

PUBPOL 510
The Politics of Public Policy
Fall 2014

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Policy analysis is a discipline that brings systematic thinking and social scientific evidence to bear on substantive problems, but policymakers seldom value analysis as much as we do. Many are skeptical about what social science can contribute to solving public problems, often rightly so. Others see policy analysis as material to be deployed selectively and strategically in political battles fought on other terms. In today's highly partisan, often hyperbolic politics, bringing reason and evidence to bear on public problems is more challenging than ever.

To be effective, policy specialists must understand the political environment in which they operate: the participants who shape policy within particular domains; the ways in which they perceive problems and solutions; the information, interests, and ideologies likely to govern their actions; the strategies they use; and the institutional arrangements and processes that shape their behavior and constrain their decisions. The goal of this course is to help you approach such matters more critically and strategically, especially as you take on new jobs in what we expect to be an upwardly mobile career.

The expectations for your performance in class every week are high, including careful preparation, exceptional attendance, and regular participation. Come prepared to summarize every reading assigned for that week and offer one or two reflections about it. (Have all readings completed before the first class for the week they are assigned.) To make sure that we are all attentive to the discussions, *I ask that you not use laptops or tablets except to access already downloaded class readings.* So no internet, email, texting, or typing. Even more important: **No audio or video-recording is allowed in class.** I want everyone to be able to speak freely.

Good writing stands out in the policy world. It may prove more important in your career than your political and policy analytic skills. However good your writing is now, we want you to take it to the next level in your first semester here. The writing faculty and the modules they teach serve that purpose, but so will this course. You will complete a range of different writing assignments that are connected to course topics, including a report that you'll write as a group. (See "Assignments" document.) Adrianna and I will read each paper for style and identify specific ways that you can improve. We may ask you to rewrite memos that exhibit significant stylistic shortcomings.

Good speaking also stands out in the policy world. Every class you will have the opportunity to express yourself on the topic on that day, but this course will provide only one opportunity to improve your formal presentation skills. Each of you will give an oral presentation related to one of the memo assignments. We'll say more about that early in the term.

Grading:

Your grade for the course will depend on:

Short Memos (4)	40%
Group Report	30%
Oral Presentation	10%
Class Participation	20%
(Final Exam: If Necessary)	(TBA)

Reading:

We recommend that you purchase the following books. We will post a copy of all other readings that lack an embedded link on the CTools site for this course.

1. Henrik Ibsen, *Four Major Plays, Volume II*, Signet Classic. Translator: Rolf Fjelde.
2. Jeffrey Henig, *Spin Cycle: How Research is Used in Policy Debates*, Sage 2009
3. John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, Update Edition, with an Epilogue on Health Care (2nd Edition), Longman 2010.
4. R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*, Yale University Press, 1990.
5. Cornelius Kerwin and Scott Furlong, *Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy*, 4th Edition, CQ Press 2010.

A Note About Plagiarism: In all of your writing for this course, academic standards apply. You should review and carefully follow the rules regarding proper attribution: UM's guidelines at:

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/handouts/plagiar.pdf>

The Practice of Politics

Wk. 1 (Sept. 3) Introduction and Welcome

Wk 2. (Sept. 8/10) A Case Study in Good Politics?

Read: Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People*, in *Four Major Plays Volume II*.

Wk. 3. (Sept. 15/17) The Political Use (Abuse?) of Policy Analysis

Read: Jeffrey R. Henig, *Spin Cycle: How Research is Used in Policy Debates*, Chs. 1-4, 8.

Memo #1 due Friday, September 19, 9:00 a.m.

Wk. 4. (Sept. 22/24) Democratic Politics: Persuading the Public?

Marvin Folkertsma, “Are American Voters Fools?” *The Blaze*, March 21, 2012.

<http://www.theblaze.com/contributions/are-american-voters-fools/>

Berinsky, Adam, and Kinder, Donald R. 2006. “Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames.” *Journal of Politics* 68: 640-656.

Arthur Lupia. 1994. “Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections,” *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1). Read pp. 63-67; skim 64-72; read conclusion on p. 72.

Jeremy Peters. “Conservatives Hone Script to Light Fire over Abortion,” *New York Times*, July 24, 2014.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/25/us/politics/republicans-abortion-midterm-elections.html>

Robert Draper, “Has the Libertarian Moment Finally Arrived?” *New York Times Magazine*, August 7 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/10/magazine/has-the-libertarian-moment-finally-arrived.html?_r=2

Jonathan Chait, “No, America is not turning Libertarian.” *New York Times Magazine*, August 7, 2014. <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/08/america-is-not-turning-libertarian.html>

Jonathan Chait, “How Libertarians Snookered the New York Times Magazine,” *New York*, August 13, 2014. <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/08/how-libertarians-snookered-the-times-magazine.html>

Jeffrey R. Henig, *Spin Cycle: How Research is Used in Policy Debates*, Ch. 7.

Wk. 5. (Sept. 29/ Oct. 1) Democratic Politics: A Polarized Public?

Morris P. Fiorina et al. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized Public*, 2010, pp. 1-126.

Allison Kopicki, "Support Is Thin for Tea Party, but It Retains Its Muscle," *New York Times*, June 24, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/25/upshot/support-is-thin-for-tea-party-but-it-retains-its-muscle.html?_r=0&abt=0002&abg=0

Memo #2 due Friday, October 3, 9:00 a.m.

Wk 6. (Oct. 6/8) Agenda Setting

John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, chs. TBA.

Jessica E. Boscarino, "Surfing for Problems: Advocacy Group Strategy in U.S. Forestry Policy" *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2009.

Note: No class on Oct. 13 (Fall Break)

Wk. 7. (Oct.15) Agenda Setting continued

Colin Gordon, *Dead on Arrival: The Politics of Healthcare in Twentieth Century America*. selections TBA.

John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, epilogue.

Lyndsey Layton, "How Bill Gates pulled off the swift Common Core revolution." *Washington Post*, June 7, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-bill-gates-pulled-off-the-swift-common-core-revolution/2014/06/07/a830e32e-ec34-11e3-9f5c-9075d5508f0a_story.html

Hayley Tsukayama, "With immigration reform off the agenda, some in tech turn to plan B," Washington Post, July 25, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-switch/wp/2014/07/25/with-immigration-reform-off-the-agenda-some-in-tech-turn-to-plan-b/>

Jordain Carney and Stacy Kaper, "Obama Has Every Reason to Fix the VA. Why Hasn't He?" *National Journal*, May 14 2014. <http://www.nationaljournal.com/defense/obama-has-every-reason-to-fix-the ва-why-hasn-t-he-20140514>

"In Wake of VA Scandal, McCain Proposes Private Health Option for Veterans." *Roll Call*, May 21, 2014 <http://blogs.rollcall.com/wgdb/in-wake-of-va-scandal-mccain-plans-legislation-to-let-veterans-get-outside-care/?dcz=>

Wk 8: (Oct. 20/ 22). Legislating

Doug Arnold. *Logic of Congressional Action*, Chs. 1, 2, 4-6

Lydia Saad, "Americans Still Sharply Divided on Healthcare Reform." Gallup Politics. Sept. 8 2009. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/122822/americans-sharply-divided-healthcare-reform.aspx>

"A Look Back at How the President Was Able to Sign Obamacare into Law." Forbes, March 23, 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/physiciansfoundation/2014/03/26/a-look-back-at-how-the-president-was-able-to-sign-obamacare-into-law-four-years-ago/>

Shailagh Murray and Lori Montgomery, "House Passes Obamacare Without Republican Votes." *Washington Post*, March 22, 2010. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/21/AR2010032100943.html>

Robert Pear, "Senate Passes Health Overhaul in Party Line Vote." New York Times. December 24, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/25/health/policy/25health.html?_r=0

Wk. 9. (Oct 27/ 29). Influencing Legislators

Kevin Esterling, *The Political Economy of Expertise*, selections TBA.

John R. Wright, *Interest Groups and Congress: Lobbying, Contributions, and Influence*, selections TBA.

Richard L. Hall and Alan V. Deardorff. 2006. "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy." *American Political Science Review*, 100.1 (Feb 2006).

Richard L. Hall and Richard J. Anderson. 2011. "Issue Advertising and Legislative Advocacy in Health Politics" In Burdett A. Loomis and Allan J. Cigler (eds.). *Interest Group Politics*, Washington D.C. CQ Press.

Robert Maguire, "Dark Money Hits \$50 Million, Most Still to Come," OpenSecretsblog, August 28, 2014. <http://www.opensecrets.org/news/2014/04/how-2014-is-shaping-up-to-be-the-darkest-money-election-to-date/>

Memo #3 due Friday, October 31, 9:00 a.m.

Wk. 10. (Nov. 3/5) Agency Rule-Making

Cornelius Kerwin and Scott Furlong, *Rulemaking*, selections TBA.

Wk. 11. (Nov. 10/12) Influencing Agencies

Roger Davison, Walter Oleszek, and Francis Lee, *Congress and Its Members*, selections TBA.

Richard L. Hall and Kristina C. Miler. 2008. "What Happens After the Alarm? Interest Group Subsidies to Legislative Overseers," *Journal of Politics*, 70:4. Read pp 990-995; skim 995-1002; and read conclusion, pp. 1002-1003.

Ari Shapiro, "Obama Office Alters More Federal Rules Than Bush." *National Public Radio: All Things Considered*, November 28, 2011. <http://www.npr.org/2011/11/28/142721675/obama-office-alters-more-federal-rules-than-bush>

Molly Redden. New Republic: OIRA Antagonizing Environmentalists. *National Public Radio*, January 12, 2012. <http://www.npr.org/2012/01/12/145095539/new-republic-oira-antagonizing-environmentalists>

Ben Wolfgang and Stephen Dinan, "House Republicans Authorize Lawsuit Against Obama for Presidential Overreach." *Washington Times*, July 30, 2014.
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/jul/30/house-votes-sue-president-obama-over-claims-presid/?page=all>

Memo #4 due Friday, November 14, 9:00 a.m.

Wk 12. (Nov. 17/19) Policy Making by Litigating

Robert J. Hume, *How Courts Impact Federal Administrative Behavior*. Routledge, 2012, pp. 1-9; 13-27; 70-80; 116-122.

R. Shep Melnick, *Regulation and the Courts*, selections TBA.

Julie Margetta Morgan and Diana Pullin, “Social Science and the Courts: Challenges and Strategies for Bridging Gaps Between Law and Research.” *Educational Researcher*. 39:7, 515–524

John F. Kowal, “Supporting Litigation and Legal Advocacy: The Lessons of Citizens United.” *Responsive Philanthropy*, January 2013, reprinted by the Brennan Center for Justice at: <http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/supporting-litigation-and-legal-advocacy-lessons-citizens-united>

Wk 13. (Nov 24) Using Litigation to Change Policy

Mary Beth Musumeci , “A Guide to the Supreme Court’s Affordable Care Act Decision,” Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2012.

www.kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8332.pdf

Chris Conover, “Will the Courts Derail Obamacare?” *Forbes*, Sept. 13, 2013
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/theapotheccary/2013/09/13/will-the-courts-derail-obamacare/>

Adrianna McIntyre, “Why a Federal Court Just Ruled Obamacare Subsidies are Illegal in 36 States,” *Vox*, July 22, 2014. <http://www.vox.com/2014/7/22/5821600/obamacare-halbig-subsidies-illegal-most-states>

Adam Liptak, “Birth Control Order Deepens Divide Among Justices,” *New York Times*, July 3, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/04/us/politics/supreme-court-order-suspends-contraception-rule-for-christian-college.html>

Tom Howell, Jr. “Obama admin. forges new ways for objecting employers to cope with contraception mandate,” *Washington Times*, August 22, 2014.
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/aug/22/obama-forges-new-ways-objecting-employers/>

Note: No Class (Nov. 26)

Wk. 14 (Dec. 1) Conclusion: Political Analysis Trumps Policy Analysis

Group Report due Wednesday, December 3, 9:00 a.m.

Wk. 14/15 (Dec 3/8/10): Group Presentations

Important Guidelines for Memos: Read each assignment carefully! Maximum length: 750 words. Please double-space. Use footnotes to report your sources, including the precise link or other location. Make sure you know and follow the standards for proper attribution. You cannot choose as your issue anything having to do with charter schools. You can choose international as well as domestic issues. Assuming that you can find the relevant information, you can adapt any assignment to the state or local level; just see Adrianna for guidance. Submit memos on CTools by deadlines specified. Contact Adrianna if you have any questions about any assignment.

Short Memo Assignments

1. You are a legislative assistant to a newly appointed Republican senator, Richard Hall, interested in issue X. Your boss sits on the committee that has jurisdiction over X and will hold a hearing on it next week. Your boss has just learned that one of the leading experts on the issue, Y, is on the witness list. Y is affiliated with a liberal-leaning think tank or other nonprofit with whom your Republican boss generally disagrees. Your boss wants to undercut this witness's testimony at the hearing, and she asks you to compile the most effective arguments and evidence that will lead the other senators to give the witness's testimony less weight. Write a set of talking points that your boss can use at the hearing.

Note: Identify a real expert from a real nonprofit who has not testified before Congress on this issue. Use the real committee that has jurisdiction on the issue.

Due: Friday, September 19, 9:00 a.m.

2. You serve on the staff of a political consulting firm that the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee has hired on a trial basis. The Committee wants the firm to advise it about issues that could prove important in the 2014 midterm elections. To this end, your boss asks you to review the public opinion polls on [issue x] and write a memo addressing the following: How much does the public know about this issue? How important is the issue to them? What policies does the public support or oppose? Were this issue to become prominent in the next campaign, will it mostly hurt or help your party's candidates?

Note: In addition to the 750 word limit, you can also add up to two pages of tables or graphs.

Due: Friday, October 3, 9:00 a.m.

3. You are an assistant to the communications director for a public interest group, X (e.g., Amnesty International, Club for Growth, Sierra Club). Some time back your boss saw on television an issue advertisement, sponsored by group Z, opposing a policy supported by your organization. She asks you for a memo evaluating the ad. What was Y trying to accomplish with the ad? Who was the target audience? To what extent and why might the ad be effective? Assuming your organization has the funds to do so, should it attempt to counter the ad? What would a good counteractive advertisement look like?

Note: Use a real issue advertisement. One way to locate them is a search on YouTube or other video sites; it sometimes helps to specify an issue in your search, such as "Obamacare ads" Be sure to include in the memo the internet link to the ad.

Due: Friday, October 31, 9:00 a.m.

4. You are a staff member in Agency X. Earlier this year, your agency finalized a rule concerning issue Z. The rule is somewhat controversial and has caught the attention of the House committee that has jurisdiction over issue Z. The committee will hold an oversight hearing on the rule in the next two weeks, and your boss has been called to testify before the committee to defend the rule. She asks you to prepare a memo that (1) briefly summarizes the most important objection to the rule that the committee leaders (chair and ranking minority member) are likely to bring up; (2) identifies one of the major organizations that opposed the rule; and (3) discusses how influential that organization might be with the two committee leaders.

Note: The key to this assignment is finding an interesting rule that fits the assignment. The *National Journal*, which is available online through lib.umich.gov, reports on major regulatory actions, but you can use whatever search process works for you. You will find the notice and comment filings and the notice of final rulemaking at regulations.gov. You can find information on committee jurisdictions and committee leaders at multiple sites, but you might start with National Journal's *Almanac of American Politics* for the current congress. The website, www.opensecrets.org is an excellent source of information on both legislators and interest groups.

Due: Friday, November 14, 9:00 a.m.

Group Assignment

This assignment asks you to play the role of a conservative political advocacy group. Working as a team of four or five, you will develop a strategy to promote one of your organization's preferred policies in the coming year. Assume that the Republicans have just won control of both chambers in the 2014 midterm elections (whether that happens or not), so the opportunities for moving the policy through Congress have just increased substantially.

Your immediate task is to get your CEO's approval for the plan. She has asked you to write a report briefing her on it. She wants to know if the initiative is politically feasible. You are free to fashion the report as you think best, but among the things she might want to know: Why should the organization focus on this particular policy? Can the organization pursue the policy non-legislatively? Other than the Republican control of Congress, what factors will affect whether the issue will get on the legislative agenda in the coming year? Is the issue salient, or can it be made salient? Is there public support for the organization's policy? What is the policy analysis or other evidence that supports your policy, and will it matter? Where will the opposition come from? Who might be the most willing and able coalition leaders, and what other legislators should the organization target? What resources should the group use to influence the key actors?

The body of the report should be broken up into sections, with each member of your group responsible for one or more of them. (Identify them by listing them as the "contact person" for the section.) However, the report should be well-organized, integrated, and convincing. Each of you will be graded on your respective sections but also on the document as a whole. The full report will be a fairly long document, but no more than 15 double-spaced pages, plus attachments.

Your boss also wants you to provide an oral briefing on the plan at a staff meeting. I will play the role of the CEO, and your classmates will play other staffers in the organization (who would prefer that it focus on a different issue). Your group will have no more than 20 minutes to present the report, which will be followed by 10-12 minutes of (hard) questions.

You want this to be a polished and professional presentation, which at the very least means that you should make sure that you have everything in good working order (hardware and software) so that you can start and end on time. We will record the presentations, and you will later watch your own presentation and write a self-critique.

Report due Wednesday, December 1, 9:00 a.m.

Presentations: December 3, December 8, December 10 in class.