

Theory and Practice in Public Policy PUBP700

Instructor: Catherine Rudder
Time of Class: Tuesday, 4:30-7:10 p.m.
Location: Arlington, Room TBA
Office Hours: 3:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, room #202
(If my door is open, please feel free to drop in anytime. Also, I'm easily available by email (rudder@gmu.edu) or phone (703-993-4996). In case of emergency, you may call me at home before 10 p.m. at 202-966-0203.)

Theory and Practice in Public Policy, the gateway course for the Master's Program in Public Policy, introduces you to tools and concepts that will help you navigate in the world of public policy. We explore positive, normative, deductive, and inductive theories and assess their strengths, weaknesses and applicability to public policy. You will be introduced to several perspectives on the practice of policy analysis and be given an opportunity to engage in a analytical and strategic project.

The objective of this course is to help you become a more sophisticated policy professional with an ability to operate effectively and ethically in a political environment. You will be presented with a variety of ways of looking at political phenomena, conceiving of relationships, and understanding outcomes, and you will hone your skills in identifying assumptions, seeing multiple sides of issues, casting alternative frames to problems, understanding underlying interests, identifying stakeholders, negotiating positions, and devising strategies for action. The course aims to heighten your sensitivity to cultural, economic and political context and your appreciation of theoretical rigor, disinterested analysis, and empirical evidence for assertions. While many of the applications will be in the U.S. context, the theories apply more broadly to policymaking in market-based democracies. In addition, a strong international component is built into the course.

You will be asked to work individually and in teams in order to demonstrate your facility with the theories and their appropriate use, as well as to hone your research, public presentation and writing skills. Grades will be apportioned in the following manner:

*	One short paper	20% of grade
*	Take-home midterm	20%
*	Take-home final exam	25%
*	Class presentations/discussions/attendance	10%
*	Team Policy Analysis and Strategic Plan	25%

Details about these assignments will be covered in class. The team policy analysis and strategic project is appended to this document.

Required Texts:

Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (Chatham House Publishers, 2000.) (paper)

“Governance Options for CapWIN: The Capital Region Wireless Integrated Network” (will be distributed to you online prior to class)

Mancur Olson. *Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Harvard University Press, Paperback Revised edition, 1971 (orig. pub. 1965)).

Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists without Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1998). (paper)

Charles E. Lindblom, *The Market System: What It Is, How It Works, and What to Make of It* (Yale University Press, 2001).

Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Harvard University Press, 1970). (paper)

Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, Revised Edition (W. W. Norton, 2001). (paper)

Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and William Damon, *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

The New York Times (daily: all U.S., international and business news)

Highly Recommended Reading:

The Economist (weekly)

Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Policy Dynamics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999).

Giandomenico Majone, *Evidence, Argument, & Persuasion in the Policy Process* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984).

Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), esp. pp. 21-52.

Roger Fisher and William Ury, with Bruce Patton, editor, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*, (NY: Penguin Books, 1991).

Jon Elster, *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Irving Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).

Thomas C. Schelling, *Micromotives and Macrobehavior* (New York: W.W.Norton, 1978).

Recommended Websites:

<http://www.gao.gov>

<http://www.cbo.gov>

<http://www.cato.org>

<http://www.cbpp.org>

http://www.brookings.edu/dybdocroot/es/es_hp.htm

<http://www.heritage.org>

<http://www.aei.org/research/research.htm>

<http://www.ctj.org>

<http://www.concordcoalition.org>

<http://www.ombwatch.org/excreport>

<http://epinet.org>

<http://www.urbaninstitute.org>

<http://www.nas.edu>

Class Schedule, Topics, and Assignments

(Pedagogical practice may dictate certain alterations in the schedule of topics below.)

Policy Analysis

I. Introduction

January 21: First Class

Distribution of the syllabus and class assignments

Divide into teams for policy analysis and strategy projects
 Assignment of the 10 (II-XIII, minus VIII and XI) sections of the syllabus to individual members of the class, including finding relevant articles in *The New York Times* and *The Economist* to illustrate points raised in the course
 Introduction to the course and to policy analysis
 Discussion of required texts and recommended reading
 Review of objectives and requirements
 Creation of teams
 Discussion of plagiarism
 What a policy professional does
 Obligations of a policy professional
 What does it mean to be a professional?

Guest presentation:

Andrew Lee on GMU library resources, electronic sources, and citations

II: The Practice of Public Policy: January 28

Assignments: 1. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis* (Be ready to discuss this book on January 28.)
 2. Access a policy analysis on the web and compare it with Bardach's.
 3. "Governance Options for CapWIN: The Capital Region Wireless Integrated Network" (will be distributed to you online prior to class)

Class questions:

- (1) You want to access a *New York Times* article that is over two weeks old. How do you accomplish this task without paying a fee?
- (2) You want to cite a web site that you have used. What is the appropriate format?
- (3) You have been asked to use a consistent citation style in your papers. How do you find and use an appropriate citation scheme?
- (4) What are the five best electronic sources for public policy research?
- (5) What is the difference between peer-reviewed articles and other information on the web?
- (6) How do you distinguish good information from bad on the web?
- (7) What is plagiarism? How do you avoid it? Why is this an important matter?
- (8) What do you consider to be Bardach's most important advice?
- (9) How does Bardach's design for developing a policy analysis differ from one you yourself have read?

Topics:

What is policy analysis?
 Ethical obligations of the policy analyst
 Bardach's Eightfold Path
 Challenges facing the analyst
 Gathering data for policy research
 Best practices research
 Putting Olson in context

Guest presentation: Mark Maggio on the CapWIN project

Recommended reading:

Beryl A. Radin, *Beyond Machiavelli: Policy Analysis Comes of Age*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000).

David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1999).

Edith Stokey and Richard Zeckhauser, *A Primer for Policy Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1978).

Duncan MacRae Jr. and Dale Whittington, *Expert Advice for Policy Choice: Analysis and Discourse* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1997).

Understanding Groups

III: Individuals in Concert: February 4

Assignment: *The Logic of Collective Action*, pp. 1-97

Class questions:

- (1) What are the ethical obligations of a policy professional?
- (2) You're a consumer -- and until business spending picks up, the economy is depending on you. Are you up to the job?
- (3) What is rational actor theory?
- (4) What is the theory of collective action?
- (5) What is a free rider? What is the significance of this concept to the policy analyst?
- (6) How closely does the CapWIN project track Bardach's prescription for policy analysis?
- (7) What accounts for the differences?

Topics:

What is theory? Why we need theory and why theory is inevitable
 Consideration of types of theory, elements of theory, testing and applying theory
 Levels and units of analysis
 What constitutes an explanation?
 Identifying assumptions

Application of rational actor theory to groups and organizations (deductive theory)
 Concepts of collective or public goods, latent groups, incentives, and compulsion
 Differences between large and small groups
 Why individuals join groups, act in concert, provide for collective goods
 Application to states, labor unions, membership associations
 Consideration of implications for policy-making, NGOs, and public policy

Discussion of group projects

Recommended reading:

Steven E. Finkel and Edward N. Muller, "Rational Choice and the Dynamics of Collective Political Action: Evaluating Alternative Models with Panel Data," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 92, No. 1. (Mar., 1998), pp. 37-49 (Available via JSTOR).

Amartya K. Sen, "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 6: 4 (Summer 1977), 317-344 (available via JSTOR).

Jane Mansbridge, "Self-Interest in Political Life," *Political Theory*, 18:1 (February 1990), 132-153.

IV: Groups in Concert: Networks: February 11

Assignment: *Activists beyond Borders*, Preface, Ch. 1, 2, and 6; choose one of the following: Ch. 3, 4 or 5.

Class questions:

- (1) What is theory? Why do we need it?
- (2) What are the limits of rational actor theory?
- (3) Public or rational choice theory applied to economic activity seems to produce far more felicitous results than when applied to the social or political realm. Explain.

- (4) What does it mean to “relax assumptions”? Why would a theorist want to do this?
- (5) Who are “champion-leaders”? Where are they likely to be found? What is the difference between a champion leader and Keck and Sikkink’s principled leaders?
- (6) In what ways do Olson’s and Keck and Sikkink’s theories differ? Compare their usefulness.
- (7) What is new about Keck and Sikkink’s transnational advocacy networks? Haven’t such formations been in existence since the 19th century?
- (8) In what ways do Keck and Sikkink use social movement theory?

Topics:

Network theory

Reconceptualizing international politics and the concept of sovereignty

Consideration of boomerang effects, international campaigns, issue framing, culture, political context, leverage, and elements of social movement theory

Creating social change: an international strategy of creating transnational advocacy networks (inductive and grounded theory)

Relationships among domestic actors, states, NGOs, international organizations, and foundations

Circumstances making creation of advocacy networks more likely

Role of leadership, political entrepreneurs, and past experience in networks

Network tactics

Impact of advocacy networks

Global public policy networks

Impact on state sovereignty

Recommended Reading:

Jan Martin Witte, Wolfgang H. Reinicke, and Thorsten Bennett, “Beyond Multilateralism: Global Public Policy Networks,” *International Politics and Society* (2000/2). (Available online.)

Stephen D. Krasner, “Think Again: Sovereignty,” *Foreign Policy* (Winter 2001). (Available online.)

Wolfgang H. Reinicke, “The Other World Wide Web: Global Public Policy Networks,” *Foreign Policy* (Winter 2001). (Available online.)

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

Michael Ondaatje, *Anil’s Ghost* (McClelland & Stewart, 2000).

Human Rights Websites:

Human Rights Online: <http://oz.uc.edu/thro/Educ-Guide.html>

Interview: <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people/Stover/stover-con99-0.html>

V: Comparisons between *Logic of Collective Action* and *Activists beyond Borders*: February 18

Assignment: First short paper due.

Class questions:

- (1) What is the boomerang technique? Is it exclusively applicable to international activities?
- (2) What does it mean to frame an issue? What is the importance of this concept?
- (3) Why does the development of advocacy networks and global public policy networks bring state sovereignty into question? Is this a significant matter?
- (4) What advice would you give someone who wants to change a public policy but who has no particular political connections and is not wealthy?
- (5) What is inductive theory? How does it differ from deductive theory?
- (6) What is the distinction between normative and empirical theory? Why make this distinction?
- (7) What is the importance of global public policy networks?
- (8) What techniques in Keck and Sikkink are used to influence public policy?
- (9) What happened when you played the Prisoner's Dilemma game? What did you learn?

Topics:

Activists beyond Borders (cont'd)

Assessment of theory: parsimony, elegance, applicability, and breadth of explanation, assumptions

Testing theory: hypothesis testing, problems of measurement, operationalizing concepts, eliminating alternatives

Identifying unstated theories underlying analysis

Finding examples from articles in *The NY Times*

Causal mechanisms of human action:

Causal explanations

Foresight and myopia, discounting

Selfishness and altruism

Reciprocity

Role of emotions

Reinforcement

Natural and social selection

Global maximum and the local maximum trap
 Unintended consequences
 Norms
 Social change
 Equilibrium
 Organizations: What difference do they make?

Recommended reading:

Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42 (Summer 1988): 427-60. (Available via JSTOR)

Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (4th ed.) (New York: Free Press, 1995).

1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Jon Elster, *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Politics and Economics

VI: Economics: Understanding the Market Context: February 25

Assignment: *The Market System* (all)

Class questions:

- (1) "[I]n our time the market system has become a global coordinator of cooperative performances of at least 2 billion people." Explain.
- (2) How does Lindblom's view of entrepreneurs relate to corporate scandals of 2002?
- (3) Between 1997 and 2001, U.S. companies spent \$90 billion to lay 39 million miles of fiber optic cable - enough to circle the earth 1,566 times. Only 2.6% of that is currently in use. How might a capitalist explain this result in light of the putative efficiency of the market?
- (4) How do markets work? Why does Lindblom consider the market system to be such a marvelous achievement?
- (5) What are some alternatives to markets?
- (6) Is a market system necessary for democracy?
- (7) Does a market system inflict harm on democracy?

- (8) What does Lindblom mean when he repeatedly says that the market system pertains to society, not merely the economy?
- (9) You want to encourage saving (IRA's etc.): What factors would you want to take into account?
- (10) How are normative questions, compared to empirical ones, addressed?
- (11) What is the difference between a concept and its operationalization? Why is this distinction important?
- (12) What is systematically collected, empirical evidence? What difference does it make?

Topics:

How markets work

Efficiency, inefficiencies, quid pro quo, freedom

Effects of the market system on personality and culture

The reach of the market system

Applicability of those ideas in public policy-making

Recommended reading:

Other works of Lindblom, including *Intelligence of Democracy: Decision Making through Mutual Adjustment*, (NY: Free Press, 1965).

VII: Structuring Choice: March 4

Assignment: *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, pp. 1-61, 76-105, and 120-126.

Class questions:

- (1) How would Hirschman analyze the following news item? "An emeritus professor has resigned from Winthrop University's Board of Trustees because he says the board and the university's president are ignoring the needs of the faculty. While some professors agreed with E. Thomas Crowson that Winthrop's leaders have let faculty salaries lag, they said his decision to quit leaves the faculty without a voice on the board as next year's budget is being set."
- (2) What does a reading of Hirschman suggest to you about the efficacy of privatization? Is he correct? Explain.
- (3) How does loyalty influence the use of exit or voice? Provide examples.
- (4) Under what circumstances is voice most effective?
- (5) Under what circumstances should a policy professional quit a job?
- (6) Would Hirschman endorse the practice of whistle blowing?

Topics:

Consideration of the concepts of exit and voice
 Theory of loyalty
 Assumptions underlying the theory
 Role of public goods
 Inside vs. outside strategies: fight from within or without? What are the trade-offs?
 Application to education vouchers and privatization of postal services
 Problems in devising workable public policies: skimming or creaming; paying people to do what they are already doing

Recommended reading:

Other works by Hirschman, including *Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

Spring Break: March 11

Politics

VIII: The Political Project: March 18

Assignment: Midterm exam due.

Topics: Introduction to Stone
 Understanding politics
 Rationality project
 Polis model
 E.E. Schattschneider
 Decision making models: rational choice, bounded rationality, incrementalism,
 and administrative behavior
 Negative and positive feedback models
 Creating change: models and strategies
 Barriers to change

Recommended reading:

Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, eds., *Policy Dynamics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960).

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984).

IX: The Political Project (cont'd): March 25

Assignment: *Policy Paradox*, Introduction and Parts I, II and III.

Class Questions:

- (1) What are the limitations to an incrementalist conception of policy making? Why, then, is it a useful conception?
- (2) How do institutions complement incrementalism?
- (3) What is the importance of the concept of policy subsystems?
- (4) What are the sources of policy monopolies? Why are they significant?
- (5) How does bounded rationality differ from rational choice?

Topics:

The role of the public in policy making: audience, intensity

Which comes first, the problem or the solution?

Rationality project vs. the political project

Political vs. market models: what distinguishes the polis from the market?

Conflicting claims of normative goals: equity, efficiency, security and liberty

Essence of policy making in political communities: struggle over ideas

Multiple understandings of a single concept and political strategy to shape understandings

Finding hidden arguments

Alternatives to rational actor assumptions

Highly recommended reading:

James Madison, *Federalist #10* (available on the Internet)

U.S. Constitution (Internet)

Recommended reading:

See last week.

Robert Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

Giandomenico Majone, *Evidence, Argument, & Persuasion in the Policy Process* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

X: The Political Project (cont'd): April 1

Assignment: *Policy Paradox*, Part IV and Conclusion.

Class questions:

- (1) When the Catholic Church's problem with abusive priests became public, how did that affect the outcome?
- (2) What are some reasons that unintended consequences might result from a well-intentioned policy? What are some ways that you would recommend to minimize the likelihood of producing results that are unwanted and unintentional? What are the drawbacks to using these techniques?
- (3) "It is important to represent both sides of the issue." What is defective about this characterization?

Topics:

Problem definition: strategic representation of situations
 Narrative stories, metaphors, and ambiguity
 Manipulation of numbers
 Assigning responsibility for problems: causal interpretation
 Mobilization of interests
 Why the logic of collective action does not pertain in the polis
 Group strategies to define issues
 Who has the power to decide?
 Controlling the alternatives
 Decision models
 Cultural frameworks

Recommended reading:

Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

W. Russell Neuman, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler, *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1992.

Competing analyses of Social Security Commission's recommendations:

<http://www.cbpp.org/6-18-02socsec-pr.htm>

<http://www.socialsecurity.org/pubs/ssps/ssp-27es.html>

XI: The Political Project and the Policy Analyst: April 8

Assignment: Team Policy Analysis Paper Due.

Topics: *Policy Paradox* (cont'd)

Policy instruments that are central in democracies: inducing people to act in prescribed ways

Inducements, rules, facts, rights, and powers

Why “reasoned analysis is necessarily political”

What is political reason?

Assessing political feasibility

The Policy Professional

XII: Professional Practice: April 15

Assignment: *Good Work*, Parts I and II

Class questions:

- (1) Can a professional be both strategic and ethical at the same time?
- (2) How might the policy analyst incorporate Stone’s ideas?
- (4) What might be an example of a conflict of interest that a policy analyst might confront? What are some other examples of conflict?
- (5) Why is good work, as conceived by Gardner, *et al.*, a problem in contemporary life?
- (6) What are the conditions of good work?
- (7) What conflicts do geneticists confront? How might these conflicts compare to those experienced by policy professionals?
- (8) What is the framework developed by Gardner, *et al.*? Is it plausible? Is it useful? What assumptions underlie it?

Topics:

Recommended Reading:

Charles E. Lindblom and David K. Cohen, *Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

Carol H. Weiss, ed., *Organizations for Policy Analysis: Helping Government Think*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992. (See esp. the introductory essay.)

XIII: Professional Practice (cont’d): April 22

Assignment: Team presentations and *Good Work*, Parts III and IV

Class question:

- (1) What conflicts do journalists confront? How do these conflicts compare to those experienced by geneticists? How might these conflicts compare to those experienced by policy professionals?
- (2) What evidence does Gardner, *et al.* adduce to make their points? Is it based on systematically collected data? Why does this matter?

(3) Is it possible to retain personal integrity while working in institutions driven by political, economic and other values that may conflict with professional standards? Explain.

XIV: (Last day of class): Conclusions: April 29

Assignment: Team presentations

XV: Turn in take-home exam on May 6.

1/22/03

Team Projects: Policy Analysis and Strategic Plan

Assignment

1. Each team is to develop a **policy analysis** along the lines of Bardach's *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis*. The deliverables include a written policy analysis of approximately 15 double-spaced typed pages (exclusive of appendices). The analysis should include:

- An executive summary of the report
- A succinct discussion of the problem (including history, component parts, reason for the problem, some relevant academic literature and related matters)
- Identification of the stakeholders
- Presentation of any data that you may have collected (primary or secondary) that you want to bring to bear on solving the problem
- Assessment of possible solutions and possible opposition
- Conclusion and recommendation (provide reasons)

In an **appendix**, append a list of the name of each member of the class and the parts of the team project for which each person was responsible. In a **second appendix**, provide a one-page assessment of your client's background, interests, financial support, political leanings, purpose of commissioning your analysis. Then indicate how these factors influenced your policy advice.

Due date for the written analysis is **Tuesday, April 8**. Kindly email me an electronic copy and deliver a paper copy at the beginning of class.

2. Each team is to prepare a **strategic analysis** of how successfully to effect the policy advice in your policy analysis. The deliverables include: An in-class **PowerPoint presentation** (emailed to me via an attachment) and an **editorial** for a relevant newspaper (about 2-3 pages maximum emailed to me and to all the members of the class prior to the presentation) using the arguments that you have recommended to the client. The presentation, not to exceed 20 minutes, should include:

- A brief summary of the policy problem and the advice you offered your client
- Relevant elements of strategies and tactics in the class readings
- A persuasive argument concerning the strategy you are proposing
- A step-by-step presentation of the strategy clearly indicating how the strategy (and accompanying tactics) will lead to the desired outcome

Due date for the class presentation and editorial is **Tuesday, April 22**.

**FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH:
ADVICE FROM LAST SEMESTER'S CLASS REGARDING
TEAM PROJECTS**

In order to maximize their chances of producing the highest quality policy analysis and strategic plan, I would advise them to do a few things. First, I would say to have an open mind. Listen to everyone's ideas regardless of their experience because this collaboration can really conjure up some great ideas. Be willing to work hard, because putting a policy analysis together and following it with sound strategies is no easy task. Third, support each other. Many people have insecurities about their own work; even if you think they are a genius, so let them know that. Lastly I would tell them to pray for some good luck. I got blessed with five fabulous group members who couldn't have worked better together, and from whom I learned so much. I might not have gotten so much from the assignment if I had been paired with any other group.

First and foremost, I would echo Bardach's suggestion, "start early"; I cannot overemphasize the importance of getting a jumpstart on a project like this. Speaking from personal experience, had my team members not been as conscientious as they were, and agreed to get started as soon as we received the assignment, we would have had some serious problems completing the analysis by the deadline and keeping it within the required page limit. We initially selected a very broad topic and after conducting a significant amount of research, realized we needed to refocus the direction of our analysis. We were able to change course halfway through the semester and avert disaster

because we had allowed ourselves ample time to complete the project. My second piece of advice: be careful not to choose an overly broad subject. There is a lot of information to wade through on most policy issues-if your scope is too broad, you will never manage to complete the analysis within the confines of the project.

The only bit of wisdom I would offer regarding the strategic plan is: use the Stone book!!

First, I would recommend that each person in the group contribute one policy topic, with a formulated problem statement. One may think that something may be good to research due to personal interests or work affiliations, but if a person can't effectively produce even a relatively coherent problem statement for the group to work off then it will be difficult to proceed. Second, make sure that the responsibilities are distributed evenly amongst members, and make it abundantly clear what is expected of each group member, and that failure to contribute will not be tolerated. Third, comparative analysis, comparative analysis, comparative analysis – make sure that the group has sufficient material on best practices and related studies so that the group can effectively compare and contrast effective solutions. Finally, complete the policy analysis early so that it can be refined and each member has time to contribute to the editing – it's hard to manage each person's schedule and if the group gets behind or if someone wants to make last minute changes there is a good chance that the finished product either won't be as coherent or look unprofessional in presentation.

My advice to next semester class is quite simple: think like the opposition. That is the best way to plan a strategy that would counter opposing opinions and viewpoints.

If possible, contact existing opposition for their opinion on the matter being discussed so that you will be prepared when creating a timeline and strategy for implementation. This will also allow you to identify where the policy strategy is weak and can aid in strengthening these points rather than leaving them to be attacked by the opposition. Also, the use of statistics is essential when proving which strategy is best. Numbers are very effective, even to the opposition, in getting a point across. And finally the policy team should think about the future and predict who will be the opposition then as well. They must take into account possible changes in political climate and predict other outcomes that will assist in creating a solid plan of implementation.

Things that are important to the group project:

1. Meet often and start meeting early.
2. Decide on a topic and outline early. Choose a topic that will work for the requirements. Research and outline early in case adjustments are necessary to the topic.
3. Divide the work into portions and assign them to each member for research. Bring the research together to decide what is relevant and outline the paper.
4. Have one person in charge of the larger picture rather than a small chunk to add - this person would bring the pieces together, make sure all paper requirements are met, and edit. This would help the flow and not leave one member of the group too overwhelmed so the larger picture is lost. This person could also help the members stay focused.

5. Speak up if you feel the group is not following the assignment. Work towards consensus and go back to the assignment description whenever necessary.

Finally, research on the issue is important but don't forget to include identification of options and then choosing one option based on considerations such as cost and/or political feasibility, recognition of opposition, if any, and recommendation of ways to overcome it.

I would have three pieces of advice. First, learn how to listen critically to the opinions of others – especially those with whom you disagree. In this context, “critically” does not mean to look for flaws in logic or values – this is second nature to most of us, and will happen in the normal course of exchanging ideas. But rather listen for substantive content and meaning behind the words, and pursue genuine understanding of their opinions. This is no simple skill to learn. Second, learn how to formulate policy alternatives and forecast the consequences of implementing those policies. This involves developing a variety of skills, both theoretical and analytical. Third, learn how to “package” your ideas in a framework with which your audiences (stake-holders) can relate. The best policy ideas are useless unless they can be communicated in a frame of words, ideas, symbols and contexts that have meaning to both parties.

It is important that your policy analysis team find time (at least an hour) within the first week after receiving the assignment to get together. This will give you an opportunity to get to know each other, compare schedules and accessibility over the

weeks that you'll be working on the project, and determine together how the team's analysis will practicably be accomplished. Collectively discuss topical interests, and personal backgrounds and the strengths you can each bring to the group. Try to identify a topic that interests all or most members of the group.

Once your topic is determined, be certain to clearly define the work to be done, work deadlines, delegation of responsibilities, and how the work will be shared (e.g. via e-mail, at meetings). Meet at least once a week to keep your momentum. Don't feel that you can't meet if not everyone is able to be present. Ensure that everyone has a role, feels involved, and is given an opportunity to provide input. Hold each other accountable for work product and participation in team meetings. Do not allow someone to take on an unfair burden of work, or less than a fair share.

I would advise the group to collectively analyze the leadership qualities of the members of the group in the early phases of the project and decide on one coordinator, or two coordinators if two strong leaders are present in one group. This way, the group can be more efficient by allowing the coordinator to set up times to meet and assemble the research collected by other members in the group. The coordinator(s) should identify critical dates throughout the semester on which the group would be required (loosely) to meet. I would also recommend that one person be designated as a "compiler" at the end of the project. This person would incorporate all the work into the final document, based on the outline agreed to by all group members, and provide a draft to other members of the group for editing. In addition, I think it is fair to give each member one single "veto" vote to use during any stage of the project. Such

fairness will ensure that everyone feels an even distribution of power when determining the strategy of the analysis.

To next semester's class, I would first urge they pay attention to where they choose to sit in class, since your neighbors could possibly become your teammates. Not only do you want people who will do good work, but also ones with whom you can work well. Though such personality judgments might be hard to tell in the first few weeks, often you determine that fairly quickly. In my group, the fact that we enjoyed each other's company made all the difference in helping the work to go along much more smoothly, translating into a higher quality final product.

While it may seem to be obvious, start early! The more time allowed for dead-ends and the like, the better the project will turn out to be. Everything will take more time than expected, and those weeks pass by quickly. Also, get used to being flexible. Team projects are hard, not just because of the work, but because you must meld the ideas of multiple people into one product.

Because everyone has very different schedules and lifestyles, everyone must make the project a top priority, or else it will not get done. Just accept the fact that this project will be in the way for a couple of months and get over it. Other people are depending upon you and this is just part of the full grad school experience – you will survive.

Finally, don't be afraid to get creative in your strategies. The wackiest idea can sometimes be the one worth pursuing if you let your teammates help you flesh it out.

I would stress that each team member has strengths and weaknesses. It is important that the team appoints a leader who has the ability to identify individual strengths and capitalizes on those strengths in order to ensure the completion of a strong product. Also, understand that all decisions will not be made to satisfy you at all times, there will be a need for each team member to compromise. Each team member should perform in the following manner: carry his/her own weight, compromise, be flexible, produce quality work in a timely fashion (meet deadlines), voice concerns constructively and propose solutions that would improve the situation.

If I were a mentor to a team in next semester PUBP700 class there is one thing I would offer as advice to help them produce the highest quality policy analysis. I would recommend the team define the team leader role and select a team leader. Once this decision has been made it should not be challenged or undermined by another member of the team unless the selected leader shows total incompetence. This was a problem with our group as one team member did not want to follow the leadership of the team and it severely hurt the outcome of our paper and presentation. Everyone contributes equally to the team effort and everyone has a say in the final results but there needs to be one person who is the go-to person for the final sign off on the team analysis.

To maximize the chances that a team from next semester's PUBP 700 class would produce the highest quality policy analysis and strategic plan, I would start by advising them to carefully select their issue and problem definition. I would try to steer them away from an issue that is too narrowly focused and steer them toward an issue with a lot of room for creative alternatives and recommendations. I would also advise them to

choose something about which research exists, but not an issue that already has many existing policy analyses.

In developing a high quality, but practical strategic plan, I would advise them to look at other issues that have potential applications to their recommendation. For example, if they recommend interstate compact as the best alternative or regulating health insurers, they should look at other instances of successful interstate compacts to emulate. Also, I would recommend that they focus on the role of public opinion and how it would impact their potential success.

In order to produce the highest quality policy analysis and strategic plan you must be open-minded and willing to work with others. As you beginning, the policy topic and approach to the project will be widely discussed. It is important to not dictate the discussion with your ideas and incorporate the points of view from others. Certainly if the group solely follows your ideas, then most likely they are not interested and will not do the work for the project. Also, being open-minded involves the ability to listen and let members of the group take on projects, which they are interested in and want to do. In the end, the coordination of everyone's part involves the willingness to work with others. Often writing styles will be different and it is important to bring everyone's contribution together into one report.

Critical to producing the highest policy analysis and strategic plan would be to first to consider a topic that you have knowledge of or motivated enough to want to learn more about it. Second, clearly defining the problem is essential. If the problem you are seeking to address is crystal clear and well stated, then the rest is only a matter of bringing the information together that will bear relevance to the problem. Once the

problem has been defined then adequate brainstorming is imperative to keeping the project on focus. Understanding the parameters of your research will assist greatly in the flow of information and avoid duplication of your efforts. Of course, your research should be scientific, but not exclusively, because speaking with people working in your area of research can prove extremely valuable to assessing current attitudes with regards to the problem. Next, narrowing down the information to what is directly pertinent to your client's problem will make all the difference in fine-tuning your project to one that is most relevant to the issue. Using graphs, tables or other forms of visual components for communicating the facts gathered for review will help intensify the message. Including visuals are effective, but should be kept to a minimum, as only the crucial information remains relevant. Be sure to take, as much time of your client, that is made available to you and be certain you are in sync with the culture and attitudes of the organization. As a result the highest quality policy analysis and strategic plan will be produced.

My greatest piece of advice to a student embarking on a policy analysis for PUBP 700 would be to organize! This involves assigning roles and responsibilities to each group member, establishing a timeline of when certain stages of the project should be completed, ensuring adequate meeting time are available, and establishing regular modes of communication (i.e. email or phone times). Organization makes it much easier to actually get things done, and fights the tendency of everyone to sit around and just talk about ideas versus acting on them.

Secondly, I would suggest that the topic agreed upon be one that all members can get at least moderately excited about. This will make the research and writing process much smoother, and possibly even enjoyable.

My last piece of advice would be to designate a coordinator or overseer who can smooth over the final research paper and presentation. Interpretations of assignments can get muddled and may easily cause a pieced together paper to have numerous overlaps in content and a general lack of flow. Fixing these problems may even bring to light new ways of looking at things that can be used for the subsequent implementation strategy.

I think the most valuable piece of advice I could offer next semester's class, based on my own experience, would be to START EARLY. Although Bardach discusses the importance of accurately defining the problem, it still seemed to me that should be the easiest step in this assignment. But truly our team's biggest stumbling block *was* defining the problem! Our team had to go through several iterations to come up with a plausible, realistic, and manageable policy question. Once you come up with the topic, try to dig in and start working with it, because that is when you will find out if it is feasible or not. Don't put it off for later!!

To any team wanting to produce a quality policy analysis, first understand Bardach. Once the group has evidenced a thorough understanding of Bardach, they should brainstorm about various issues that are of interest. The group should gather other policy analysis papers as an example of what things are important and use them as a guide. Finally, each member of the team should participate in every aspect of the analysis, no matter who has primary responsibility for a particular aspect of the policy project.

There are three areas that the team should focus on to maximize the chances for producing a high quality policy analysis and strategic plan. The advice is divided by the overall approach, policy analysis paper, and strategic plan presentation.

Overall:

- **Begin early; coordination will take more time than individual effort**
- **Ensure all members are participating from the beginning; make any corrections early to ensure that the team doesn't miss out on valuable input**
- **Divide responsibilities for all aspects of the project. Overlap in more demanding areas or in situations where one team member might not have a strength**
- **Outline meeting times, due dates, and deliverables; publish all group expectations and requirements in writing**
- **Hold people accountable and give praise for good efforts**

Policy Analysis:

- **Have clear, concise arguments with the problem clearly defined**
- **Write so that anyone could understand your analysis**
- **Follow the applicable suggestions of the class readings; Bardach was helpful**
- **Research all sides of the issue to ensure your arguments will be feasible and complete; this research will be useful in the strategic plan presentation as well**

Strategic Plan:

- **Give plenty of background including a definition of the problem as well as your strategic recommendations**
- **Make your presentation interesting with the use of color and graphics**
- **Use as few possible words on each slide; this keeps the audience's attention on what you are saying**
- **Practice all aspects of the presentation as a group**
- **Brainstorm potential questions and have good responses prepared**
- **Keep to the schedule when presenting; a 20-minute presentation should run approximately 20 minutes.**

Most importantly, enjoy what you are doing! This is practical experience and application of learning, both in the topic of your research, and performing the group functions.

The most important piece of advice is to always work as a team. Developing the policy analysis and strategic plan is too large and too daunting of a task if a sense of

cooperation and teamwork is not fostered. In addition, the variety of viewpoints offers a more well-rounded perspective and leads to a more complete and thorough process overall.

As for the creation and development process itself, the importance of planning ahead and strong research cannot be underestimated. As previously mentioned, this project is larger than it initially appears and it is vital that the team accounts for the time constraints and the variety of schedules within the group. And finally, the research must be comprehensive and incorporate the class readings. The class readings provide a strong theoretical foundation and the additional research imparts knowledge to the group that will prove crucial, especially during their presentation to the client.

Basic Questions to Ask When you Read Policy Books/ Analyses/ Evaluations/ Research Reports/ Proposals/ Editorials

1. What's the argument?
 - What is the substance of the argument?
 - What is the logic of the argument?
 - Is the argument logical?
 - Do you detect any logical fallacies? (eg, post hoc explanations, ad hominem, etc.)
2. What are the assumptions?
 - Are they reasonable?
 - Are they made clear?
 - What values underlie the argument?
3. What interests might be involved?
 - Who or what is served beneficially by the conclusions drawn?
 - Does the author/sponsor/publisher have a conflict of interest, that is, have any reason to benefit from the conclusions of the work?
4. What are the concepts?
5. How are they measured?
 - How closely does the measurement match the concepts?
 - Are multiple indicators used to measure each of the concepts?
6. What's the evidence?
 - This consists of systematically gathered facts or data that are shown to measure a concept that in turn are combined with an articulation of why this constitutes evidence.
 - How adequate is the evidence to support the argument?
 - Are the data systematically gathered? Are they verifiable?
 - Is the translation of data into evidence tightly drawn?
 - Is the interpretation of the evidence logical?
 - Does the evidence match the argument point-for-point?
7. Is causality asserted?
 - Is the asserted relationship between cause and effect airtight?
 - Is causation being assumed when only correlation is demonstrated?
 - How much of the effect can be accounted for by the presumed cause?
 - Have all of the relevant factors been taken into account?
 - Could some other factor other than the ones identified be causing the result?
 - Are there intervening variables?
8. Are you convinced?

Are you satisfied with the argument, evidence, and conclusions?
How well does this argument comport with other things you know?
In what ways does the argument fit with or contradict other professional policy work?

9. Finally, so what? Is this matter one of importance? Why?