

PUBP501: Policy and Organizational Analysis

Spring 2004

ver. 1/12/2004

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office hours: Th 3:00 PM - 4:00PM or by appointment.

course credit: 3

1st Day: *August 28*

room: Arlington (Old Building) 331

meeting time: Tuesday 4:30 - 7:10PM

course website: <http://itm30.itmassociates.com/pubp501-auerswald> [accessible by 1/12/04]

Note: So that we will all start the semester with a common understanding of some analytic and research fundamentals, I have scheduled two *optional* session on research fundamentals:

Tuesday 1/13, 5:40-7:10PM, room 245 (Arlington): Math, statistics, and economics review. This review will cover basic mathematical notation, probability theory, and economic terminology. I will also spend a few minutes on Excel basics. The material covered is not part of the course itself, but rather is intended as a refresher of tools and concepts that I expect you have covered elsewhere. If you are unable to attend this optional session, I will make arrangements to meet with you during office hours in advance of the class meeting on 1/27 to review the material covered.

Tuesday 1/20, 4:30-7:10, room 331 (Arlington) [regular course time and place]: Research methods. Professor Matthys van Schaik will provide an overview of library and online research methods. Students in other classes have found Professor van Schaik's tips and insights on the research process to be very valuable. I strongly encourage you to attend.

Course Description

Objective

This course is about organizing, analyzing, and using information. The objective of the course is to improve your skills as an analyst by advancing your understanding of, and appreciation for, the research process in a societal context. The course will emphasize information acquisition, application of data analysis techniques, and presentation, including writing for professional and lay audiences. The course is a precursor to, not a substitute for, advanced statistics and advanced research course(s).

Overview

Public policy professionals routinely must assess the accuracy, balance, and completeness of information in many forms—from raw data to television commentary, research reports, and academic journal articles. Such assessments are less about finding right answers than they are about understanding why people raise particular questions to begin with. Skilled analysts are aware of the diverse sources of information that may be pertinent in a given context, and can differentiate inquiry from advocacy. After careful study they are able to describe complex phenomena in an accessible manner.

We will approach policy and organizational analysis as five stage process of learning and *adaptation*:

Assessment—informing oneself about the operative system of institutions and incentives, locating existing data and assessing its reliability and validity;

Definition—establishing domains of inquiry and formulating hypotheses;

Analysis—employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data analysis, testing hypotheses;

Presentation—developing logically coherent arguments, writing for professional and lay audiences, presenting information in a visually accessible manner;

Transformation—seeking feedback, learning from comments, starting over.

Your own approach to this process is our point of departure. Early in the course you will be asked to reflect upon both the manner in which you assess the value of information and analysis produced by others, and (importantly) how you create and judge your own analytic work. During the semester you will

complete a series of assignments using spreadsheets and other applications software,
construct and deliver presentations, and
provide written analyses of technical research.

To provide coherence and continuity in the course, we will focus on analysis relevant to public policies at the federal level in two broad areas:

public health (disease treatment and prevention, transportation and worker safety, environmental risks); and

the “war against terrorism” (both domestic and international dimensions).

Expectations

Course requirements include regular attendance and participation in class (not graded, but noticed), completion of four assignments (best three worth **50** percent of grade), a mid-term examination (**20** percent), and a 2.5 hour, cumulative final examination (**30** percent).

Assignments are an essential part of this course. The professor will organize the class into study teams of 3-4 individuals. However, you must independently submit responses to assignments. Students are expected to devote no less than 1.5 hours to the efforts of the study team per assignment—either in person (preferable), or “virtually.” A due date for each assignment will be

specified when the assignment is distributed. Late assignments lose 50% of possible points. The professor will not accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late.

Communications

The course website will be

<http://itm30.itmassociates.com/pubp501-auerswald>

Your initial login and password will be

login: Firstname Lastname (e.g for me: Philip Auerswald)

password: pubp501

Please access the course website during the week of 1/12-1/16. From the website you will be able to link to the class survey. You will also be able to enter default email and telephone contact information.

If your GMU email is not yet active, please enter a current, valid email address into your profile on the course website.

If you have any difficulty accessing the course website or updating your contact information, please either send an email to me (auerswald@gmu.edu) or call me (cell: 571 594-1102).

The course website is the primary means of communication for this course outside of the classroom. If you cannot access the site, or if your contact information is not valid, you will miss important course information.

Materials

The *required* textbook for the course is

Dipak Gupta. *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts, Tools and Techniques*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2001.

The following *optional* textbook will also be available in Arlington:

Fred Pyrczak. *Success at Statistics: A Worktext with Humor* (2nd edition). Pyrczak Publishing. [ISBN: 1-884585-40-X]
(for those of you seeking practice with introductory statistics)

Those not already familiar with Excel may be interested in acquiring a guide to Excel.

Various additional *required* readings and cases will be available either in a course reading packet, from the library (via online resources), or directly from the course website in PDF format. If you have not done so already, please familiarize yourself with the library's online resources, and make sure that you have access to Adobe Acrobat Reader.

A partial list of the additional required readings follows below.

Outline

Optional (but recommended) sessions

January 13, 5:30-7:00PM, room 245 (Arlington): Math, statistics, and economics review.

January 20, 4:30-7:10, room 331 (Arlington) [regular course place and time]: Overview of research methods (Professor Matthys van Schaik)

I. The Context for Policy Analysis

1. January 27: What is policy analysis?

readings (in class): Kennan (1946), Qutb (1964), Tengs et al. (1995)
assignment #1 distributed

2. February 3: Organizations—Authority, networks, and communication

G: Chapter 2

readings: the report of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (2003) [excerpts], Rochlin, LaPorte et al. (1987)

3. February 10: Markets—Individual choices, aggregate outcomes

G: Chapter 1

II. The Process of Policy Analysis

4. February 17: Assessment—Salience, credibility, and legitimacy; Identifying constituencies / quantitative and qualitative data; discussion of assignment 1

G: Chapter 3, 7 and 8

focus topic: research on global climate change

reading: Cash et al. (2002)

assignment #1 due; assignment #2 distributed

5. February 24: Definition—Politics, framing and research design; finding patterns in data

G: Chapters 4 and 5

reading: Bateson (1972); BBC data on climate change

in class activity: coin toss.

6. March 2: Analysis—Basic statistics; discussion of results from 2nd class survey

G: Chapter 6 (optional: Chapters 10-12)

March 9: NO CLASS.

7. March 16: Analysis—Strategy, decisions, and expectations

G: Chapter 6 (optional: Chapters 10-12)

8. March 23: Analysis—Understanding trends and forecasting; discussion of assignment #2

G: Chapters 10 and 13

assignment #2 due at midnight, the night before class; assignment #3 distributed

9. March 30: MID-TERM EXAM

10. April 6: Analysis—costs and benefits
G: Chapter 14

11. April 13: Analysis—costs and benefits (continued); discussion of assignment 3
rough draft of assignment #2 due at midnight, the night before class

12. April 20: Presentations—by groups

13. April 27: Review of the course

May 4: NO CLASS (Reading Period)
final draft of assignment #3 due

May 11: Final exam (in class)

Readings¹

January 29

Kennan, George (1946). "Long Telegram"

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm>

Qutb, Sayyid (1964). *Milestones*:

http://www.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/milestones/inde_2.asp

Tengs, Tammy O., Miriam E. Adams, Joseph S. Pliskin, Dana Gelb Safran, Joanna E. Siegel, Milton C. Weinstein, and John D. Graham, 1995. "Five Hundred Life-Saving Interventions and Their Cost-Effectiveness." *Risk Analysis* 15:3, pp. 369-390. [reading packet]

Testimony of Professor Lisa Heinzerling re. the nomination of John D. Graham:

http://www.citizen.org/congress/regulations/graham/heinzerling_testimony.html

White House, National Energy Plan [excerpt]

Overview

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/energy/>

February 3

The report of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) [excerpts]:

board statement, executive summary, and report synopsis (pp. 6-17) and

Part II, "Why the accident occurred" (pp. 99-202);

<http://www.caib.us/news/report/default.html>

The CAIB board charter

http://www.caib.us/board_charter/default.htm

Rochlin, Gene I., Todd R. La Porte, and Karlene H. Roberts. "The Self-Designing High-Reliability Organization: Aircraft Carrier Flight Operations at Sea." *Naval War College Review* 40, no. 4 (Autumn)

February 17

Cash, David, William Clark, Frank Alcock, Nancy Dickson, Noelle Eckley, and Jill Jäger. 2002. *Salience, Credibility, Legitimacy and Boundaries: Linking Research, Assessment and Decision Making*. *John F. Kennedy School of Government Faculty Research Working Paper* RWP02-046.

¹ Additional readings to be added.

John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/BCSIA/sust.nsf/pubs/pub69

February 24

Gregory Bateson, 1972. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. New York: E.P. Dutton. [excepts]

(Chapter 2) [Reading packet]

BBC Online “Climate Change: Evidence”

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/sci_tech/2000/climate_change/evidence/warmer.stm