

PADP 8680: Advanced Policy Analysis
Assignment notes for Working Draft of Research Report
(8-10 pages, double-spaced; no more than 12 pages max)
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I expect that by this point in the semester you have constructed a solid working draft/outline of your policy analysis project with the caveat that some specifics may still be evolving as we cover and discuss policy analysis topics in class. What follows is a suggested format for the first draft of your project. While not a fixed outline, the following elements need to be present in some fashion and addressed as effectively as you can, taking into account in-class discussions and the feedback you have received from me so far. In this initial draft I acknowledge you will not be able to address all aspects completely, so do the best you can to describe your thinking to date.

1. Introduction that announces the document's purpose and previews its contents.
2. Conceptualization of the policy problem, citing relevant research and literature where appropriate *about the policy problem*. In other words, at this point you're framing the policy problem within its broader policy domain (health, environment, education, etc.) but not yet introducing the policy tool on which your project focuses.
3. Introduction, description, and analysis of the policy tool/instrument. In this section I'll be looking for:
 - The basic mechanics of the policy tool – how does it induce a particular kind of behavior? What is the general logic through which the policy tool remedies a policy problem?
 - What are the general steps through which this policy tool is implemented?
 - How is the effectiveness of this policy tool typically evaluated?
 - In a general sense, where does this policy tool fall along the equity-efficiency spectrum? In other words, is it considered relatively equitable but not necessary very efficient, vice versa, or somewhere in between?
4. Analysis of the tool in your particular policy domain of interest. Here I would like to see such topics as:
 - When did this policy tool first appear in this policy domain? What factors (economic, political, theoretical) led to its emergence?
 - How has this policy tool's effectiveness been evaluated within the policy domain? (Note that this question is distinct from a question of the tool's effectiveness in and of itself.)
 - To what extent is the tool's effectiveness agreed upon by researchers, experts, and policymakers in your chosen policy domain? In other words, along a spectrum of broad consensus to a raging debate about if it "works," where does this policy tool fall?

- What kind of political rhetoric surrounds the policy tool in this domain? (Note that this question seeks to capture Stone's (2011) take on the politics of policy analysis rather than a partisan perspective on the policy tool.)
5. Conclude with a well-argued summary of what the future holds for this policy tool in your particular policy domain of interest. Is evidence accumulating to call into question the tool's effectiveness? Are political trends suggesting this tool's widespread adoption? Focus on crafting an argument that draws from what you have presented in the report i.e. up to this point your report has been largely objective but here you can apply a critical lens to the topic as you look to the future.

---- Here is where you're limited to no more than 12 pages (but fewer pages are preferred) ----

6. References that include any academic literature, policy reports, popular press articles, or other citations that are relevant to your analysis. All references should be formatted in a uniform style (e.g. APA, Chicago).
7. Appendices only if needed.

As you complete your draft, keep in mind that you do not need to have all the details of your report fully worked out. However, you should push yourself to make the details about the policy tool and its application in your policy domain of interest as concrete as possible so we can identify any potential pitfalls and how you might resolve them. Be especially attentive to part #4 of the report; this analysis of the tool's history, effectiveness, and its politics will require you to think deeply about the less tangible aspects of the policy tool you're researching.