

Advanced Policy Analysis

[Course Home](#) [Topics](#) [Guidelines](#) [Assignments](#) [Readings](#) [Project](#) [Calendar](#) [Discussion](#) [@eLearning](#)

PADP 8680, Dr. Tyler Scott

Thursday 3:30 to 6:15pm, Baldwin 206

Office Hours: Monday 9am-12pm or by appointment

Course list-serv: PADP8680-S2016@listserv.uga.edu

Overview

This course is an elective course that builds upon foundational MPA core courses such as Policy Analysis and Microeconomics in Public Policy. Whereas those courses largely approach public policy analysis from a welfare economic perspective (e.g., public vs. private goods, externalities, and market failure), this course takes a more detailed and holistic view of the art and science of political decision making. Specifically, this course examines policy design and instrumentation, brings equity and social justice considerations to bear alongside efficiency concerns, and applies a critical lens to applied analyses and evaluations.

Objectives

The course has three objectives:

- I. Develop analytical skills required to consume technical policy analysis and program evaluation studies/reports.
- II. Cultivate a critical eye to what's being measured in a policy analysis or program evaluation study/report and speak to the study/report's internal, external, and construct validity.
- III. Foster emerging expertise on a given policy tool and/or a specific domain of public policy.

Topics

Wk	Goal(s)	Topic	Due (before class)
1	I, II, III	What is policy analysis?	
2	I, II, III	Tools, goals, and evidence	
3	I, II, III	Policy, management, and implementation	1. Initial Idea Sketch
4	II	Goals: Efficiency	
5	II	Goals: Equity and Welfare	
6	I, III	Policy Tools/Instruments: Carrots, Sticks, and Sermons	
7	III	Direct Tools of Government Action	In-class presentations on policy tools
8	III	Indirect Tools of Government Action	In-class presentations on policy tools
9	III	Behavioral Interventions	
10	III	Tools in Action	Working draft of final project
11	II, III	Equity: Race and ethnicity	

12	II, III	Equity: Gender	Peer review final project
13	III	Evidence in Action	
14		Final Presentations	In-class presentations on evidence used in policy analysis
Finals Week			Final project

[Back to top of page](#)

Guidelines

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. That said, this course is designed with an assumption that you have a basic background in policy analysis, microeconomic foundations, and descriptive and inferential statistics and research methods more generally. I will also assume that you have the capacity to read and interpret basic descriptive and inferential statistics (including reading/interpreting professional and academic studies on public policy).

Office Hours

While I am happy to hold weekly office hours, I fully acknowledge that other classes, work schedules, childcare constraints, etc., can make it difficult to get to Baldwin Hall within a set 90 minute window. For this reason I am happy to talk on the phone with you if that is more convenient. Or, if you need to coordinate a conversation with me and your group members, I am happy to meet with you virtually using Google Meetup, Skype, or similar technology. If you have a topic you would like to bounce around or you seek a detailed amount of feedback about something related to class, my only request is that you consider a medium other than email since writing out long emails (and replies) is often less efficient than a conversation.

Attendance

Class preparation and participation are very important for success in this course. In fact, participation constitutes almost a third (30%) of your grade. Please arrive on time to class and attend each class from beginning to end. An absence is excused if you email me in advance of the class meeting and only in the case of illness, documented emergencies, and unavoidable conflict due to university obligations. Absences reported after missing class are considered unexcused unless valid documentation is provided. I expect students who are unable to attend class to obtain class materials and notes from classmates. Missing class is not an excuse for turning in late assignments.

Participation

As mentioned above, class preparation and participation are very important for success in this class. I ask that you attend class, arrive on time, complete assigned readings, and to contribute to class activities through active participation and involvement. Everyone benefits tremendously when there is active participation in class. Class discussions are not an empty exercise to gain points but an effort to teach each other how to engage in respectful and high-level discussions. Come to class with enthusiasm and ready to engage me, your classmates, the material, and your abilities! As you will see, I've designed participation credit for this course in a way that rewards multiple types of participation, not just speaking up in class.

To facilitate discussion in class and in small groups, I ask that you pose on at least *five* occasions during the semester two or three discussion questions to the class about the week's required reading material. To receive participation credit for your question(s), you will need to post the question(s) pertaining to that week's material by noon (12:00 PM) on the day of class to the course's [online discussion board](#). The question(s) you pose about the week's required readings need not be overly complicated. At the same time, please go beyond a question that could be answered with a 'yes/no' (e.g. 'Do you agree with Merten's point about...?' does not provide sufficient material to stimulate discussion). The point of generating questions like this is to stimulate your own critical thinking about the material and provide your classmates with insight into your takeaways related to the week's required readings. When thinking about your question, you are welcome to connect your question about the week's materials to material covered in previous weeks. The [class discussion board](#) also allows you to post a reply to someone's questions. That is, if you have a question that builds on or extends another classmate's question, you are welcome to offer that in place of your own stand-alone question.

Academic Integrity

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, 'A Culture of Honesty,' and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in 'A Culture of Honesty' found at: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Special Accommodations

If you have a learning disability, sensory or physical disability or if English is not your first language and you need special assistance in lecture, reading assignments, or written assignments, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Students with chronic conditions (illness, disability, extenuating personal or family circumstances) that may require special accommodations must notify me in writing by February 2nd. In the case of chronic illness, you must provide a doctor's note written on letterhead with the doctor's name, signature and telephone number. Excuses for chronic conditions will not be granted if documentation is not provided before the February 2nd. The physician must be located in the United States, preferably locally.

Students needing accommodations because of disability will need to register with UGA's Disability Resource Center (DRC) and complete the appropriate forms issued by DRC before accommodations can be provided. The DRC office at the University of Georgia is located at 114 Clark Howell Hall, or the DRC can be reached by phone at (706) 542-8719. For more information, please see: <https://drc.uga.edu/>

Working in Teams

By this point in your graduate school experience you are likely well acquainted with group work and team projects.

I invite you to divide up work however you see fit over the course of the quarter. For consistency's sake, however, please delegate one team member as the lead who will be responsible for submitting all your team assignments.

You are welcome to approach me at any point in the quarter if you're struggling with a teammate, but I also encourage you to remedy the situation on your own to the best of your ability. Note that at the end of the quarter, I will ask you to assess your contribution to the team project and the contribution of your teammates. A blaring lack of contribution may affect a team member's final project grade negatively.

Email

You are welcome to email me whenever you have a question or need clarification about something related to class. Please begin the subject line with "PADP 8680" so that I can clearly see the email among our other correspondence. Please also allow sufficient time (12-24 hours) for a response. Shane and I will do our best to reply as soon as possible but oftentimes we may be traveling, in day-long meetings, or engaged in other activities that take us away from email. If you are emailing about a group project, please follow the general convention of also copying in your teammates so as to avoid redundant correspondence. In certain cases, you may pose a good question from which everyone in the class may benefit hearing the answer; in those circumstances I may copy in the class email list when I reply.

Netiquette

Students are expected to abide by professional standards in all written and spoken communications, including email, web-based and other electronic communications. I will not respond to emails without a subject line or appropriate salutation. For a guide to respectful electronic communications, please see: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Acknowledgements

In designing this course I looked closely at 1) how other faculty members teach policy analysis at UGA and 2) analysis and evaluation courses at the nation's other top schools of public affairs and public policy. To that end I gratefully acknowledge that some of the ideas, readings, and cases I use in this course have been borrowed from policy analysis courses such as those at the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Policy and Governance and Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs.

[Back to top of page](#)

Assignments

This course aims to provide advanced training in both the theory, practice, and consumption of critical policy analysis. To that end, coursework consists almost solely of producing deliverables just as one might when working as an analyst or manager at a public, private, or non-profit organization. Accordingly, I expect your assignments to be well organized, thoughtful, clearly written, and free of typos and errors. Please do not turn in any assignment that has not first been edited for grammar and typos both by you and by another individual (a friend, a classmate, your partner, etc.) When I read and grade your assignments I am evaluating your ability to critically analyze a policy issue; typos, poor sentence structure, and grammatical errors distract me from what is important.

As the quarter progresses, I will distribute detailed guidance regarding each stage of the project (e.g., idea sketch, working draft, etc.).

A few notes regarding deliverables:

- All assignments are due to the [course @eLearning page](#) before class on the designated week

- Files must be clearly labelled using the following format: 'Firstinitial.Lastname.PADP8680.Assignment#'. Assignments that do not follow this convention will not be accepted.
- All written work must be double spaced, with 1-inch margins.
- All assignments must be submitted in .pdf format. Assignments not submitted as a .pdf file will be returned for revision and will be marked late.
- Memos without line numbers will be returned for revision and will be marked late.
- All group work must have a title page that includes the names of all group members (this page does not count towards page limit).

Overview of Assignments

- **1. Initial Idea Sketch:** For this assignment you will briefly and succinctly describe the research project you wish to undertake as part of the course, from one of the following three options. For any option, you will choose a hypothetical audience for this report (e.g. a lawmaker, agency head, executive director of an advocacy organization) so that your analytic report can also be tailored to the specific practical and political implications of the policy tool and its use.
- **Policy Tool DebrieFs:** In an effort to simultaneously cover as much material as possible during the quarter but also learn about material that is of interest to you, on two occasions you will have the opportunity to pair up with a classmate to choose a policy tool that is particular interest to you and become an expert on that tool. For this assignment, you will pick a topic of interest, read the relevant material, and briefly present in class the material you covered. Think of this not as a formal in-class presentation but rather, imagine you are on a committee that divides into ad-hoc subcommittees to research particular topics of interest. In other words, PowerPoint presentations are neither required nor appropriate for these policy de-briefs; instead, I expect you to do the readings, think about them critically, discuss them as a group beforehand to conclude on salient points, and come to class ready to present for 10-15 minutes on the topic you chose.
- **Final Project:** The main assignment for this course is a deep analysis of a particular policy tool in a specific policy domain. Policy tools and instruments, as we will discuss throughout the quarter, are the means by which government attempts to solve policy problems. For this assignment, you will choose a particular policy tool and write a detailed research report about what is known regarding the policy tool's development, implementation, and outcomes in a given area of public policy (social policy, environmental policy, economic policy, etc.). You will choose a hypothetical audience for this report (e.g. a lawmaker, agency head, executive director of an advocacy organization) so that your analytic report can also be tailored to the specific practical and political implications of the policy tool and its use.

You will choose a specific area of public policy because the practicalities and politics of a policy tool vary widely across policy domains. The feasibility, efficiency, and perceived fairness of a voucher in housing policy is distinct from, for example, the use of a voucher in K-12 education policy. While your analysis will inevitably draw from other lessons learned in other areas of public policy, I expect you to develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of your chosen policy tool specific to your policy domain of choice. An outline for this main assignment and the accompanying rubric I will use to grade these assignments will be distributed in class under separate cover.

- **Peer Review:** Based on my belief that both you and a classmate will benefit from reading each other's work-in-progress, I ask that you engage in a peer review of all materials that will coincide with the submission of the actual assignment. At the first class we will create a process to facilitate peer editing throughout the quarter. Your ability to read and critique someone else's writing, in addition to offering that individual constructive feedback, is a valuable skill.
- **Final Presentation:** 10-15 minute presentation of your policy report, designed in accordance with your intended audience.

Due Dates

Assignment	Pages	Individual/Group	Due
1. Initial Idea Sketch	2-3 pages	Individual	Wk 3
2. Policy Tool Debrief I	10-15 minutes	Group	Wk 7
3. Policy Tool Debrief II	10-15 minutes	Group	Wk 8
4. Working Draft: Policy Tool Report	15-20 pages	Group	Wk 10
5. Peer Review: Policy Report	2-4 pages	Individual	Wk 12
6. Project Presentation	10-15 minutes	Group	Wk 13
7. Final Policy Tool Report	15-20 pages		Finals Wk Class Period

Readings

There is only one required text for this course, which you can [buy on Amazon](#). You are welcome to buy an older edition, but I'd recommend buying the most recent 3rd edition as it has been updated in light of 9/11 and other recent key events of the last 15 years.

- Stone, Deborah. *Policy Paradox: The art of political decision making*. W. W. Norton & Company; Third Edition edition. 2011.

With the exception of *Policy Paradox: The art of political decision making*, all required readings are available from the library, [course website \(password protected\)](#), or Google Scholar. Please note that I have purposely assigned only 2-4 readings per week, with the strong expectation that this will allow you to read each piece completely and fully engage with the readings. While this course is not designed with tests or quizzes, if it becomes apparent that students are not doing the reading I reserve the right to give in-class quizzes on the material.

Optional Texts

While not required, you may wish to purchase one or more of these books for easy reference and future use:

- Salamon, Lester M., ed. *The tools of government: A guide to the new governance*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Haskins, Ron, and Greg Margolis. *Show Me the Evidence: Obama's Fight for Rigor and Results in Social Policy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2014.
- Gueron, Judith M., and Howard Rolston. *Fighting for reliable evidence*. Russell Sage Foundation, 2013.
- Bemelmans-Videc, M. L., Rist, R. C., & Vedung, E. O. (Eds.). (1998/2010). *Carrots, sticks, and sermons: Policy instruments and their evaluation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Wheelan, Charles. *Introduction to Public Policy*, WW Norton & Company, 2011.

Reading Schedule

Wk	Topic	Readings
1	What is policy analysis?	Weimer and Vining 2011 Ch. 2 Stone Ch. 1
2	Tools, goals, and evidence	Salamon 2002 Ch1 Gueron and Rolston 2013 Ch1
3	Policy, management, and implementation	Gueron and Rolston 2013 Ch4 Gueron and Rolston 2013 Ch6 Bemelmans-Videc et al. Ch. 1
4	Goals: Efficiency	Stone Ch. 3 Haskens and Margolis Ch. 1
5	Goals: Equity and Welfare	Stone Ch. 2 Stone Ch. 4
6	Policy Tools/Instruments: Carrots, Sticks, and Sermons	Schneider and Ingram 1990 Bemelmans-Videc et al. Ch. 5 Skim Bemelmans-Videc et al. Ch. 2, 3, and 4
7	Direct Tools of Government Action	Pick one tool (Grants, Loans, Taxes and Permits, Insurance, Tax Expenditures, Economic Regulation, Tort Liability, Gov. Corporations, Vouchers, Public Information, Social Regulation, Contracting) and corresponding chapter from Stone Part IV
8	Indirect Tools of Government Action	Pick one tool (Grants, Loans, Taxes and Permits, Insurance, Tax Expenditures, Economic Regulation, Tort Liability, Gov. Corporations, Vouchers, Public Information, Social Regulation, Contracting) and corresponding chapter from Stone Part IV
9	Behavioral Interventions	Chetty 2015 Congdon et al. 2011 Ch2 Pick one chapter from Congdon et al. 2011 Chapters 4-7
10	Tools in Action	Kroetz et al. 2015 (see also extended version) Kousky and Shabman 2015 Gillingham and Palmer 2013
11	Equity: Race and ethnicity	Ingram and Schneider 2005

	TBD by class
12	Equity: Gender TBD by class
13	Evidence in Action TBD by class
14	Final Presentations

[Back to top of page](#)

Grading

Assignment Weights

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Deliverables	Percentage
Participation	30
Initial report sketch	5
Working report draft	5
Peer review of policy report	10
In-class policy tool debrief (2x)	7.5 (2x)
Final report (paper and presentation)	35

Letter Grades

Grades are constructed to reflect [posted university grading standards](#) which are summarized below. Grades will be based on how many points you earn according to the following

- A = 93-100 | A- = 90-92 points
- B+ = 87-89 | B = 83-86 | B- = 80-82 points
- C+ = 77-79 | C = 73-76 | C- = 70-72 points
- D = 60-69 points
- F = < 60 points

[Back to top of page](#)

Stay Connected



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