Course Syllabus: PUAD 503 Policy Analysis

Professor:
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-Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2pm, Wednesday 1-2pm, Thursday 3-4pm (if remote, by appointment)

Communication with Professor:
The professor can be reached via email from 8am-5pm (M-F) for course inquiries. Please allow for up to 24 hours for a response. Unless an emergency, student email inquiries sent over the weekend, will be addressed on Mondays.

Course Description:
This course will introduce you to the theory and practice of policy analysis. Working as a policy analyst, administrator, or manager means making or helping to make decisions in the public’s interest and doing so within a democratic setting. Making these decisions is not just something to be done on the fly and in an ad hoc manner. Public decisions are made in a complex and contentious environment featuring political partisanship, competing interests, numerous stakeholders, ambiguity, chaos, limited and often inaccurate information, and distrust. Accordingly, the class is theoretical but mainly practical as you are introduced to some of the key tools in the policy analyst’s toolbox. We will use examples from various contemporary policy controversies to illustrate our major theoretical points and the utilization of policy analysis tools. This course is unique, yet complimentary to PUAD 531 Introduction to Public Policy. PUAD 531 focuses on the policy process and introduces students to some of the tools of policy analysis. Our course will focus on policy evaluation by covering many different tools providing students with practice, and ultimately expertise in policy analysis.

Course Learning Objectives:
1. Apply the theory of policy analysis to practice in real policy environments.
2. Understand the major concepts or schools of thought driving policy analysis.
3. Develop an understanding of the policy making process and how policy analysis fits into that process.
4. Master the tools of policy analysis including problem definition and analysis, developing and accessing policy alternatives, assembling evidence, the cost-benefit analysis, the stakeholder analysis, and communicating evidence to decision makers in a recommendation.
5. Understand the role of cultural awareness in the practice of policy analysis. More specifically, learn how ethics and gender are intrinsically connected to work in the field.
6. Develop an ability to conduct policy analysis effectively in a diverse team setting.
7. Demonstrate graduate level writing, public speaking, critical thinking, research, and analytical skills.

In exploring these, the course will introduce and begin to develop core national (NASPAA) MPA competencies to participate in and contribute to the Public Policy Process.

Course Materials:

Course Assignments:

Readings (Preparation):
I have provided you with course reading material that I believe will enhance your understanding of the field of policy analysis and provide you with real experience dealing with the challenges of practicing policy analysis. I expect you to complete ALL of the reading each week. It will be impossible to complete the assignments without completing the reading and it will be easy to tell who has completed the reading and who has not given the nature of the assignments. I suggest starting early to give yourself enough time.

Skills Assessments:
There are six skill exercises: (1) a problem analysis (issue paper) (2) development and assessment of policy alternatives, (3) a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) (4) a stakeholder analysis (5) a policy recommendation and (6) a research plan that identifies data sources and outlines steps for further analysis of a selected policy issue. You will find that all of these skills will promote learning and prepare you for work in the public/nonprofit sector doing policy analysis. Each of these assignments should be two pages long and follow the guidelines for writing assignments below. More specific directions for each assignment can be found on Moodle (Weeks 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14).

Team Exercises:
You will be required to analyze and write about four complex policy cases. These assignments will be completed as a team in class. On the days we do these exercises, you will come to class having read the assigned case. Your team will then have approximately one hour to write up a one-page policy memo that implements the policy analysis skill learned from the reading for that day. Each case will implement one skill. These skills include (1) problem definition, (2) devising policy alternatives, (3) assembling evidence, and (4) incorporating ethics and gender in complex policy contexts. The cases and subsequent assignment directions are provided on Moodle (Weeks 3, 5, 12, 15).

Student Presentations:
For this assignment, you will act as if you are a policy analyst for a state or local agency. You will present your research plan to us (a group of policy makers) detailing your plan and the need to study the policy issue you selected. Your five minute presentation should utilize some sort of
artifact (i.e. powerpoint presentation or handout). Presentations will be completed the last day of class. Please see Moodle (Week 16) for more specific expectations regarding this assignment.

**Discussion Leader:**
You will each lead a 25-30 minute discussion on one of the assigned readings. I will make these assignments on the first day of class. Essentially, you will carefully read your assigned reading and come ready to engage the class in a discussion of the main concepts in the reading and how they can be applied in the work of policy analysis. You are required to produce some type of handout that explains and clarifies certain aspects of the reading and includes discussion questions and/or activities that promote a deeper understanding of the topic. As I assess your performance, I will look for the following items:

1. Discussion leader is prepared with questions in the form of a handout for everyone in the class. Questions sent to instructor prior to class.
2. Questions promote thoughtful and engaging discussion among participants. Discussion leader demonstrates command of the reading.
3. The discussion stays on topic focused on the readings at hand. Discussion leader makes effective use of discussion time.
4. Discussion leader makes an effort to deepen the discussion by asking follow-up questions, providing new insights, and attempting to incorporate nonparticipating students.

I will have all assignments assessed with feedback within 10 business days of the day they were due (not the day you submitted it). If you ever have a question or concern about feedback you received on an assignment, please do not hesitate to contact me. I welcome the prospect of maintaining an open dialog with you throughout the semester.

**Course Grading Contract:**
This course uses a form of grading called contract grading. There are no points or letter grades in this course, aside from the final letter grade you earn at the end. The premise of contract grading is that if you do the work required to earn a B, you will see enormous gains in your learning. Traditional grading systems encourage you to work for “points,” as if learning were a game whose goal was to get a certain grade. Contract grading provides you with reassurance that if you complete all of the assigned work, you will earn at least a B (which is all you need to be in good standing in our department). This can free you up to focus on your learning, not your grade. To put this system of grading in context, consider how your performance is evaluated in your own workplace. In most workplaces, you generally do not receive feedback in the form of a score on individual tasks, but instead are given qualitative feedback on tasks with a possible numerical value attached in a comprehensive review.

During the semester I will not assign grades or scores to individual assignments; instead I will provide written or verbal feedback on the assignments that you turn in. In my feedback I will
identify the strong aspects of the assignment, point out information or concepts that were missing from your assignment, and/or suggest additional work (thinking, writing, reading, etc.) that you need to do in order to improve your understanding of the topic. Ideally this feedback will help you deepen your understanding of the material and concepts. See below for descriptions of the grading criteria.

Earning a C (Not meeting expectations)
You will earn a C in this class if you miss any assignment, submit assignments late, lack adequate participation on the class discussions, submit writing that is not college level work, or fail to adequately follow the assignment directions in some way. These examples are considered “not meeting expectations”. If you submit an assignment that is not meeting expectations, I will afford you one opportunity to make revisions until the assignment meets expectations. You also risk earning a C if you are unable to keep up with the course materials and complete them in their entirety.

To Earn a B (Meeting expectations)
You will earn a B in the class if you complete all of the work in the class (including the reading) on time and with sincere effort. This means staying current with the reading each week, actively participating in each class discussion, submitting all assignments on time, and actively participating in your assigned team and during the final presentation meetings. To earn a B, I expect your writing to reflect college level work including the use of outside sources as support, the proper citation of those sources, and no spelling or grammatical errors. I will let you know that your work is at this level by telling you that your submission “meets expectations” in the assignment feedback. The average final grade for the class will be a B.

To Earn an A (Exceeding expectations)
You will earn an A in the class if you do all of what is required for a B and show excellence in your work. Some features I look for in A work include:

- Strong critical thinking, including the ability to understand and respond to other views
- Writing that shows critical reading and careful rereading
- Ideas that are uniquely your own, not just repeated from class discussions
- Taking risks in your writing (trying a new technique or a more challenging approach)
- Clear sentences, careful proofreading, and well-integrated quotes

In class discussions, I’ll look for evidence that you’re stretching beyond your usual ways of participating. If participating is hard for you, try to confront that fear with small steps such as asking questions. If participating is easy for you, try to hold back more and listen to others.

Mid Semester Check-In
Around Week 6 of the semester, I’ll ask you to complete a written self-assessment. In this evaluation, you’ll tell me how you are doing in the class in terms of your effort, completion of the course materials, and overall participation. You are also welcome to share any challenges you’re experiencing in the class and how you plan to overcome them. You will then be required
to meet with me in my office to discuss your evaluation and how you can continue to meet the expectations of the course.

Final Check-In
During the last week of the semester, you will complete a final self-assessment that will allow you once again to account for your performance over the second half of the semester. I will contact you after you submit this to let you know if I agree with your assessment of your performance.

**Important Policies and Expectations**

**Time Commitment**
In higher education, the standard for work outside of class is this: for every credit hour taken, you should spend 2-3 hours outside of class per week. That means for a 3-credit course, you should end up spending about 6-9 hours outside of class each week on average.

**Guidelines for Written Work**
All written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions or the professor:

1. All work must be typed, single-spaced, utilize 12 point times new roman font, and have one-inch margins.

2. Citations should follow a proper style guidelines such as, but not limited to, MLA, Chicago, or APA (in-text citations and a reference page are necessary).

3. Assignments are due on the date/time listed in the course schedule; late assignments will not be accepted,

4. All assignments must be turned in electronically via Microsoft Word (not as a PDF). If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made.

5. Written work will be evaluated both in terms of content, following instructions, organization, and writing/grammar.

6. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments (unless working in an approved team) and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.

**Note on Attendance:**
You must attend every class period of the semester. One absence will be allowed for emergencies, illness, etc. (use it wisely) but a second absence will result in a reduction of a whole letter grade. A third absence will result in failure of the class altogether. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late are counted absent and leaving during class (not returning) is also counted as an absence (unless you speak with me beforehand about accommodations). If you are ill, please don’t attend class.
Note on Technology
No “technology problem” excuses will be accepted in this class. That is, you cannot blame your failure to complete an assignment on time on “computer/internet/Moodle issues” (unless it was one that affected the whole class, in which case we will address the issue on a class-wide basis). Make sure to back up your work, perhaps using Microsoft OneDrive on your computers or UMBox/Dropbox.

Note on Late Work
Late assignments are not accepted. Extensions are only provided for two circumstances. (1) If an emergency situation arises and you inform me BEFORE the due date, then I will consider your circumstances and make a decision; (2) If you have a disability AND have sent me an accommodation letter from Disability Services. The best way to prevent the possibility of submitting an assignment late is to plan ahead.

Note on Debate Ethics
Some of the issues we discuss in this class are controversial with multiple, and sometimes divisive points of view. Although you may already have an established opinion on a particular topic, you are encouraged to consider other points of view and the strengths/weaknesses of your own. Additionally, as we discuss controversial topics, you are expected to respect the points of view of your fellow students. Respect is shown in the manner you address other students and the words you use to carry your point across. In an increasingly uncivil political environment in the U.S., civility will be maintained in this class so as to elevate the educational experience of all present.

Note on Academic Honesty
Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. All work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation. For help on avoiding plagiarism, see the following resources from the UM Writing and Public Speaking Center.

Note on Sexual Misconduct
UM prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Prohibited sex discrimination includes incidents of sexual harassment (including sexual violence), dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (collectively “sexual misconduct”). As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. University policy requires that I report all incidents of sexual misconduct that come to my attention. If you encounter sexual misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at (406)243-5710. Additional information about sexual misconduct and available resources can be found on the UM Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action website.
Note on Student Disability Related Needs
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Cultural Leave Policy
UM has a Cultural and Ceremonial Leave Policy: “Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student’s customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student’s attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.”

Land Statement
The University of Montana acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people.

Course Calendar:
Week 1: Introduction to Policy (Jan 12-18)
• Preparation:
  1. Read Meltzer and Schwartz “Introduction”
  2. Read Bardach and Patashnik “Introduction”
• Due:
  1. Beginning of semester questionnaire due Sat 11:59pm

Week 2: What is Policy Analysis? (Jan 19-25)
• Preparation:
  1. Read Meltzer and Schwartz Ch. 1
  2. Read Wildavsky excerpts from 1979
  3. Read Meltsner 1986
  4. Read Ingram and Schneider Ch. 4
• Due:
  1. None

Week 3: Defining the Problem (Jan 26-Feb 1)
• Preparation:
  1. Read Melzer and Schwartz Ch. 2
2. Read Bardach and Patashnik Pages 1-12
3. Read Case: School Shootings and Focus Group Research (for team assignment)

**Due:**
1. Team Exercise: Problem Definition due in class Thurs 6:50pm

**Week 4: Defining the Problem part 2 (Feb 2-8)**

**Preparation:**
1. Read Kraft and Furlong Ch. 5 (On Moodle)

**Due:**
1. Skills Assessment: Problem Analysis due Sat 11:59pm

**Week 5: Devising Policy Alternatives (Feb 9-15)**

**Preparation:**
1. Read Meltzner Ch. 3
2. Read Bardach and Patashnik Pages 12-27
3. Read Case: Vaping Politics and Policy—Up in Smoke (for team assignment)

**Due:**
1. Team Exercise: Devising Policy Alternatives due in class Thurs 6:50pm

**Week 6: Assessing Policy Alternatives (Feb 16-22)**

**Preparation:**
1. Read Meltzner Ch. 4
2. Read Bardach and Patashnik Pages 27-46
3. Read Kraft and Furlong Ch. 6 (On Moodle)

**Due:**
1. Skills Assessment: Devise and Assess Policy Alternatives due Sat 11:59pm

**Week 7: Technical Aspects of Policy Analysis (Feb 23-29)**

**Preparation:**
1. Read Meltzner Ch. 5
2. Read Clemmons and McBeth Ch. 3 (On Moodle)

**Due:**
1. Midterm Self-Assessment due Sat 11:59pm

**Week 8: Projecting Outcomes (Mar 1-7)**

**Preparation:**
1. Read King et al.
2. Read Bardach and Patashnik Pages 46-71

**Due:**
1. Skills Assessment: Cost-Benefit Analysis due Sat 11:59pm
Week 9: Incorporating Stakeholders (Mar 8-14)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Clemmons and McBeth Ch. 1 (On Moodle)
  2. Read Bryson
  3. Read Case: Big Mart: Cheap Goods at What Price? (for next Skills Assessment)
- Due:
  1. None

Week 10: Spring Break (Mar 15-21/ No Class)

Week 11: Making Recommendations (Mar 22-28)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Meltzer and Schwartz Ch. 6
- Due:
  1. Skills Assessment: Stakeholder Analysis due Sat 11:59pm

Week 12: Assembling Evidence (Mar 29-Apr 4)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Bardach and Patashnik Part II and III
  2. Read Case: Playing Politics: Bison, Brucellosis, Business, and Bureaucrats (for team assignment)
- Due:
  1. Team Exercise: Assembling Evidence due in class Thurs 6:50pm

Week 13: Research & Policy Analysis (Apr 5-11)
- Preparation:
  1. Meltzer and Schwartz Ch. 7
  2. Bardach and Patashnik Part IV
- Due:
  1. Skills Assessment: Recommendation due Sat 11:59pm

Week 14: Policy Analysis in Practice (Apr 12-18)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Meltzer and Schwartz Ch. 8-9
- Due:
  1. Skills Assessment: The Research Plan due Sat 11:59pm

Week 15: Ethics & Gender in Policy Analysis (Apr 19-25)
- Preparation:
  1. Read McPhail
  2. Read Case: The Pocatello Prison Siting Story (for team assignment)
- Due:
1. Team Exercise: Incorporating Ethics and Gender due in class Thurs 6:50pm

Week 16: Student Presentations (Apr 26-May 2)

- **Preparation:**
  1. Be ready to give a five minute presentation in class (see directions above)

- **Due:**
  2. Final Self-Assessment due Sat 11:59pm