**Policy Analysis**

**Department of Political Science**

Melanie Bowers, PhD

Office: 401 Cooper St.

Email: melanie.bowers@rutgers.edu

Office Hours: TBD

**OVERVIEW**

 This is an introductory course that provides an overview of policy analysis. The course is designed to be accessible for both majors and non-majors and should provide particular insight for those considering careers in public policy. The course uses an applied approach, covering concepts and analytic tools that are useful in professional environments. The course is structured so that students learn a new concept each week; the first class period of the week will be lecture based and will cover the concept’s theoretical and academic underpinnings. In the second class of the week we will apply this concept to case studies from a variety of policy areas. We will investigate important questions like as how we define problems and who has a say in this definition, how we evaluate the costs and benefits of possible solutions, what happens when policies have unintended consequences, and how we evaluate whether like how the an examination of the relationship between problem definition, policy solutions,

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students should be able to:

1. Identify and articulate the relationship between social problems, proposed solutions and enacted policy and be able to apply this understanding to specific policies.

2. Understand and be able to articulate the difference between intended and unintended consequences and stated and unstated policy goals.

3. Practice and improve professional communication skills, including writing reports and briefs, facilitating groups and completing professional presentations.

4. Practice and improve professional project management skills including effectively and efficiently working in group settings, evaluating places of strength and weakness in individual knowledge and learning, and developing a schedule, planning and carrying out a semester-long project.

5. Practice and improve research skills by completing a semester-long research project .

**DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities are welcome in this class.  If you have a disability or suspect you might have a disability but do not yet have documentation, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services immediately: (856) 225-6442, Armitage Hall, Room 231 (in the Rutgers-Camden Learning Center).  No accommodations may be made without the explicit approval of the Office of Disability Service.  If you already have documentation of a disability, please present it to me within the first week of class so I may work with you to ensure you can properly access and complete the work for this course.

**INCLUSIVITY AND NAMES**

This is an inclusive classroom that is welcoming of all people and perspectives, including those of diverse races, religions, ethnicities, ages, gender identities and sexual orientations. If you go by a name or gender that is different from the one on official Rutgers documents, please let me know so that I can use the proper name and pronouns.

**EXPECTATIONS AND ATTENDANCE**

In this class we will create a learning community where you will develop the foundational skills to be able to complete and analyze research. To do this, attendance and preparation are necessary. As your teacher, I expect you to complete the readings and assignments and show up to class, ready to actively engage in your own learning process. In return, you can expect me to be prepared, present the material enthusiastically, respond to your questions and concerns in a timely fashion, and lead you in a learning experience that will help give you skills and tools that you can apply in both your academic and professional lives.

**Class Attendance is Mandatory.** You may miss no more than three classes without providing documentation of an extenuating circumstance. After the first three absences, you will lose 10% of your participation grade for each unexcused absence. Legitimate reasons for additional absences include severe illness, death, family emergencies, and other issues evaluated at my discretion.

**Tardiness:** You are expected to be in class on time. Being late is disruptive, impedes others’ ability to learn and limits your access to valuable information and class time.

If tardiness becomes a problem I reserve the right to enforce the following tardiness policy: If you are late you will be marked tardy. Every three tardies will convert to an absence and will be subject to the attendance policy. For example, if you are late 6 times it will count as 2 absences (6/3=2).

To reiterate: 1-3 absences-no penalty; 4+ absences: -10% of participation grade for each absence; Tardies: Every 3 tardies = 1 absence

**LATE POLICY**

Except for extenuating circumstances or with prior approval, late work will only be accepted within three days of the established due-date. You will lose 10% of your grade for each day that it is late. For example, if the assignment is due on Monday and you submit it on Tuesday you would lose 10% of your grade, if you submitted it on Wednesday you would lose 20%, and if you submitted it on Thursday you would lose 30%. It would not be accepted on Friday or any day thereafter. All work must be submitted in the manner identified in the syllabus (either paper or in Sakai’s Dropbox). I WILL NOT ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS BY EMAIL.

**GROUP WORK**

This course is designed to provide you with a glimpse into the professional world of policy analysis. Developing effective working relationships is an integral part of a successful professional life so in this class you will complete your assignments with a small group of classmates. Each group will consist of 3-4 students who have similar policy interests. We will establish these groups in the second week of class. You will work with this group to lead class discussion, write your policy report, and prepare your policy presentation. Although you will work in groups, you will be graded and evaluated as individuals so it is imperative that each of you contributes to the group and pulls your own weight. Together with the other members of your group you will create a Group Contract, a document that outlines the expectations you have for one another and identifies each member’s responsibilities. This document will structure your group experience and will be a way to help you hold each other accountable. In addition, it will be a useful tool to help you evaluate yourself and your fellow group members at the end of each project.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

There are 1000 possible points.

1. Pre-Class Survey 50 points (5%)
2. Lead Class Discussion with group 150 points (15%)
3. Policy Analysis (3 parts) 350 points (35%)
4. Quizzes 150 points total, 50 points each (15%)
5. In-Class Participation 250 points (25%)
6. Post-Class Survey 50 points (5%)

**GRADE SCALE**92.5-100 = 4.0; 87.5-92.5 = 3.5; 82.5-87.5 = 3.0; 77.5-82.5 = 2.5; 72.5-77.5: 2.0

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

This class uses materials from a variety of sources that have been compiled into a course pack. The course pack is available at…

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

PLAGARISM AND CHEATING OF ANY KIND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. Blatant plagiarism and cheating will be reported to the Dean of Social Sciences. I don’t want to do this, so don’t cheat. I have software that checks for plagiarism and I will use it if I feel this is becoming a problem.

## According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

* to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
* to use (another's production) without crediting the source
* to commit literary theft
* to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

It is your responsibility to be familiar with Rutgers’ academic honesty statement. This statement is available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1: Introduction to Policy Analysis**

***Monday January 6***

No Reading

**ASSIGNMENT: Pre-Class Survey and Plagiarism Quiz**

***Wednesday January 8***

READING

Kraft, Michael E. and Scott R. Furlong. 2013. "Public Policy and Politics" in *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis and Alternatives*, 4th ed. Washington DC: CQ Press

**Week 2: Problem Definition**

***Monday January 13: How we Tell When There’s A Problem and Why Problems Need Defining***

READING
Irwin, Lewis G.2003. "Defining the Problem" in The Policy Analyst's Handbook: Rational Problem Solving in a Political World. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Stone, Deborah. 2012. "Causes" in *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making, 3rd ed*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

**ASSIGNMENT: Establish Policy Analysis Groups in Class**

***Wednesday January 15: Case Study Immigration and Education***

READING

Reich, Gary and Jay Barth. 2010. Educating Citizens or Defying Federal Authority? A Comparative Study of In-‐State Tuition for Undocumented Students. *Policy Studies Journal* 38(3), 419-‐445.

**Week 3: Problem Definition**

***Monday January 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day***

No Class, No Reading

***Wednesday January 22: Social Construction of Target Populations***

READING

Schneider, Anne and Helen Ingram. 1993. Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy. *The American Political Science Review* 87(2), 334-‐347.

**Week 4: Problem Definition**

***Monday January 27: Who Defines the Problem, What Values Matter?***

READING

Stone, Deborah. 2012. "Security." in *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, 3rd Ed. New York: W.W. Northon & Company. 5

Doyle, Charles. 2002. "The USA Patriot Act: A Sketch." *CRS Report for Congress*. Accessed 11/8/13 at https://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RS21203.pdf.

Friedersdorf, Conor. "A Patriot Act History Lesson: How Warnings Were Mocked in the Senate." *The Atlantic Magazine*, July 9,2013

.

**ASSIGNMENT: Submit Group Contract and Action Plan**

***Wednesday January 29: Library Day***

No Reading

**ASSIGNMENT: Make sure to meet with the instructor to discuss your group contract and action plan during this week.**

**Week 5: Policy Alternatives**

***Monday February 3: What are Policy Alternatives and where do they Come from?***

READING

Irwin, Lewis G.2003. "Generating Potential Courses of Action" in *The Policy Analyst's Handbook: Rational Problem Solving in a Political World*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Kingdon, John. "The Policy Primeval Soup" in *Agendas Alternatives and Public Policy.* Longman Classics 2010. \*I will provide this reading to you, it is not in your reader\*

**QUIZ 1: Problem Definition**

***Wednesday February 5: Case Study Energy Independence***

READING

Hamm, Harold. "American Energy Independence within a Decade and the Policies Necessary to Achieve it." Testimony given to the US House of Representatives' Energy and Power Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, September 13, 2012. Accessed 11/8/13 http://energycommerce.house.gov/hearing/american-‐energy-‐initiative-‐focus-‐outlook-‐achieving-‐north-‐ american-‐energy-‐independence

Weiss, Daniel J. "Testimony on 'The American Energy Initiative: A Focus on the Outlook for North American Energy Independence within the Decade." Testimony given to the US House of Representatives' Energy and Power Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, September 13, 2012. Accessed 11/8/13 http://energycommerce.house.gov/hearing/american-‐energy-‐initiative-‐ focus-‐outlook-‐achieving-‐north-‐american-‐energy-‐independence

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 1**

**Week 6: Policy Alternatives**

***Monday February 10: Evaluating Alternatives Using Cost Benefit Analysis***

READING

Irwin, Lewis G. 2003."Cost Benefit Analysis" in *The Policy Analyst's Handbook: Rational Problem Solving in a Political World*. New York: M.E. Sharpe. 6

Munger, Michael C. 2000. "Cost Benefit Analysis" in *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts and Practices*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

***Wednesday February 12: Case Study Energy Independence Continued***

Review Reading from February 5 and Read class handouts from Monday February 10

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 2**

**ASSIGNMENT: Policy Analysis Draft 1**

**Week 7: Policy Alternatives**

***Monday February 17: Evaluating Alternatives: Political Costs, Public Support and Interest Groups***

READING

Jacob Hacker.2010. The Road to Somewhere. *Perspectives on Politics* 8(13), 861-‐876.

***Wednesday February 19: Case Study Affordable Care Act***

READING

Where the Parties Stand on Health Care, excerpted from the Democratic and Republican National Committees websites.

Montgomery, Lori. Government Shutdown Moves Closer to Reality. *Washington Post*, September 17, 2013. Available at http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-‐09-‐17/business/42130975\_1\_senate-‐ republicans-‐house-‐speaker-‐john-‐a-‐boehner.

Seitz-‐Wald, Alex. Shutting Down over Obamacare is the New Obamacare. *National Journal,* October 16, 2013. Accessed 12/8/2013 http://www.nationaljournal.com/politics/shutting-‐down-‐the-‐government-‐ over-‐obamacare-‐is-‐the-‐new-‐obamacare-‐20131016.

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 3**

**Week 8**: **Policy Alternatives**

***Monday February 24: Stated vs. Unstated Policy Goals***

READING

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward. 1971, 1993. "Introduction" in *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public of Public Welfare*, 2nd Ed. New York: Random House.

Piven, Frances Fox and Richard Cloward. 1971, 1993. "Chapter 1: Relief, Labor and Civil Disorder: An Overview" in *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public of Public Welfare*, 2nd Ed. New York: Random House.

***Wednesday February 26: Case Study: Race and the War on Drugs***

READING

Provine, Doris Marie. 2007. "Introduction" in *Unequal Under Law: Race in the War on Drugs*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Provine, Doris Marie. 2007. "Congress on Crack: How Race Neutral Language Hides Racial Meaning" in *Unequal Under Law: Race in the War on Drugs*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 7

**Discussion Leader Group 4**

**Week 9: Spring Break!**

No Reading

**Week 10: Policy Alternatives**

***Monday March 10: Far Reaching Implications of Policy through the Lens of the Great Recession***

READING

Greenstone, Michael and Adam Looney. 2013. The Lasting Effects of the Great Recession: Missing Workers and a New Economic Normal. *Brookings Institute*. Accessed 11/8/13 http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/jobs/posts/2013/09/12-‐jobs-‐gap-‐greenstone-‐looney.

Bernake, Ben S. "The Effects of the Great Recession on Central Bank Doctrine and Practice." Speech given at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston 56th Economic Conference, Boston Massachusetts, October 18, 2011.

Resnikoff, Ned. America's New Hunger Crisis. *MSNBC* October 30, 2013. Accessed 11/8/13 at http://www.msnbc.com/all/americas-‐new-‐hunger-‐crisis.

***Wednesday March 12***

No Reading, Finish Watching Movie *Too Big to Fail*

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 5**

**ASSIGNMENT: Policy Analysis Draft 2**

**Week 11: Implementing Policy**

***Monday March 17: Rule Making, Bureaucratic Power and Street Level Bureaucrats***

READING

Lipsky, Michael. 1980. "Introduction." in *Street Level Bureacray: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

Meyers, Marcia K and Susan Vorsanger. 2003. "Street-‐Level Bureaucrats and the Implementation of Public Policy" in *Handbook of Public Administration* edited by B. Guy Peters and John Perre. Thosand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

***Wednesday March 19: Case Study: County Clerks and Gay Marriage Licenses***

READING

Gonzales, Richard. 2013. How a County Clerk Ignited the Gay Marriage Debate in N.M. *NPR*. Accessed 11/6/2013 http://www.npr.org/2013/10/22/239790062/how-‐a-‐county-‐clerk-‐ignited-‐the-‐gay-‐marriage-‐ debate-‐in-‐n-‐m

Kingkade, Tyler. "New York Town Clerk Refuses to let Same-‐Sex Couple Get Married." *Huffington Post* , September, 15 2011. Accessed 11/6/13 at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/15/new-‐york-‐ town-‐refuses-‐to-‐marry-‐gay-‐couple\_n\_964595.html?view=print&comm\_ref=false 8

Muse, Queen. PA Judge Orders Montco Court Clerk to Stop Issuing Same-‐Sex Marriage Licenses. *NBC*. September 12, 2013. Accessed 11/6//13 at http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Judge-‐Orders-‐ Montco-‐Court-‐Clerk-‐to-‐Stop-‐Issuing-‐Same-‐Sex-‐Marriage-‐Licenses-‐223477291.html.

**QUIZ 2: Policy Alternatives**

**Week 12: Program Evaluation**

***Monday March 24: What is Program Evaluation and how do we do it?***

READING

Posavac, Emil J. "Program Evaluation: An Overview" in Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies. Boston: Prentice Hall, 2011.

***Wednesday March 26: Case Study: Federal Education Policy***

READING

Darling-‐Hammond, Linda. "Evaluating 'No Child Left Behind: The Problems and Promises of Bush's Education Policy'" *The Nation*, May 21, 2007. Accessed 11/8/2013 at http://www.thenation.com/article/evaluating-‐no-‐child-‐left-‐behind?page=0,2

Boser, Ulrich. Race to the Top: What have we Learned so Far? A State by State Evaluation of Race to the Top Performance. *Center for American Progress.* March 2012. Pages 1-‐ 13.

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 6**

**ASSIGNMENT: Policy Analysis Draft 3**

**Week 13: Program Evaluation**

***Monday March 31: Unintended Consequences and Economic Externalities***

READING

Rob Norton, "Unintended Consequences." *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. 2008. Library of Economics and Liberty. 8 December 2013. <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/UnintendedConsequences.html>.

Bryan Caplan, "Externalities." *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. 2008. Library of Economics and Liberty. 8 December 2013. <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Externalities.html>.

***Wednesday April 2: Case Study Urban Renewal***

READING

Juan Gomez-‐Novy and Stefanos Polyzoides. A Tale of Two Cities: The Failed Urban Renewal of Downtown Tucson of the Twentieth Century. Journal of the Southwest, Vol. 45, No. 1/2, Architecture (Spring -‐ Summer, 2003), pp. 87-‐119

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 7**

**Week 14: Program Evaluation**

***Monday April 7: Unequal Outcomes***

READING

Venkatesh, Sudhir and Isil CelimliTearing Down the Community. Shelterforce Online 138, November/December 2004. *National Housing Institute*. Accessed 12/8/2013 9 http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/138/chicago.html.

***Wednesday April 9: Felon Disenfranchisement***

READING

Bowers, M., & Preuhs, R. R. (2009). Collateral Consequences of a Collateral Penalty: The Negative Effect of Felon Disenfranchisement Laws on the Political Participation of Nonfelons. *Social Science Quarterly*, 90(3), 722-‐743.

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 8**

**Week 15: Policy Entrenchment**

***Monday April 14: When to Keep Policy and When to Change it***

READING

Patashnik, Eric M. 2009. "Chapter 1: Introduction: General Interest Policymaking and the Politics of Reform Sustainability" in *Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes are Enacted*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Patashnik, Eric M. 2009. "Chapter 9: Conclusions The Patterns and Paradoxes of Policy Reform" in *Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes are Enacted*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

**QUIZ 3: Program Evaluation**

***Wednesday April 16: Case Study: Acid Rain***

READING

Patashnik, Eric M. 2009. "Chapter 8: Making Pollution Control Pay: Emissions Trading for Acid Rain" in *Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes are Enacted*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**DISCUSSION LEADER: Group 9**

**Week 16: Policy Analysis as a Profession**

***Monday April 21: Job Prospects***

READING

Blanchard, Sadie. 2007. Policy Analyst: Shaping Society Through Research and Problem Solving. Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* Spring 2007, 20-‐25.

Hot Career: Health Policy Analyst/Specialist: Growing Field Helps Improve Lives. *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 2009.

***Wednesday April 23: Final Presentations***

No Reading

**Week 17: Finals Week**

***Monday April 28, 7:45-‐9:45 am: Final Presentations*** 10

No Reading

**ASSIGNMENT: Final Policy Analysis EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

***Pre-Class/Post-Class Surveys (100 points)***

Ten percent of your grade comes from the completion of pre and post class surveys. Ideally, the pre-class survey will be completed prior to the first day of classes, though students who join late will not be held to this expectation; the post-class surveys will be taken before the final, though I will not look at these surveys until after final grades have been submitted. These questionnaires are designed to help me understand a variety of things. In the pre-survey I am primarily interested in your background, your existing experiences in college classrooms, your existing knowledge, assumptions and predispositions, how you think about learning, what you expect in a class, what your learning styles are, what you think of different types of assessment, and the course-related topics you are interested in. These questions will help me design more effective activities and assessment, help me understand places where you need more or less instruction, and generally give me a better sense of who you are as students. By helping me know you better, this assignment should also improve our chances of building an effective learning community. In the post-survey, I’m primarily interested in what you thought of the course, how your predispositions and assumptions changed, the extent to which you learned the material, the things you liked or would change in the course, and the value you saw in the course. This survey will allow me to evaluate how effective the course was, objectively identify changes in your thinking, and give me invaluable insight into how I can improve the class in the future.

I would like to use these surveys as part of a research project, and I will ask for your consent in using your answers. Taking the survey is mandatory; however allowing me to use your results is completely voluntary. This survey will not be anonymous, I will link your pre-post answers using your student ID, however, if you choose to allow your answers to be used in research, your identity will be kept confidential, meaning that your name will never be linked to your answers in any written work, presentations etc.

***Participation (250 points)***

I have structured this class in a way that is similar to a graduate seminar. There may be fewer lectures than you are used to, but I have done this because I believe it is a more valuable learning experience and that you are more likely to retain the information and make connections if you are actively engaging in your own learning process. Because of this, I expect you to participate in class on a regular basis. There are three ways to do this.

1. During lecture there will be opportunities to ask and respond to questions. If you are confused, chances are that others are too. Ask questions; it is the only way I know that you aren’t getting it, and it shows other students that they aren’t alone in their confusion. In addition, everyone learns better when there are many perspectives being shared, so when I ask a question and you have an idea- even if you are worried it might be wrong- please share it.
2. We will spend the last 20 minutes of each lecture day debriefing, discussing, and reviewing. We will do this in small groups where you will have ample opportunity to have your voice heard. Participate in these groups; it will help you cement what you’ve learned and connect the concepts to things that are happening outside of the classroom.
3. The second class of each week will be devoted to case study analysis. In these sessions we will apply the concepts we cover during the first class of the week to real policies. Discussions about the case studies will be led by your fellow classmates. The more you participate in these discussions, the more interesting the class will be, the less stressful it will be for each of you to lead the class, and the better your participation grade will be.

***Discussion Leaders (150 points)***

Verbal communication is essential to almost every career, as is the ability to think critically, make connections quickly and participate in group conversation. We will practice these skills every Wednesday during our discussion sessions. On discussion days we will cement our understandings of course concepts by applying them to real-world policy examples. Because some of the most effective learning happens when we are personally invested, each group will lead discussion during one Wednesday class. On these days I will give a short lecture, approximately 20 minutes long, that covers the most important elements of the case study, the group will then have 30 minutes to lead the class, we will conclude with a variety of activities that either reinforce what we have learned or extend our understandings. Though this time should primarily be spent in discussion, your group may also bring in video or audio clips that you believe capture the concept and application and/or you may do other activities designed to help students make connections.

I will provide each group with 4-5 basic discussion questions to get the ball rolling; it is up to the group leaders to supplement these questions with more nuanced ones, plan activities, find additional materials, and keep the class on track. It is not always easy to lead discussion, but it is an invaluable part of learning how to facilitate groups, ask questions in ways that elicit thoughtful responses, and manage diverse and sometimes conflicting viewpoints and personalities.

***Iterative Tests (50 points each, 150 points total)***

Ultimately, your success in this class depends on you gaining a foundational understanding of the concepts we cover. In order to do well on the policy analysis, you must understand the core of each concept and be able to apply it to diverse policy areas; it is not enough to be able to repeat a description. Even when we think we understand something, we frequently realize we don’t know as much as we thought we knew when it comes time to write it down. Iterative tests are a way to keep that from happening when you go to write your policy analysis. There will be three short answer tests over the course of the semester that will require you to explain, identify, assess, and apply the concepts we’ve learned in class. These tests will be challenging, but they are meant to provide you with feedback on how well you understand course concepts. It is more important to me that you eventually learn the concept, than that you do it perfectly the first time. As such, ~25%, or 13 points, of each test grade will be a completion grade, while ~75% (37 points) will be based on the content of your answers. If you do poorly on a test you will be able to revise your answers to improve your grade. You will be able to improve your score by up to 1.5 times. For example, if you took the test and got 50% of the answers correct, you would receive 31 points (12.5 completion points+(37\*.5) content points), or a 62%. If you revised you answers so that they were all correct, you would improve your score, receiving 40.25 points (12.5+18.5+9.25) or an 80%. In this way you will be able to cement your understandings by fixing mistakes in your thinking.

***Group Policy Analysis (350 points)***

Your primary assignment for this course will be to complete a semester long, multipart analysis of a policy issue of your choosing. This project will require you to apply the concepts we learn in class to a specific policy area; we will practice doing this nearly every week so you will be prepared to do it on your own. There is a significant amount of creative, intellectual, and organizational freedom in this project, which means that you will need to stay on top of your work and find a significant amount of self-motivation, something that is invaluable in the work environment.

To complete this assignment, you will form a policy analysis firm with 2-3 of your fellow classmates. Together your group of 3-4 will identify a topic to research. **This topic should be as specific as possible, and at a minimum must include a general policy area, specific topic, and location of interest.** For example, it is not sufficient to research policing; it would however be appropriate to research something like how the police have used broken windows policy in New York City to address crime. If you are interested in national policy, it is perfectly fine to have the United States as your location of interest. After identifying the topic, you will develop a group contract and plan of action, which includes specific details about when you will complete each phase of the project and which group members will be responsible for which components of the project. Ten percent of your grade will come from meeting with me to review your group contract, topic, and plan of action. This meeting is an opportunity for you to clarify expectations and work out any early kinks. The project itself consists of three assignments: a 15-20 page written policy analysis; a 1-2 page executive summary; and a 15-20 minute class presentation.

You will work on this project over the course of the semester and turn it in during the last week of classes. This means that you will need to be self directed, working consistently over the course of the semester, to be successful. Although you will receive only one grade for this assignment, you will have four opportunities to submit materials to me for review. You will not receive a grade for what you turn in, instead, this is an opportunity to receive feedback so that you can fix in glaring problems, alter the direction of the project when needed, and ensure that you are moving forward in a way that will make you successful in the long run. These reviews are optional. As a group, you can choose not to participate in one or all of the opportunities I provide you; however, if you do not submit materials for review, there will be no opportunity to fix problems in your analysis- my first reading will be your final grade. The grade for this assignment will reflect four components:

**Group Meeting, Group Contract, Plan of Action (52 points, ~15%)**

*Meeting (7 points):* As a group, you will schedule and attend a meeting with me to review your group contract and plan of action. You will sign up for a meeting time in class.

*Group Contract (10 points):* In the work environment, particularly if you are working as a consultant, you are often required to work under a contract that is negotiated among all parties and outlines expectations and obligations. In your case, you will be working with group members and your success as a group is dependent upon each member pulling his/her weight. To help this process, you will develop a group contract that all members agree to. This written document allows you to clearly articulate your expectations and hold one another accountable. It should include your expectations about how each member of the group will behave, a plan for group decision making, a plan for reconciling differences/conflict, and a method for peer-evaluation. I will provide you a template and a few examples of group contracts that you can refer to as you create this document. You will submit this contract to me on **Date**, we will discuss it during your group meeting.

*Plan of Action (35 points)*: As a group, you will create a plan of action that will serve as a road map for completing the project. This planning document needs to include 1) A description of how you will break this assignment into smaller pieces 2) A timeline for project completion, including mini-deadlines for completing the smaller components 3) A plan for what you will turn in to me at each of the four check points, and 4) A list of which member of the group will be responsible for which parts of the project. You will submit this contract to me on **Date**, we will discuss it during your group meeting.

**Policy Analysis (175 points, 50%)**

Your policy analysis will be a complete, professional document that discusses a policy of your choice. This document will be 15-20 pages long (standard 1 inch margins, 12pnt font, double spaced, Times New Roman or Calibri font) and have a minimum of five charts, graphs or pictures that visually depict the problem and/or policy alternatives. I will provide you with several examples of policy analyses that you can use as a guide for completing your paper. This will not be a list of questions with answers, but should be a coherent paper that connects the following questions and weaves them into an interesting, informative analysis of the problem. Successful groups will use empirical and/or qualitative evidence to support any assertions they make in their analysis and will use visual tools such as graphs, charts and pictures to highlight particularly important point. Each analysis must address the following

1. Problem to which this policy is responding
2. Location of problem
3. How we know there is a problem: numbers, focusing events, reports etc.
4. How problem is defined and who is involved in that definition.
5. Who/which group policy efforts are targeted towards
6. How that group is constructed in society
7. Policy alternatives- what solutions have been considered to address the problem
8. How the social construction of the target population influence the policy alternatives that are considered
9. What are the costs and benefits of the primary policy alternatives
10. How the public and political officials responded to these alternatives
11. How public/political responses influence the viability of these alternatives
12. What policy alternative has been selected to address the problem
13. What the policy’s goals are, including any unstated ones you come across in research
14. Whether the policy has been implemented in the way that was anticipated
15. Whether there are opportunities for street level bureaucrats to use their discretion in implementation and if so, how this has affected the policy
16. How we know if the policy was effective, including outputs and outcomes
17. How the policy has influenced the problem- has it improved the situation, made it worse, had no effect
18. What economic externalities or unintended consequences have resulted from the policy
19. Whether the policy affects all people equally or whether there have been unequal impacts
20. How the policy is connected to other policy areas?

In order to answer these questions, you will need to complete extensive research on the problem, policy alternatives, and existing impact analyses. You will need to include a **minimum of 30 academic and/or journalistic sources to do this.**

 **Executive Summary (53 points,~ 15%)**

The reality of the policy world is that months of research may be for naught if you can’t get decision makers to pay attention. Because they are often busy and have limited attention, it is essential that you are able to communicate your ideas in a concise way. To practice this skill, you will consolidate your policy analysis into a 1-2 page, single-spaced executive summary/policy memo. This document should summarize the main findings including the nature of the problem, policy alternatives, chosen policy, current understanding of policy impacts and any additional information you believe to be essential.

**Class Presentation (70 points, 20%)**

As a policy analyst, you must be able to verbally articulate your ideas and communicate with a diverse audience. The final portion of this assignment requires you to practice these skills and replaces the final. You may complete this assignment in one of two ways.

1. The first option is to prepare a presentation that would be appropriate to give to a legislative body (US Congress, state congress, or city council depending on the issue area). Your presentation should be 10-15 minutes, should include all of the important points from your research and should have ample visuals to portray your problem/policy solution. This presentation should be concise, and you should assume that you are speaking to individuals who have a limited understanding of the specific topic but are generally familiar with policy and politics. Remember that these people are smart and busy, so you need to keep it interesting and provide evidence to support your claims.
2. The second option is to create a public service announcement/mini documentary about your policy area. In this case, your audience is the general public and your goal is to inform them about an issue that they may have personal experience with, but are unlikely to have a detailed understanding of. This video can be up to 15 minutes long, but may be as short as 5 minutes. Because it is a visual medium, this video should have plenty of visual interest but must also cover the major parts of the research- what is the problem, what are the possible solutions, what policy has been adopted, what are the current outcomes of this policy, plus anything else that is particularly interesting. You may use video clips and pictures you find online to portray your issue, but if you do this you will need to do a voice-over or have subtitles to explain your project. You can also film yourselves discussing the issues or create original footage of a problem/policy. This is very open, so you can use your creativity to make your video stand out.