

## Applied Policy Analysis

MSPP0-GP 3100

Sherry Glied

Prerequisites: CORE-GP 1022, MSPP-GP 1000, MSPP-GP 1900, MSPP-GP 2100, MSPP-GP 2105, MSPP-GP 2905, MSPP-GP 4021, PADM-GP 2140, and PADM-GP 2171, MSPP-GP 3101 concurrently

This course will provide students with an opportunity to engage in policy analysis in situations that mimic the real world practice of the craft of policy analysis. In practice, policy analysis requires drawing inferences from limited information, under time pressure and data constraints. It requires asking the right questions, finding the right data, assessing the quality of the data and analyses, and communicating results effectively in writing and in person. Your coursework up to this point has given you the skills you need to do much of this – in this course, you will refine those skills and put them to work.

Learning objectives:

- Gain practice leading and working in teams
- Apply policy analysis concepts to real world cases
- Deepen policy analysis skills, including around measurement issues, distributional analyses, and ethics issues
- Improve memo writing and presentation skills
- Conduct time- and data-limited policy analyses

Class structure:

The class is divided into two parts: case analysis and policy exercises. In the case analysis portion of the course, advanced policy analysis concepts will be introduced and students will analyze policy cases that highlight these concepts.

Students will write a 2-page case analysis memo due each session (each 4% of course grade) and will be expected to participate in class discussion (each session 5% of course grade). These memos are to be submitted electronically through the NYU Classes course site.

There will be 4 case analysis sessions, currently scheduled as:

- A. May 21–9:30am -12:30pm Location: 25 West 4, C-7
- B. May 23–9:30am -12:30pm Location: 25 West 4, C-7
- C. May 25–9:30am -12:30pm Location: 25 West 4, C-7
- D. May 29–9:30am -12:30pm Location: 25 West 4, C-16

- E. There will be three policy exercises. Students will be divided into teams of 3 for each exercise, and each student will be team leader for one team/exercise (3 teams for each exercise \* 3 exercises). The team leader will be responsible for conveying the assignment to the team, assigning tasks to team members, ensuring that the final product is complete, and presenting the results at the final meeting for that exercise.

Policy exercises will each have the same form:

At the first exercise meeting, on a Friday morning, the overall topic will be presented. Where possible, a guest lecturer who is expert in the topic will present an overview of the current state of the discussion. Data sets and resources that may be pertinent to the topic will be reviewed. At the end of the session, team leaders (only) will be presented with the specific assignment. They will then meet with their teams to divide up the work. Team leaders (but no team members) may consult with the Professor for advice during the subsequent week.

On the following Tuesday, each team will meet separately with the Professor to assess progress and get feedback on drafts of papers and analyses.

At the final exercise meeting, on Thursday afternoon, each team leader will present his or her findings to the class in a 10 minute PPT or similar presentation and will turn in the final decision memo (maximum 5 pages) and policy analysis appendices (5-8 pages each). Team members are expected to help answer questions about their analyses and to ask questions of other teams.

- 10% of the final grade will be assigned to the team leader based on the presentation and team organization.
- Each team will produce a decision memo (13% of grade)
- Each team member will produce a policy analysis appendix memo (which may focus on stakeholder analysis, economic analysis, data analysis etc.) for each exercise (5% of grade each)

Exercise 1: June 1, 9-11 [introduction to topic and assignment] 25 West 4, C-7  
June 5, 9-10:30 [group meetings with Professor] 25 West 4, C-16  
June 7, 4-5:30 [group presentations and discussion] 25 West 4, C-7

Exercise 2: June 8, 9-11 [introduction to topic and assignment] 25 West 4, C-7  
June 12, 9-10:30 [group meetings with Professor] 25 West 4, C-16  
June 14, 4-5:30 [group presentations and discussion] 25 West 4, C-7

Exercise 3: June 15, 9-11 [introduction to topic and assignment] 25 West 4, C-7  
June 19, 9-10:30 [group meetings with Professor] 25 West 4, C-16  
June 21, 4-5:30 [group presentations and discussion] 25 West 4, C-7

## Case Analyses Sessions

*Pre-class readings (links to most of these can be found on NYU Classes site in the Resources folder):*

### A. Frameworks and Structured Decision Processes

Logic models -- <http://toolkit.pellinstitute.org/evaluation-guide/plan-budget/using-a-logic-model/>

Public Impact Fundamentals – <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/fundamentals/>

Bardach, Eugene (any edition). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. Part I. [Many copies available at Bobst].

Hemenway, David. "Survey research and self-defense gun use: an explanation of extreme overestimates." *J. Crim. L. & Criminology* 87 (1996): 1430.

<https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6936&context=jclc>

Costanza, David. "The Evidence Behind Generations is Lacking." *Slate*. April 13, 2018. <https://slate.com/technology/2018/04/the-evidence-behind-generations-is-lacking.html>

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Case (to be purchased): New York City's Teen Action Program – An Evaluation Gone Awry <https://case.hks.harvard.edu/new-york-citys-teen-action-program-an-evaluation-gone-awry/>

**Case Analysis Memo 1:** Read the case. Suppose you were asked to evaluate the Teen Action Program. Sketch out the design you would use to evaluate the program. (max 600 words). Due before next class session.

### B. Learning from Data

Mark Moore. *Creating Public Value*. HUP 1997, 63-76.

Kotter, John P. 1995. "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail." *Harvard Business Review*, March/April: 59-67.

Nagin, Daniel, and Raymond Paternoster. "Population Heterogeneity and State Dependence: State of the Evidence and Directions for Future Research." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 16, no. 2 (2000): 117-26 (remainder optional). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41954209>.

Freeman, Richard B., and Brian Hall. "Permanent homelessness in America?" *Population Research and Policy Review* 6, no. 1 (1987): 3-27. (focus on 1-9, 13-16)

Aguiar, Mark, and Mark Bilal. "Has Consumption Inequality Mirrored Income Inequality?" *The American Economic Review*, vol. 105, no. 9, 2015, pp. 2725-2756, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/aer.20120599>. (2725-2727; 2732-2737; skim 2743-2749)

Muller, Jerry Z. *The Tyranny of Metrics*. Princeton University Press, forthcoming. Ch 1-6, 15-16.

Case (to be purchased): Michelle Rhee and the Washington, DC Public Schools  
<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/michelle-rhee-and-the-washington-d-c-public-schools/>

**Case Analysis Memo 2:** Read the case Assess Rhee's performance from the perspectives of either Moore or Kotter. (max 600 words)- Due before next class session.

### C. Ethics, Distributional Analyses

Fleischacker, Samuel. *A short history of distributive justice*. Harvard University Press, 2009. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3300666> Section 3 – p. 80-124

Bradford, DF and Alan Auerbach. *The Distributional Effects of Tax policy*. American Enterprise Institute. [http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/-distributional-analysis-of-tax-policy\\_155140860812.pdf](http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/-distributional-analysis-of-tax-policy_155140860812.pdf) [1-5]

Schmitt, John. "Why does the minimum wage have no discernible effect on employment?." *Center for Economic and Policy Research* 22 (2013): 1-28.  
[https://www.doviak.net/courses/metrics/min-wage\\_cepr\\_2013-02.pdf](https://www.doviak.net/courses/metrics/min-wage_cepr_2013-02.pdf)

Case (to be purchased): Money and Morals: The Minimum Wage and the American South <https://case.hks.harvard.edu/money-morals-the-minimum-wage-and-the-american-south/>

**Case Analysis Memo 3:** Read the case. Take one of the philosophical positions described by Fleischacker and provide an argument for or against raising the minimum wage (max 600 words).- Due before next class session.

### D. Stakeholder Analyses

Frank, Richard G., Chris Koyanagi, and Thomas G. McGuire. "The politics and economics of mental health 'parity' laws." *Health Affairs* 16, no. 4 (1997): 108-119.  
<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/pdf/10.1377/hlthaff.16.4.108>

Overseas Development Association. "Guidance Note on how to do Stakeholder Analysis of AID Projects and Programmes." (1995).  
[https://www.sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference\\_attachments/ODA%201995%20Guidance%20Note%20on%20how%20to%20do%20a%20Stakeholder%20Analysis.pdf](https://www.sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/ODA%201995%20Guidance%20Note%20on%20how%20to%20do%20a%20Stakeholder%20Analysis.pdf)

Case (to be purchased): Achieving Mental Health Parity  
<https://case.hks.harvard.edu/content/review/1948.0.EducatorCopy.pdf>

**Case Analysis Memo 4:** Read the case: Who cares about mental health parity and why? - Due before next class session.

## **Policy Exercises** (subject to change)

Pre-class readings:

Guide to Document Preparation. HHS Secretary. 2012 (NYU Classes), chapters 1-4, 6.

**Exercise 1:** Free Community College – Guest speaker (tentative), TBA

WSJ Pro and Con:

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/should-community-colleges-be-tuition-free-1442368892>

Joshua Wyner: YES: It's an Investment in the Country's Economic Future

Monica Herk: NO: It's Better to Help People—and Majors—That Will Pay Off

Bruce Baker and Jesse Levin. Estimating the Real Cost of Community College.

<https://tcf.org/content/report/estimating-real-cost-community-college/>

**Exercise 2:** NYC Congestion Tax – Guest speaker (tentative), TBA

Winnie Hu. New York's Tilt Toward Congestion Pricing was Years in the Making. NYTimes 11/28/2017 [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/nyregion/congestion-pricing-new-york.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/nyregion/congestion-pricing-new-york.html?_r=0)

Litman, Todd (2005) : London Congestion Pricing – Implications for Other Cities, CESifo DICE Report, ISSN 1613-6373, Vol. 03, Iss. 3, pp. 17-21.

<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/166849/1/ifo-dice-report-v03-y2005-i3-p17-21.pdf>

**Exercise 3:** Ending Cash Bail in NYC – Guest speaker (tentative), TBA

Margaret Talbot. The Case Against Cash Bail. *New Yorker* August 25, 2015.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-case-against-cash-bail>

Rohrer, Kyle. "Why Has the Bail Reform Act Not Been Adopted by the State Systems." *Or. L. Rev.* 95 (2016): 517-525, 534-541.

[http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/orglr95&div=16&g\\_sent=1&casa\\_token=&collection=journals](http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/orglr95&div=16&g_sent=1&casa_token=&collection=journals)