

Rutgers University
School of Social Work
Social Policy Analysis (Ph.D. Policy Analysis)
16:910:647 (3 credit hours)
Fall 2019

(Note: Some course materials for later weeks will change based on students' research interests)

Classroom Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30 am – Noon
390 George St. Room A

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I. Course Description

Drawing on the *Conceptual Foundation for Social Work and Social Welfare* course, this course focuses on the concepts, methods, and practices of analysis of social welfare policies designed to address social problems in the United States. Students are expected to apply social science research training and critical thinking skills to study the ideological and socioeconomic contextual backgrounds of social problems, social policies, and policy analyses and evaluate various alternatives to problem definitions, policy strategies, and types of policy analysis.

II. Course Objective:

This course aims to enable students to acquire the following sets of concepts and skills.

1. Value bases of policy and policy analysis
 - How different values and ideologies guide different policy approaches to a social problem
 - How values and ideologies influence policy analysis
2. Utility of policy analysis
 - Why we conduct policy analyses; why policy analyses are particularly important for social work profession
 - How policy analyses are used in public discourse and policy development
3. Concepts of policy analysis
 - What are some typical types of policy analysis (e.g., Historic analysis, comparative analysis, economic analysis, political analysis, outcome analysis, cost-benefit analysis)?
 - What particular element of policy (e.g., values, goals, assumptions, hypothesized relationships, provisions, allocation, finance, and delivery) becomes the subject of analysis for each type of policy analysis
 - When certain types of policy analysis become useful
4. Practices of policy analysis
 - Some of dominant research methods in policy analyses (e.g., content analysis,

- quantitative evaluation, qualitative evaluation, and randomized experiment) and when they are useful
 - Some pros and cons of those various methods and how they complement each other
 - Why ideal policy analyses are applied social science
 - Where to look for various aggregate and micro data and how to use them appropriately
5. Program evaluation
- How policy analyses are different from and/or similar to program evaluations
 - Role of program evaluations for policy development
 - Why performance indicators are used for evaluations of federal programs
 - Consequences of using poorly conceived and measured performance indicators

III. Required Readings

All required readings – both book chapters and journal articles - are posted on course Sakai website (<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>) under weekly resource tab. In addition to the required readings, all students are strongly recommended to identify and read readings about social policies of their choices. The following is the list of books whose chapters are selected as required readings.

1. **Bardach, E. (2012). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. Sage Publications**
Required sections
 Part 1: The Eightfold Path (pp. 1-78)

2. **Chambers, D. E. & Bonk, J. F. (2012). *Social policy and social programs: A method for the practical public policy analyst* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.**
Required sections
 Chapter 1: Analyzing the Social Problem Background of Social Policies and Social Programs
 Chapter 2: An Overview of a Style of Policy Analysis: A Value-Critical Approach
 Chapter 3: The Analysis of Policy Goals and Objectives in Social Programs and Policies
 Chapter 8: Analysis of Interactions among Policy Elements

3. **Gilbert, N. & Terrell, P. (2009). *Dimensions of social welfare policy* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.**
Required sections
 Chapter 1: The field of social welfare policy (p. 1-35)
 Chapter 3: Framework for social welfare policy analysis (p. 62-95)

4. **Ginsberg, L. H., & Miller-Cribbs, J. (2005). *Understanding social problems, policies, and programs*. University of South Carolina Press.**
Required sections
 Chapter 8: Analyzing social policies and models for policy analysis (p. 207-237)

5. **Popple, P. & Leighninger, L. (2015).** *The policy-based profession: An introduction to social welfare policy analysis for social workers* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Required sections

Chapter 3: Social welfare policy analysis (p. 35-55)

Chapter 4: Policy analysis from a historical perspective (p.56-76)

Chapter 5: Social/economic analysis (p.76-96)

6. **Weimer, D. & Vining, A. R. (2010).** *Policy analysis: Concepts and practice* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Required reading

Chapter 2: What is policy analysis?

Chapter 14: Doing policy analysis - Gathering information

Chapter 15: Doing policy analysis - Landing on your feet

Chapter 16: Doing policy analysis - Cost-benefit analysis

Chapter 17: Doing policy analysis – When statistics count

IV. Library Resources

The Rutgers University library system contains a very impressive collection of resources and materials that will be of great assistance to you as you complete assignments for this class and your other graduate courses. Many of these materials can be accessed on-line. The university librarians offer free tutorials on using the in-library services and on-line search tools; understanding how to navigate these tools is vital for ensuring timely, thorough, and proficient completion of the assignments for this course. Any student who needs assistance with the library system can contact the social work librarian, Karen Hartman (khartman@rci.rutgers.edu 848-932-6104) and/or the instructor.

All the major assignments of this course, all students are strongly encouraged to visit the following library website to learn about the APA style writing.

<http://libguides.rutgers.edu/content.php?pid=130823&sid=1121991#3429445>

V. Course Assignments and Grading

The course assignments are organized into the following four components.

Please note that (1) all assignment papers should adhere to the **APA** writing style (some useful information about how to cite government documents can be found at

<http://www.memphis.edu/govpub/citweb.php>) and that (2) all assignments should be submitted into **Sakai drop box** by the due dates.

1. *Weekly reading response & discussion facilitation (20%)*

Students are expected to keep up with the weekly readings and actively facilitate class discussions. Students are asked to choose at least two required readings each week and write a one-page response paper to provide the following: (1) a concise summary of one idea and/or

technique explored in each reading that you find important or interesting; (2) a brief response to the identified idea and/or technique to relate it/them to the policies of their interest (or other concepts/materials in this course). Students should post their reading response papers on Sakai drop box before coming to class and use them to facilitate class discussions every week.

2. Five mini policy analyses (10% each, 50% total)

For the following 5 related assignments, students are required to select a social problem and an *existing federal* social welfare policy (any student who wish to choose an international policy needs to consult with the instructor in advance). Students are strongly recommended to consult with the instructor before making his/her choice of a social problem and a federal policy. All mini analysis papers are expected to be around 2-3 pages not counting the references.

(1) Mini analysis 1: Analysis of social problem (due by week 2)

For the social problem you choose to study, please discuss the socioeconomic, demographic, and political background or contexts of the problem. Also discuss the underlying values and/or theories that influenced public discourses of the problem.

(2) Mini analysis 2: Descriptions of federal policies (due by week 3)

Discuss historical revisions of one federal policy or a couple of closely related federal policies designed to address the social problem you identified in the first mini analysis. Please focus on identifying major differences and similarities in the policy approaches to the social problem of your choice. Students are required to find and submit the policy PDFs along with their papers.

(3) Mini analysis 3: Analysis of policy elements, part 1 (due by week 5)

Please choose only one policy from your second mini analysis and analyze the following four elements - goals, objectives, values, and underlying assumptions/theories of the policy, some of which can be implicit at best in the policy text. The focus this analysis should be on analyzing if and how well the four policy elements are in line with your analysis of the social problem.

(4) Mini analysis 4: Analysis of policy elements, part 2 (due by week 8)

Building upon the third mini analysis above, students are required to discuss other four elements of the policy - allocation, provision, finance, and delivery. Again, the focus of this analysis should be on analyzing how well the four policy elements are aligned with your analysis of the social problem as well as the policy elements discussed in the third mini analysis.

(5) Mini analysis 5: Critiques of two seminal policy analyses (due by week 10)

For this assignment, students are asked to identify two analyses of the policy of their choice published in high impact peer-reviewed academic journals and summarize and critique the research questions, methods, and conclusions/implications of the analyses. Please note that the conceptual and empirical analyses shown in the chosen articles should be rigorous and that the research questions are relevant to elements of the policy of your choice. Students are expected to apply the course contents (especially week 9 & 10 readings) in

critiquing the processes and results of the analyses.

3. Student-led seminar (10%) (on week 13 & 14)

Students are asked to present the compilations of their 5 mini analyses before their classmates in a professional manner to demonstrate their understanding of the course contents and the ability to lead scholarly discussions on their topics. This can be an opportunity for students to improve the analyses that they submitted in the mini analyses. Materials should be organized coherently and presented in PPT slides, which should be posted on Sakai (along with any supporting materials) before the seminar dates.

4. Capstone project analysis paper (20%) (due by week 15)

The goal of this assignment is to help students synthesize all the knowledge and skills that they acquire from the course materials and mini analysis assignments and to come up a policy analysis paper on your own. Based on the literature review and review of seminal work in their policy field, students are expected to come up with an original policy research question, analyze the components of the policy of their choice, and develop a 1st draft of manuscript. More detailed requirements and guidelines will be discussed and distributed in class. Students are expected to closely consult with the instructor for their paper project throughout the semester.

5. Overview of Course Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Due by week	%
Mini analysis		
1: Social problem description	2	10
2: Federal policy identification	3	10
3: Policy elements, part (1) - Goals, objectives, values, assumptions/theories	5	10
4: Policy elements, part (2) - Allocation, provision, delivery, and finance	8	10
5: Critiques of two seminal policy analyses	10	10
Student-led seminar	13-14	10
Capstone project paper and presentation	15	20
Reading response and discussion facilitation	Weekly	20
	Total	100

Grading for this course is as follows:

94-100	A	80-86	B	70-74	C
87-93	B+	75-79	C+	Below 70	Failed (F)

Grades will be based on students' demonstrations of thorough and comprehensive research, coherent and logical thinking abilities, and good writing skills.

VII: Weekly Outline

1. Introduction (Week 1)

Main topics

- Introduction to the course
- Getting to know each other

Required reading:

None

2. Definitions (Week 2)

Main topics

- Social problems
- Welfare policies
- Policy analysis

Required readings

- Chambers, D. E. & Bonk, J. F. (2012). Chapter 1: Analyzing the social problem background of social policies and social programs
- Gilbert, N. & Terrell, P. (2009). Chapter 1: The field of social welfare policy
- Weimer, D. & Vining, A. R. (2010). Chapter 2: What is policy analysis?

Assignment Due:

Mini analysis 1: Social problem description

3. Utility of Policy Analysis (Week 3)

Focal questions

- Why we conduct policy analyses; why policy analyses are particularly important for social work profession
- How policy analyses are used in public and political discourse (e.g., accountability, advocacy, planning, etc.)
- How policy analyses are used in policy development (e.g., formulation, coordination, implementation, revision, etc.)

Required readings

- Romero, F. (2001). The policy analysis course: Toward a discipline consensus. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 20(4), 771-779.
- Shullock, N. (1999). The paradox of policy analysis: If it is not used, why do we produce so much of it? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 18(2), 226-244.
- Weimer, D. (1998). Policy analysis and evidence: A craft perspective. *Policy Studies*

Journal, 26(1), 114-128.

- Weimer, D. (2002). Enriching public discourse: Policy analysis in representative Democracies. *The Good Society*, 11(1), 61-65.

Assignment Due:

Mini analysis 2: Federal policy identification

4. Value Bases of Policy and Policy Analysis (Week 4)

Focal questions

- How different values and ideologies guide different policy approaches to a social problem
- How values and ideologies influence the process and uses of policy analyses

Required readings

- Chambers, D. E. & Bonk, J. F. (2012). Chapter 2: An Overview of a Style of Policy Analysis: A Value-Critical Approach
- Thacher, D. (2005). Value Rationality in Policy Analysis, working paper # 2005-002, Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan.
- Thacher, D., & Rein, M. (2004). Managing value conflict in public policy. *Governance*, 17(4), 457-486.

5. Concepts of Policy Analysis (Week 5 through Week 8)

Focal questions

- What particular element(s) of policy (e.g., values, goals, assumptions, hypothesized relationships, provisions, allocation, finance, and delivery) becomes the subject of analysis for each type of policy analyses
- What are some typical types of policy analyses (e.g., Historic analysis, comparative analysis, economic analysis, political analysis, outcome analysis, cost-benefit analysis)?
- When certain types of policy analysis becomes useful
- How indistinguishable the various types of analyses are in reality

Required readings

Week 5:

- Chambers, D. E. & Bonk, J. F. (2012). Chapter 3: The analysis of policy goals and objectives in social programs and policies
- Ginsberg, L. H., & Miller-Cribbs, J. (2005). Chapter 8: Analyzing social policies and models for policy analysis

Assignment Due:

Mini analysis 3: Policy elements - Goals, objectives, values, assumptions/theories

Week 6:

- Gilbert, N. & Terrell, P. (2009). Chapter 3: Framework for social welfare policy analysis
- Chambers, D. E. & Bonk, J. F. (2012).
 - Chapter 4: Who gets what: The analysis of types of benefits and services
 - Chapter 5: Who gets what, how much, and under what conditions: Analysis of eligibility rules
 [Gilbert, N. & Terrell, P. (2009). Chapter 4 on allocation; Chapter 5 on provision; Chapter 6 on delivery; Chapter 7 on finance) – Recommended not required]

Week 7:

- Chambers, D. E. & Bonk, J. F. (2012).
 - Chapter 6: Analysis of service-delivery systems and social policy and program design
 - Chapter 7: How do we pay for social welfare policies and programs? Analysis of financing
 - Chapter 8: Analysis of interactions among policy elements
 [Gilbert, N. & Terrell, P. (2009). Chapter 6 on delivery; Chapter 7 on finance – Recommended not required]

Week 8:

- Popple, P. & Leighninger, L. (2008). Chapter 3: Social welfare policy analysis
- Popple, P. & Leighninger, L. (2015).
 - Chapter 4: Policy analysis from a historical perspective
 - Chapter 5: Social/economic analysis

Assignment Due:

Mini analysis 4: Policy elements part - Allocation, provision, delivery, and finance

6. Practices of Policy Analysis (Week 9 through Week 11)

Focal questions

- Process of ‘doing’ policy analysis; Why ideal policy analyses are applied social science
- Some dominant research methods in policy analyses (e.g., Content analysis, quantitative evaluation, qualitative evaluation, and randomized experiment) and when they are useful
- Some pros and cons of those various methods and how they complement each other
- Where to look for various aggregate and micro data and how to use them appropriately

Required readings

Week 9

- Bardach, E. (2012). Part 1: The Eightfold Path (pp. 1-78)

Week 10

- Weimer, D. & Vining, A. R. (2010).
 - Chapter 14: Doing policy analysis - Gathering information
 - Chapter 15: Doing policy analysis - Landing on your feet

Assignment Due: Mini analysis 5- Critiques of two seminal policy analyses

Week 11

- Weimer, D. & Vining, A. R. (2010).
Chapter 16: Doing policy analysis - Cost-benefit analysis
Chapter 17: Doing policy analysis – When statistics count

7. Program Evaluation & Policy Analysis (Week 12)

Focal questions

- How policy analyses are different from and/or similar to program evaluations
- Why performance indicators are used for evaluations of federal programs
- Consequences of using poorly conceived and measured performance indicators

Required readings

- Behn, R. (2003). Why measure performance? Different purposes require different measures. *Public Administration Review*, 63(5), 586-606.
- Blalock, A.B. (1999). Evaluation research and performance management movement. *Evaluation*, 5(2), 117-149.
- McDavid, J., & Hawthorn, L., (2006). Chapter: Key concepts and issues in program evaluation and performance measurement, *Program Evaluation & Performance Measurement: An Introduction to Practice*. Sage Publications.

8. Student-Led Seminar (Week 13 and Week 14)

Student-led seminars:

Students will lead seminars on their policy research for the two sessions. The content of seminar should be based on the mini analysis 1 through 5 as follows-(1) problem description, (2) federal policy identification, (3) discussions of the policy elements (goals, objectives, values, allocation, provision, finance, delivery, major outcomes, etc.), and (4) critiques on two seminal policy analyses from journal articles. Detailed instructions on how and what to prepare for this seminar will be discussed in class.

9. Capstone Project Presentation (Week 15)

Required reading

- Vining, A., & Weimer, D. (2002). Introducing policy analysis craft: The sheltered workshop. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 21 (4), 697-707.

Assignment Due:

Capstone policy analysis paper