

Professor Elaine Denny
ekdenny@ucsd.edu
Summer II 2015
Mondays & Wednesdays 2:00-4:50 PM, PCYNH 120
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 5-6 PM (Location TBD)
TA: Liesel Spangler (Office Hours & Location TBD)

POLI 160AA: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

This class serves as an introduction to public policy and policy analysis. The material builds practical skills while building a theoretical understanding of policy makers' goals – and how these goals are pursued. The course emphasizes methods and theories applicable across policy spheres. While this course does not require it, a background in basic economics and/or statistics may be useful.

You will gain skills in asking relevant questions, assessing problems from multiple perspectives, and using a variety of analytical tools (rooted in political science, economics, psychology, and more). By the end of this course, you will have gained exposure to the strategy behind policymaking by crafting your own policy memo. This memo can serve as a basis for further research and/or evidence of your research skills, which you can share with potential employers.

In-class exercises and student discussion will apply and extend concepts covered in course lectures and readings. Policy professionals have also been invited to join the class and demonstrate how course skills and concepts are implemented in a real-world context.

This class is fast-paced but realistic, emphasizing hands-on engagement to deepen learning. Hard work can pay off in newfound proficiency with a number of analytical and critical thinking skills.

My Expectations of Students

I set high but attainable expectations for participants in this course. I conceive of our mutual expectations as a contract: I demonstrate a willingness to work hard and engage deeply in the interests of students' success, and in return I set high expectations for students' effort and engagement.

Research suggests that often what we commonly consider “intelligence” or “aptitude” is not hard-wired, but rather is the result of long-term effort, hard work, and practice. It has been shown that at least 5000 hours of practice are required to master a skill, and that a “growth” mindset (learning through practice) leads to higher probability of long-term success than a “fixed” mindset (learning due to innate intelligence).

Hence, I expect students to invest time and energy in working through course assignments. I expect students to prepare for each session, and to thoughtfully and deeply participate in class exercises.

Students are expected to approach their learning and conversations with peers with integrity and professionalism. This includes listening carefully, both to classmates and to the voices we encounter through the coursework. I also expect students to take part in discussions (in class, office hours, and/or online) as a means of taking ownership of their own knowledge and opinions.

I do not, however, expect perfection. Our class is a learning environment in which students have the space to try and fail, to safely make mistakes and learn from them. Assignments and my grading system create spaces for creativity and curiosity. My goal is for students to feel in control of and inspired by their learning experience. Therefore, if you are struggling (or if you have a particularly exciting idea), don't hesitate to come talk to me.

What Students Can Expect from Me

My role as educator is to serve as a guide as we explore the foundations of social science research. I seek to facilitate in-depth engagement with concepts in ways that challenge students to develop their own proficiency in the generation and evaluation of quality research. In a larger sense, students will ideally strengthen their own voices as future policy professionals and members of the global society.

Being an excellent teacher requires a deep investment of time, effort, and creativity. Students can expect me to make this investment in them and their education, be it through careful preparation prior to classroom sessions, dynamic class leadership, or continued mentorship after the course ends. This is because I firmly believe that by maximizing their learning experience, I can better equip students to engage intelligently, thoughtfully, and passionately with the world both before and after they graduate.

I take seriously my responsibility for creating a classroom environment that facilitates the open, respectful exchange of ideas. By setting clear guidelines for peer engagement and expectations for student dialogue, as well as by teaching through example (listening with respect), I create safe spaces where students can play with ideas and exchange points of view in productive and empowering ways.

I prioritize giving my students my time to listen, to support, and to mentor. This is because my relationship with them only begins in the classroom. Whether it is by providing advice and perspective, collaboration opportunities, or field-specific knowledge and guidance, students can expect me to remain committed to supporting them and their success after our classroom journey concludes.

Academic Integrity

As per UCSD's Academic Integrity Policy, plagiarism is not tolerated. This includes excerpting text from web pages without citation, having others complete a student's assignments, and copying parts of other papers you've written without citing yourself. If you are unsure about whether a type of work or writing is considered plagiarism, please come and ask. The UCSD's full policy is available here:

<http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>

Also, I have seen that occasionally students resort to plagiarism when they are overwhelmed by other school or personal concerns. Trust me – a penalty for plagiarism makes life infinitely messier. If you are feeling overwhelmed, come talk to me (or one of the other resources on campus), and we'll see how we can accommodate your needs.

Resources

TED will be used extensively in this class. Please refer to it frequently.

Writing

UCSD offers many programs to help you take your writing skills to the next level. These include:

- The UCSD Writing Center: Sign up for individual assistance on papers and/or group workshops
- OASIS Language and Writing Program: Individual tutoring for students who speak English as a second language.
- College-specific writing assistance (see website for more details)

You can find more information about all of the above at:

<https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/advising/academic-success/writing-programs.html>

Counseling

UCSD has a wide range of services promoting student health and psychological wellbeing. You can access these services at <http://caps.ucsd.edu/>

Technology

Laptops are permitted for note-taking and readings, but using electronics for non-course purposes (gchat, email, web browsing, etc.) will affect participation grade.

I will make my best effort to respond to emails within 24 hours, particularly on weekdays. For queries about logistics, please read the syllabus carefully before emailing in case your question is addressed there.

Also, note that I (and other professors) have found that face-to-face conversations help answer questions/solve problems faster and more deeply than long email exchanges – if office hours conflict with other courses, feel free to email me to set up a time to meet in person.

UCSD offers VPN services (off-campus access to various university networks/programs). You may be able to do your STATA and library work remotely:

<http://libraries.ucsd.edu/services/computing/remote-access/>

Professional Experience and Mentoring

Are you curious about what it's like to work for a non-profit organization, for government, or as a consultant on development issues? Are you thinking about graduate school? Are you looking for ways to travel abroad? I have a diverse professional background and would be more than happy to share experiences and insights, or just to think through next steps after UCSD with you.

For reference, I come back to graduate school after 5 years of non-profit work abroad and in the US, including 2 years at Amnesty International. I've traveled to a number of countries to engage with development and human rights issues: Argentina, China, El Salvador, India, Jordan, Mexico, Nicaragua, and South Africa. Currently, I'm working on projects with UNICEF and DFID (British equivalent of USAID) that address gender-based violence in Nigeria, Sudan, and Somalia. I was a chemistry major as an undergraduate and received a Masters in Public Policy at the University of Michigan.

EVALUATION

Course grades will be determined as follows. Assignments and grading are structured to give students a chance to be creative and experiment, while practicing a diverse range of policy skills.

5%	Submission of 2 reading questions on TED for classes 2-8 @ 1% each (2 scores dropped)
20%	In-class participation (attendance, in-class exercises, course discussion)
10%	Midterm concept quiz
25%	6 written exercises (all steps toward your final policy memo!) @ 5% each (lowest score dropped)
10%	First draft of policy memo
10%	Final presentation in policy roundtable
20%	Final policy memo

Due dates are listed below.

PARTICIPATION

Class attendance is mandatory. More than one absence is penalized unless you have a medical excuse or other extenuating circumstance. This course moves quickly, and if you're absent, you won't be able to make up all the in-class learning from slides or readings.

Participation is also determined based on your contributions (quantity and quality) to classroom discussion and exercises. If you have found class participation to be a challenge in the past (due to language barriers, shyness, etc.), please come talk to me sooner rather than later and we will discuss ways to help you engage with the class. You are welcome to start (or respond to) discussion threads on TED as a way of augmenting your participation grade.

There will be occasional in-class exercises or short quizzes, which will also be included in your participation grade.

MIDTERM QUIZ

The midterm quiz (90 minutes) will ask you to engage with key terms from the first half of the course:

- What the term means
- Why it's important
- A policy example that applies the concept

You'll also be asked to draft a short policy brief to practice policy writing and analysis skills.

Please bring a blue book for your quiz.

ASSIGNMENTS

This class moves quickly. Assignments are structured to help you strengthen a diverse set of professional skills in a condensed time period. The weekly written assignments help pace work on the final project, so you won't have as much of a crunch at the end of the session!

Response questions to readings

Due noon on day of class, Aug 5-Aug 26

Based on the readings due that day, craft two questions that respond to points of tension, confusion, or curiosity that you found in the readings. Some of these questions will be used in class discussion, so explore questions that you're interested in posing to your peers.

Written assignments

Details of each written assignment will be distributed on TED the week before the exercise is due. **Assignments are due on TED at 11:59 PM on the date listed.** Assignments should be about 1-2 pages long. Assignments marked with an asterisk (*) should be about 1-2 pages long and are components of your final policy memo.

- Aug 2: Complete pre-class survey (not graded)
- Aug 5: Choose topic and summarize the policy problem in your own words *
- Aug 9: Backgrounder (Interests, Interactions, Institutions) *
- Aug 16: Issue analysis from 2 perspectives *
- Aug 23: Cost benefit analysis and recommendation *
- Aug 28: First draft of policy memo, including implementation strategy *
- Aug 30: Peer feedback *
- Sept 3: Final policy memo due

POLICY ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS

Each student will present a concise and engaging overview of his/her policy memo analysis and recommendations during class periods 9-10. Presentations will be grouped by issue area, in the style of a policy roundtable. Presentations will be 5 minutes maximum (focus on key questions: what, who, why, how). We will have time for presenters to ask each other questions and answer audience questions as well. Further presentation details will be provided later.

Aug 31 and Sept 2: Final presentations (in class)

FINAL POLICY MEMO

This cumulative project integrates multiple facets of learning from the course. It can also be a valuable writing sample when you are job hunting. The policy memo will be approximately 5-7 pages single spaced (12-point font, 1-inch margins).

You are an analyst employed at an institution of your choice (can be government, non-profit, business sector, etc.). You'll select a policy problem (based on a student-generated short list), analyze the problem from multiple angles, propose (and justify!) a solution that advances the interests of your institution, and outline a plan of strategic action. Further guidelines and grading rubric will be forthcoming.

This research assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to engage in more in-depth analysis of a policy problem or question of particular interest to you, further hone your critical thinking and writing skills in defending the position(s) you put forth, and enable you to investigate a case study not covered in the course. Because of UCSD's tight timeline for grade submissions after the course, and the importance of maintaining standards of fairness for all students, late assignments will be penalized ***one-third of a letter grade for each 24-hour period that they are late***. Please note that there are ***two deadlines*** for the policy paper: (1) submission of hard copy at the beginning of class, and (2) submission of e-version to TED.

In order to avoid a late penalty, ***both*** parts of the assignment must be submitted by the deadlines

We'll be using Turn-It-In in this class, so please make sure your ideas and writing are original, and properly cite outside sources.

If you need help narrowing your topic, or if you run into problems finding information on the topic you've chosen, please consult the TA, a reference librarian at Geisel, or me.

READINGS AND CLASS CONTENT

For the August 5-August 26 readings, students are asked to submit 2 discussion questions to TED prior to class. These questions are based on points of tension, confusion, or curiosity that emerge in the readings, and the questions may be used for class discussion. Readings are required, particularly so that all students are prepared to engage in class discussion and understand concepts covered in lecture.

Throughout the course, various policy professionals join for brief conversations about their work. **Take 3-5 minutes to review the website of their organizations before class (links below) and consider: What type of organization is this? Who are they trying to influence through the policy process, and why? What are the main policy tools they use, and why?**

Required texts

1. *Contemporary Policy Analysis* by Michael Mintrom (Oxford University Press).
This will be the primary textbook used in the course
2. *The Economics of Public Issues, Seventeenth Edition*, by Miller, Benjamin, and North.
Note: We'll use the 17th edition, not the 18th – it's much cheaper! (<\$10!)
3. Other readings (marked with an asterisk *) will be available on the course website prior to that day's class. Please check TED often.

Aug 3: What's a Public Problem, and What is Public Policy?

Readings:

Mintrom, Ch. 1, 7-8

* Godwin, Ch. 3

Aug 5: Strategies for Analyzing Policy

Readings:

“Killing the Colorado” -- Read 2 of the report's articles listed here:

www.propublica.org/series/killing-the-colorado (feel free to explore further as well)

Miller, et al., Ch. 8

* Smith, Ch. 6-7

* Godwin, Ch. 2

Guest speaker:

Siobhan Mills, Senior Analyst at Abt Associates

www.abtassociates.com

Aug 10: Markets, Externalities, and the Flow of Capital and Labor

Readings:

Skim (& read p. 16-17): [Wages and Working Hours in Textiles](#), International Labor Organization
Miller, et al., Ch. 14
Mintrom, Ch. 9-10

Guest speaker:

Paul Watson Jr., President/CEO of The Global Action Research Center (ARC)

www.theglobalarc.org

Aug 12: Role of Government; Public and Private Goods

Readings:

Mintrom, Ch. 3-4, 11

[6 Policies Economists Love \(and Politicians Hate\)](#) (“Plan” and “People Think” tabs)

[Pres. Obama’s Action Plan on Climate Change](#)

Miller, et al., Ch. 25

* “Property Rights: Private and Political Institutions,” by Louis De Alessi. Chapter 2 in *The Elgar Companion to Public Choice*. William F. Shughart and Laura Razzolini, Eds

Guest speaker:

Dawson Tang, Data Analyst at Good World Solutions (and former UCSD graduate student)

www.goodworldsolutions.org

Aug 17: Institutions and (Challenges of) the International System

Readings:

* “[Rules of War \[Geneva Conventions\] in a Nutshell](#)” International Committee of the Red Cross

* “[War Crimes Overview](#)” BBC

* *A Problem From Hell*, by Samantha Power. p. 329-357, 364-366, 370-377, 382-385 (full text from 329-385 included for your reference)

* “[Quick facts: What you need to know about the Syrian refugee crisis](#)” Mercy Corps

* “[UN Calls on Western Nations to Shelter Syrian Refugees](#)” *New York Times*, April 17, 2015

Mintrom, Ch. 12-13

Guest speaker:

Katie Shay, Human Rights Lawyer and Legal and Policy Coordinator

International Corporate Accountability Roundtable

<http://icar.ngo>

Aug 19: Incomplete and Asymmetric Information; Midterm Quiz

Readings:

Mintrom, Ch. 11

Aug 24: Strategy, Decision-Making, and Human (Mis)Perceptions

Readings:

**The Logic of Collective Action*, by Mancur Olson, p.5-16

* “The logic of collective action,” by Omar Azfar. Chapter 3 in *The Elgar Companion to Public Choice*. William F. Shughart and Laura Razzolini, Eds.

* “The Elements of Strategic Thinking: Decision Tree and Game Theory,” by Dipak K. Gupta. Chapter 13 in *Analyzing Public Policy*, 2nd Ed..

**Thinking Fast, Thinking Slow*, by Daniel Kahneman, p. 269-288

[Discrimination starts even before grad school, study finds](#), *Nature newsblog*, April 24, 2014 (based on study by Milkman, Akinola, and Chugh)

* “Are Emily and Brendan more employable than Latoya and Tyrone? Evidence on racial discrimination in the labor market”, M Bertrand, S Mullainathan *AER*, 2004

Skim: Mintrom, Ch. 7 (review), 14-15

Guest speaker:

Megan Ryan, Burma Desk, US Department of State

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35910.htm>

Aug 26: Bargaining, Coalitions, and Collective Action (To What End?)

Readings:

[Getting to Yes With Iran](#), *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2013, by Robert Jervis

[Iran Deal Reached](#), *Reuters*, July 14, 2015

* Godwin, Ch. 5-6

* “Social Justice,” by Robert Sudgen. Chapter 18 in *The Theory of Choice*. By Shaun Hargreaves Heap, Martin Hollis, Bruce Lyons, Robert Sudgen, and Albert Weale.

* Review Olson and Azfar readings from last week.

Your turn:

Choose two of the following groups. Then, **find and read 3 news sources (your choice) on both groups to get an overview of their recent political activities. What initiatives seem successful, where are challenges, and why?**

- AARP
- NRA
- Human Rights Campaign
- #BlackLivesMatter
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Guest speaker:

Sara Schmidt, Outreach and Organizing Manager at the Breast Cancer Fund
(previously: Amnesty International USA Field Organizer)

www.breastcancerfund.org

www.aiusa.org

Aug 31: Policy Roundtables

(no extra readings)

Sept 2: Policy Roundtables and Course Wrap-up

(no extra readings)