

Kathryn Baragwanath
kbaragwa@ucsd.edu
Summer II 2019
Mondays & Wednesdays 11:00AM-1:50 PM, HSS 2321
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 2-3 PM (SSB 324)
TA: Dui Trinh (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.

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

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>

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.

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/>

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.

Grade	Item	Date
10%	Participation, attendance	ongoing
10%	Quizzes	random
25%	Midterm	08/19
20%	First Draft Policy Memo	08/26
35%	Final Policy Memo	09/06

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.

QUIZES

We will have 5 quizzes at the beginning of class. The dates will be chosen at random. They will test the materials discussed in the previous lecture as well as the material assigned for reading that day. This is a way of ensuring that students attend class and are on top of the reading, so we can have a productive discussion in class. The lowest two scores will be dropped. Bring an electronic device (cell phone, tablet or laptop) in order to take the quiz.

MIDTERM

The midterm (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

Please bring a blue book for your midterm.

READINGS AND CLASS CONTENT

Readings are required, particularly so that all students are prepared to engage in class discussion and understand concepts covered in lecture.

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

Readings:

Mintrom, Ch. 1, 7-8

Miller, et al., Ch 1
[The Limits of Markets](#)
[Six Policies Economists Love \(and Politicians Hate\)](#)

Aug 7: Strategies for Analyzing Policy & The Role of Government

Readings:

Miller, et al., Ch. 8, 25
Mintrom, Ch. 3-4, 11

Aug 12: Markets and Market Failure

Readings:

Miller, et al., Ch. 12, 17, 25
Mintrom, Ch. 9-10

Minimum Wage

VOX- [How new research is shaking up the debate about a \\$15 minimum wage](#)

Carbon Tax

[What is a Carbon Tax?](#)

VOX- [The 5 most important questions about carbon taxes, answered](#)

Vaccines

VOX- [Be Thankful you were born after the smallpox vaccine](#)

Aug 14: Public, Private and Collective Goods

Readings:

[NPR - Lighthouses, Autopsies and The Federal Budget](#)

[Tragedy of the Commons](#), Garret Hardin

[Governing the Commons](#) – on Elinor Ostrom’s work

The Economist – [“The Irony of the Tragedy of the Commons”](#)

Miller et al., Ch. 9

Aug 19: Midterm Quiz; Monopolies, Cartels and Natural Monopolies

Readings:

No reading this week. Study for the exam!

Aug 21: Property Rights and Collective Action: Application to the Environment

Readings:

Miller et al., Ch 24, 26

[The Logic of Collective Action](#)", by Mancur Olson, p.5-16

[What is the Coase Theorem, really?](#)

[Ronald Coase and the Misuse of Economics](#), The New Yorker

Vox - "[We'll Soon know the exact air pollution from every power plant in the world. That's huge](#)"

Aug 26: Incomplete and Asymmetric Information: Application to Job Market

Readings:

Akerloff, George. [The Market for "Lemons": Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism](#)

The Economist: [Secrets and Agents – Information Asymmetry](#)

["Are Emily and Brendan more employable than Latoya and Tyrone? Evidence on racial discrimination in the labor market"](#), M Bertrand, S Mullainathan *AER*, 2004

Aug 28: Representation, Lobbying, Money in politics

Readings:

Miller et al., Ch 21

"Why is there so little money in US politics?", Ansolabehere et al, 2003. (PDF on Tritoned)

"The Theory of Economic Regulation" George Stigler, 1976. (PDF on Tritoned)

[Unintended Consequences: Origins of an Enduring Era](#), Chicago Booth Review

Sept 2: Labor Day – No Class

Sept 4: Race and Gender Analysis

Mintrom, Ch. 14 & 15