POLI 168: Policy Assessment
Professor Haney Hong, Spring Quarter AY2018-2019

Course Information

- People:
  - Instructor: Haney Hong, http://www.linkedin.com/hdhong/, haneyhong@ucsd.edu, +1.619.234.6423, office hours by appointment (likely by video and in the evenings/ on weekends; you’re always welcome to come to my office, however)
  - Teaching Assistant: Keng-Chi Chang, kechang@ucsd.edu, +1.415.650.8222, office hours Thursdays 11:00am-12:00pm at Social Sciences Building 329 (sign up at https://appoint.ly/s/kengchichang/poli168)
  - Executive Assistant (for scheduling office hours): Ms. Lupe Flores, lflowers@sdccta.org, +1.619.234.6423.

- Course Description
  The use of real data to assess policy alternatives. Introduction to benefit/cost analysis, decision theory, and the valuation of public goods. Applications to health, environmental, and regulatory economic policy making.

- Course Materials
  - Readings are listed in the course schedule. Want to learn more? sections indicate suggested books if you’re interested in digging deeper.

- Tools and technology resources:
  - Slack communication tool at ucsd-poli168-201904.slack.com.

Teaching Methods and Learning Outcomes

- Teaching Methods
  I am excited for the privilege to work with you these next ten weeks. You have the incredible blessings to be at an amazing institution, and my goal is to help you maximally leverage your blessings and opportunities so you can be of service to others. Politics, after all, is about how we organize for each other.

  I am a practitioner with one foot usually in the academic door, and you’ll find that I am a to-the-point, but practical instructor interested in challenging you to grow so you can make positive impact in your community. I have taught undergraduate and graduate students for over ten years, and I’ve come to learn that students often really love or really hate how I teach. Many times in the same evaluation set, I’ve gotten “best prof ever” and “worst prof ever.” If you end up in the latter group, I certainly hope you
afford me at least the benefit of the doubt that I am challenging you to grow, which can be uncomfortable, and that you recognize that you will encounter people like me in your work life.

We are going to explore real data and their applications in a variety of ways.

- The course schedule of topics and activities is designed to help you methodically through your individual research and creative project, where you will recommend a real-world policy change for a real-world agency. This is where you will learn from me, other scholars through readings, and your classmates during in-class discussions.

- In the middle of the course, you’re going to learn from your classmates in- and out-of-class through group work. You’re going to experience a proxy of the real-world ambiguities and uncertainties of making policy with data with little personal stake on the line.

- During the last three weeks of the course, you’re going to learn through an in- and out-of-class game. You’re going to experience the real world, and you’re going to have a personal stake on the line. Games are fun, but there are winners and losers, just like in real life.

- **Learning Outcomes**

I have three overarching goals for you. The successful student will...

- Get excited about how data can drive meaningful policy solutions to the most wicked challenges we face as a community;
- Become equipped, only basically, with an understanding of how data works in real world policy making; and
- Develop the critical thinking and meta-awareness to be thoughtful and ethical policy makers using data as part of the decision making.

These three overarching objectives imply there are other objectives, as well. Think of these as competencies you, the successful student, can develop:

- Demonstrate your “data literacy:” your ability to judge the value of research, interpret statistical tables, understand validity to studies;
- Apply data in policy analysis: your ability to understand risk, to recognize the limits of your understanding, to utilize information for cost benefit analyses;
- Communicate complex data effectively and appropriately to various audiences: your ability to take information and relay “so what” or “now what” effectively and efficiently—and truthfully;
- Persuade and negotiate with the information you have: your ability to use the three competencies above to be of service to your community; and
- Organize collective action: your ability to use information ethically to drive policy changes for a group of self-governing people.

### How to Succeed in this Course

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I expect of you</th>
<th>What you can expect of me</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be attuned and engaged.</strong> Read this syllabus carefully and completely so you understand the course structure and expectations.</td>
<td><strong>Enthusiasm.</strong> To be prepared for each class and to bring my enthusiasm for teaching to each lecture, activity, and office hour meeting.</td>
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<td><strong>Hold yourself accountable.</strong> Keep up with readings and assignments, as each one builds on the previous one.</td>
<td><strong>Responsiveness.</strong> To respond to emails within 24-48 hours. For those that know me already, you know that I usually respond faster than this. Emails received on weekends or while I’m traveling may take longer. Best to copy the TA and my EA.</td>
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<td><strong>Ethical.</strong> A good attitude and maintenance of honest and ethical principles towards me, your classmates, and the execution of the course. Please read UC San Diego’s Principles of Community and Conduct Code.</td>
<td><strong>Timely feedback.</strong> To make every effort to return graded assignments within one to two weeks of the submission date and to post general feedback soon as is reasonably possible after the submission date.</td>
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<td><strong>Integrity.</strong> An honest, fair, responsible, respectful, trustworthy, and courageous effort on all academic work and collaboration. Please read UC San Diego’s Policy on Integrity of Scholarship. Then, take the integrity pledge!</td>
<td><strong>Integrity.</strong> To uphold integrity standards and create an atmosphere that fosters active learning, creativity, critical thinking, and honest collaboration.</td>
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<td><strong>Be flexible and polite.</strong> Sometimes my schedule gets affected by unavoidable work travel or commitments, necessitating some office hour rescheduling at the last minute.</td>
<td><strong>Reasonable</strong> accommodation and understanding for student situations that arise; however, I will not make exceptions for one person that are not available to every other person in the course.</td>
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*Some of you likely know that I’m also an officer in the US Navy. As we say, “Your failure to plan does not constitute an emergency on my part.”*
Course Structure and Learner Interaction

How Learning Will Be Assessed

- Assignments and Activities
  - Graded:
    - 50 points for individual project
    - 25 points for midterm project
    - 25 points for game “work production” and results
  - Non-graded:
    - You will take quizzes to verify whether presenters effectively communicated data, but it affects the presenters’ grade, not yours.

- Attendance and Participation Policy: there is no grade specifically for participation/attendance. Note, however, that whether you attend or not and the degree to which you engage with others in class, the midterm group project, and the game will likely have an impact on how your colleagues perceive your commitment—and therefore the game results, which do impact your grade.

- Grading Procedures: there will be a rubric for each of the graded activities to clarify expectations and how you earn points. A few notes to set expectations, however:
  - The individual project will be graded against an absolute rubric on the quality of work, as determined by the instructor. That means everyone can do just as well as one another.
  - The group project will have two components to the grade: (1) 10 of the 25 points against an absolute rubric on the quality of work, as determined by the instructor, (2) 10 of the 25 points based on how well your classmates do on the quiz you draft, but that the TA/instructor modifies and approves, and (3) 5 of the 25 points on whether you convince your classmates to pursue your policy recommendation.
  - Your grade from the game is fairly simple and will be based on two components: (1) 15 of the 25 points on your work production and (2) 10 of the 25 points on your performance in your game role relative to all the others in the same type of role. You’ll get 0 points if you do not come to the final session with at least $1 of game money.

- Incompletes and P/NP policy: you are not allowed to take this course P/NP per UCSD policies. I will consider incompletes on a case-by-case basis depending on the student’s circumstances, but generally expect students will complete assignments on time. The individual project is due in Week 8 so there is absolutely no reason why a student couldn’t submit that before the end of the term.

- Extra Credit policy: every student has the opportunity to earn up to 25 points in extra credit. This is based on the 15 points of the midterm project and the 10 points of the game that are not completely under your control, though you certainly influence it. The opportunity and rubric will be issued separately from the syllabus and be based on a real-world policy matter in the San Diego region.

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<th>Total</th>
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<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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• Regrade policy: for the individual project, a student is allowed to resubmit as many times as he or she desires, but the latest grade will stand. I will not accept any resubmissions on the individual project after the Final.
• Late or missing assignments: I will consider requests for extensions on individual projects on a case-by-case basis, but generally expect that it will be submitted on time. A late submission will have 5 points deducted per 24 hour period or part thereof.

Class Structure
In each class session, we will generally do a combination of the following with breaks to separate the “chunks.” The class session will have required and optional/ recommended readings to prepare you for the discussions.
- Lecture and small/large group discussion on concepts and policy issues (e.g., common data sources, measures of reliability of sources, etc.)
- Depending on availability, we may have a guest speaker to discuss the policy area of focus for that class session
- In Module 1, lecture and small/large group discussion on the individual projects
- In Module 2, midterm project group presentations and some game preparations/practice through Slack
- In Module 3, game playing

Module 1: Brilliant on the Basics
1. 2 April – Introduction and Concepts


Want to learn more?

a. Who’s who? Why is this course valuable to you?
b. What do we mean by data literacy?
c. What cognitive biases do we have?
d. Explanation of individual project, midterm group project, and game.
e. Explanation of extra credit opportunity.

2. 9 April – Public Goods, Market Failures, and Regulations; Housing and Homelessness

Regulatory Impact Analysis: A Primer, URL

a. What is a public v. shared v. private good?
b. What do we measure? How do we find valid data?
c. Why do private markets fail?
d. What are regulations, and do they have benefits? Costs?
e. For the midterm group project: we will spend class time to organize into groups (min of 4, max of 8), and each group will select a topic for presentation from Weeks 5-8. Ideally, we have two groups per week.
f. For the individual project this week and out-of-class: communicate, if you’d like, with TA/ instructor your agency and policy question you’d like to explore; get advice if you’d like.

3. 16 April – Cost Benefit Analyses, Distribution Concerns, Discounting; Health and Environmental Regulations


Want to learn more?

a. What are the “costs” and “benefits” of policy and to whom are those costs and benefits distributed?
b. What is the concept of the value of a statistical life year?
c. What is vintage regulation?
d. For the midterm group project: we will spend class time discussing how to find data and how to evaluate the legitimacy of those data
e. For the individual project this week and out-of-class: communicate, if you’d like, with TA/ instructor what data sets you’ve found; get advice if you’d like.

4. 23 April – Decision Theory, Policy Interventions; Defense/ Development


a. How to manage uncertainties?
b. How to model? Test/ pilot?
d. For the midterm group project: we will spend class time discussing how to review data. Groups going in Week 5 must submit to the TA their recommended validating quiz on the data.
e. For the individual project this week and out-of-class: communicate, if you’d like, with TA/ instructor what data sets you’ve found; get advice if you’d like.
Module 2: Evaluate Policy Options as an External, Dispassionate Observer

5. 30 April – Networks/ Knowledge Spreading; Energy/ Water


Want to learn more?


a. First Midterm Group Presentation and quiz/ vote; groups going in Week 6 must submit to the TA their recommended validating quiz on the data.

b. How is information shared? What is trusted and generally accepted?

c. What are best practices in communications?

d. What are adaptive versus technical problems?

e. For the individual project this week and out-of-class: communicate, if you’d like, with TA/ instructor what evaluation and ideation you’ve done to get advice or thoughts.

6. 7 May – Process v. Substance; Education


Want to learn more?

a. Second Midterm Group Presentation and quiz/ vote; groups going in Week 7 must submit to the TA their recommended validating quiz on the data.
b. How and why do “organizations” behave the way they do?
c. What is the difference between substantive and procedural justice?
d. For the individual project: communicate, if you’d like, with TA/ instructor what evaluation and ideation you’ve done to get advice or thoughts.

7. 14 May – “Seams” across issues and systems thinking; Housing/ Urban Planning


Want to learn more?

a. Third Midterm Group Presentation and quiz/ vote; groups going in Week 8 must submit to the TA their recommended validating quiz on the data.
b. What is the field of “behavioral economics?”
c. How do policies cut across issue areas? What’s a “system?”
d. For the individual project: begin to write, if you’d like, your policy paper.

8. **21 May – Ethics, Persuasion, Negotiation; Transportation & Infrastructure**


   **Want to learn more?**


   a. Fourth Midterm Group Presentation and quiz/ vote.
   b. Submit individual project.
   c. How to persuade?
   d. How to negotiate?
   e. Be a delegate or a trustee?
   f. Begin to prepare for game; submit preferences for game role in class

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**Module 3: Drive Policy Changes as a Stakeholder**

9. **28 May – Law Enforcement and Public Safety**

   No readings
   a. Game activities:
      i. Select Speaker
      ii. Begin role playing

10. **4 June – Economic Development**

    No readings
    a. Game activities:
i. Bills submitted and read
ii. Agenda for final class determined

11. Final
No readings
a. Game activities:
i. Conduct session and debate bills

Student Resources for Support and Learning
- Library help: for questions about eReserves and research tools, use “Ask a Librarian.”
- Learning Resources:
  o Writing Hub
  o Supplemental instruction
  o Tutoring
  o CAPS Student Health and Well-Being
- Community Centers: learn about the different ways UC San Diego explores, supports and celebrates the many cultures that make up our diverse community – Student Life - Diversity
- Accessibility: Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. Contact the OSD for further information: https://disabilities.ucsd.edu/, osd@ucsd.edu, +1.858.534.4382.
- Inclusion: I am committed—and you should be, too—to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspective, experience, and identities. I encourage students to participate in discussion and contribute to the field from their perspective. Invite anonymous feedback as an option. Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: +1.858.822.3542, diversity@ucsd.edu, https://diversity.ucsd.edu/. The game, group project, and class discussions will challenge you and the interpersonal relationships you have with your classmates; it’s important that you remember to be fair and equitable to all your classmates, as you would expect that from them. It’s also important to demonstrate grace if you feel wronged, as often individuals do not harm another with intentionality; if you do feel wronged by a classmate or even me, please bring this up with me privately, and let’s talk it through with one another and the other individual.
- Basic Needs: I encourage any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect his/her performance in this course, to contact foodpantry@ucsd.edu, basicneeds@ucsd.edu, +1.858.246.2632.
Technical Support: for help with accounts, network, and technical issues, contact the ITS Service Desk. For help connecting to electronic library resources such as eReserves and e-journals, see how to connect from off-campus.

UC San Diego Academic Policies

- **Academic Integrity:** Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating, or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the University’s ability to certify students’ knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result in sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in the class and suspension or dismissal from the University. So, think carefully before you act. Before you act, ask yourself the following questions: a: is my action honest, fair, respectful, responsible, and trustworthy, and b) is my action authorized by the instructor? If you are unsure, don’t ask a friend, ask your instructor, instructional assistant, or the Academic Integrity Office. You can learn more about academic integrity at academicintegrity.ucsd.edu.

- **Classroom and Out-of-Class Behavior Policy:** I expect everyone to behave professionally and to treat others with respect and dignity. Note that the game will test your professional limits and will likely lead to strong emotions, so think twice before speaking or acting especially if you’re upset. Refer to the UCSD Student Conduct Code and Principles of Community.

- **Religious accommodation:** it is the policy of the university to make reasonable efforts to accommodate students having bona fide religious conflicts with scheduled examinations by providing alternative times or methods to take such examinations. If a student anticipates that a scheduled examination will occur at a time at which his or her religious beliefs prohibit participation in the examination, the student must submit to the instructor a statement describing the nature of the religious conflict and specifying the days and times of conflict.

- **Discrimination and harassment:** the University of California, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and university policies, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy (including pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (including membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services). The university also prohibits harassment based on these protected categories, including sexual harassment, as well as sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. The nondiscrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in university programs and activities. If students have questions about student-related nondiscrimination policies or concerns about possible discrimination or harassment, they should contact the Office for the Prevention of Harassment &
Discrimination (OPHD) at +1.858.534.8298, ophd@ucsd.edu, or reportbias.ucsd.edu. Campus policies provide for a prompt and effective response to student complaints. This response may include alternative resolution procedures or formal investigation. Students will be informed about complaint resolution options. A student who chooses not to report may still contact CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center for more information, emotional support, individual and group counseling, and/or assistance with obtaining a medical exam. For off-campus support services, a student may contact the Center for Community Solutions. Other confidential resources on campus include Counseling and Psychological Services, Office of the Ombuds, and Student Health Services. CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center +1.858.534.5793, sarcaucsd.edu, https://care.ucsd.edu; Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) +1.858.534.3755, https://wellness.ucsd.edu.

Subject to Change

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be – under certain circumstances such as mutual agreement to enhance student learning – subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.