

Kathryn Baragwanath

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Spring 2021

Tu-Thu 12:30PM-1:50PM

Zoom ID for class: [REDACTED]

Zoom link: [REDACTED]

Office Hours: Thu 2PM

Zoom ID for OH: [REDACTED]

TAs: Adam Fefer, Eric Thai & Martin Olvera Cruz

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

Canvas 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/>

FORMAT

Traditionally, this course would be conducted as a seminar, with the expectation that all students contribute to debates in class. The Covid 19 pandemic has upended everybody's lives – and some more than others. The instructor understands that students face different contexts and have different challenges. Nonetheless, it is instrumental that we learn from what everyone taking this course brings to the table. Therefore, we ask those who can do it to please attend the Zoom lectures live. An online course poses significant challenges to participation. We support your right to privacy. You have the right to keep your camera and microphone off. However, if you feel comfortable doing so, turning your video on and participating during class will enrich your education and the education of your colleagues.

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
35%	Midterm	Due on Thursday of Week 5
20%	First Draft Policy Memo	Due on Thursday of Week 8

45%	Final Policy Memo	Due on Thursday of Week 10
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MIDTERM

The midterm (take-home, one week to complete) 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

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 Canvas often.

Week 1: 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 \(and Politicians Hate\)](#)

Week 2: Strategies for Analyzing Policy & The Role of Government

Readings:

Miller, et al., Ch. 8, 25

Mintrom, Ch. 3-4, 11

Week 3: 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](#)

Week 4: 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

Week 5: Midterm Quiz; Monopolies, Cartels and Natural Monopolies

Readings:

No reading this week. Work on midterm!

Week 6: 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”](#)

Week 7: 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

Week 8: 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

Week 9: Environmental Policy: Applying different frameworks to the environmental problem

Deforestation

<https://ourworldindata.org/deforestation>

<https://ourworldindata.org/drivers-of-deforestation>

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/climate-geopolitics-petrostates-russia-china/>

Baragwanath and Bayi, “Collective property rights reduce deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon” PNAS 2020. <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/34/20495/tab-article-info>

Green New Deal:

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez et al. (July 2019). H. Res. 109, Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal. 116th Congress. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text>

Tooze, Adam. “Why Central Banks Need to Step Up on Global Warming.” Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/20/why-central-banks-need-to-step-up-on-global-warming/>

Dolsak, Nives, and Aseem Prakash. 2019. “The Green New Deal And The New Politics Of Climate Change.” Forbes. 9

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/prakashdolsak/2019/03/13/gnd-and-the-politics-of-climate-change/?sh=712265a67c6c>

Week 10: Race and Gender Analysis

Mintrom, Ch. 14 & 15

"Improving women's representation in politics through gender quotas." J-PAL Policy Insights. Last modified April 2018. <https://doi.org/10.31485/2274.ID.2018>

“Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India.” Chattopadhyay, Raghavendra and Esther Duflo. 2004.

Esther Duflo: “Representation for women in India” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqi4dd7B4&feature=youtu.be>

“How to close the massive gender gap in Congress” Vox <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/8/7/20746147/congress-women-2019-gender-parity>

“For Affirmative Action, Brazil Sets Up Controversial Boards To Determine Race” NPR <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/09/29/495665329/for-affirmative-action-brazil-sets-up-controversial-boards-to-determine-race>

“Research says there are ways to reduce racial bias. Calling people racist isn’t one of them.” Vox <https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/11/15/13595508/racism-research-study-trump>