

POLI 160AA / USP 101: Introduction to Policy Analysis

Spring 2023

Professor: Jennifer Gaudette

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Office Hours: Thursdays from 12:45pm – 2:15pm in SSB 320 and by appointment
(with exception of April 27, when office hours will be held on Tuesday, May 2, from 12:45-2pm)

Class Meetings: Tu/Th, 11:00am-12:20pm

Lecture Hall: Pepper Canyon Hall 109

Teaching Assistant: Marianna Garcia

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-2pm (SSB 441)

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Teaching Assistant: Sergio Guedes Reis

Office Hours: Fridays 2-3pm (SSB 343)

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Course Description

This course is designed to give students an understanding of public policy and how one might choose between various policies. The first part of the course provides basic knowledge of rationality, collective action, market dynamics, and problems with the market. The second part of the course provides a brief overview of each stage of the policy-making process. The third part of the course discusses various aspects of public policy. The last part of the course focuses on current policy questions.

Evaluation

Your grade will be determined using the following rubric:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
40%	In-Class Midterm	Tuesday, May 9
20%	Policy Memo – First Draft	Tuesday, May 23
40%	Policy Memo – Final Draft	Tuesday, June 13

Policy memo due dates mean assignments must be submitted by 11:59pm on that date or be considered a late submission with associated penalties. Memos may be submitted at any time prior to the due date.

Because assignments are back-loaded, reading assignments are much lighter in the second half of the quarter.

Syllabus

This syllabus is a guide to the course and is subject to updates throughout the term. I will post an announcement on Canvas if updates are made to highlight the changes.

Course Policies

Grading Scale

Grades are based on the following scale:

98-100 = A+	84-86.9 = B	70-73.9 = C-
93-97.9 = A	80-83.9 = B-	60-69.9 = D
90-92.9 = A-	77-79.9 = C+	0-59.9 = F
87-89.9 = B+	74-76.9 = C	70-100 = Pass if taking Pass/Fail

Participation

Evidence-based research on teaching and learning has documented a strong causal relationship between active participation/discussion and student learning. The risk of large courses is that students miss out on the opportunity to discuss course materials and therefore learn less. For this reason, we will engage in small group discussions as well as larger group discussions throughout the course. I strongly encourage you to come to class prepared to contribute to these discussions.

In-Class Midterm

The midterm will be taken in-class and is meant to be completed in less than our allotted time (1 hour 20 minutes). The exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions covering the first five weeks of material. You will be permitted to bring one page of notes, double-sided, but otherwise no materials may be accessed. **Please let me know by Tuesday of Week 2 if you do not have a tablet or laptop that you can bring to class to take the exam.**

The midterm exam cannot be made up without well-documented evidence of an emergency or prior approval by the instructor.

Policy Memo – First Draft

A rubric and examples of policy memos will be posted by the end of Week 3 for your review. The first draft of the policy memo should address all requirements of the rubric on a policy topic of your choice. In addition to a grade, you will receive feedback on the first draft from your TAs.

Policy Memo – Final Draft

A rubric will be posted by the end of Week 7 for your review. The final draft of the policy memo should address all requirements of the rubric **and must include a cover sheet explaining how you addressed the feedback you received from TAs on the first draft.** The rubric you receive will provide full details on how to structure the feedback response.

Extra Credit

Extra credit of up to 2 percentage points is available if you attend a local city or county council meeting and provide (1) photographic proof of attendance (a selfie at the venue is fine), and (2) a three paragraph summary that states the name of the event and what you learned from attending. A list of local councils for San Diego County can be found here: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cob/mastercalendar.html>. Additionally, I reserve the right to award extra credit of up to 2 percentage points for excellent student participation.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the date and time indicated on the assignment. Late assignments turned in within 24 hours of the due date will be penalized with minus 5 percentage points. Late assignments turned in 24-48 hours after the due date will be penalized with minus 10 percentage points. Please contact me if an assignment is later than 48 hours after due date.

Grade Appeals

We have two fantastic TAs who have been instructed to give students the benefit of the doubt when grading. However, our amazing TAs are also human, and humans make mistakes. If there is clear error in grading, you can submit a grade appeal. Appeals about grades must be type-written, include evidence of the error with citations, and be no more than one page long. It must be submitted to your TA, who will discuss with me.

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 your assignments, copying the work or answers of others, and copying parts of other papers you've written without citing yourself. Online AI tools cannot be used to generate answers to exam questions or your policy memo. These tools frequently cite fake sources and occasionally plagiarize. You are responsible for any plagiarism in your work, regardless of whether you wrote it or used an AI tool. If you are unsure about whether a type of work or writing is considered plagiarism, please ask. UCSD's full policy is available [here](#).

Writing Assistance

UCSD offers multiple opportunities for feedback on your writing and assistance outside of this course. You can find more information about the UCSD Writing Center and the OASIS Language and Writing Program for English as a second language students here: <https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/success/writing-programs.html>.

Classroom Policies

Cell phones are prohibited from being used during class. Laptops are permitted but should only be used for taking notes and pulling up readings. I strongly recommend taking notes by hand as studies have found that hand-writing notes leads to better comprehension and material absorption.

This class will involve frequent discussions both in large and small groups. Respect for your fellow classmates is required. Disagreement is natural and debate is encouraged, but students *must* be respectful to one another.

Inclusive Classroom

I am committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspective, experience, and identity. I urge all of you to contribute your unique perspective to discussions so we can all learn from each other. If you ever feel excluded or unable to fully participate in class, please let me know. I also ask that everyone abide by UCSD's Principles of Community (<https://ucsd.edu/about/principles.html>) and Student Code of Conduct (<https://studentconduct.ucsd.edu/>).

Class Format and Course Materials

Each class will consist of a mix of lecture, large group discussion, and small group discussion. Course assignments are a mix of academic papers, textbook chapter selections, newspaper/web articles, YouTube videos, and podcast episodes.

All assigned readings and links are available on Canvas. Readings are lighter in the second half of the quarter to give you time to focus on drafting and revising your policy memos.

Discussion questions may change; check the weekly announcements that cover the next week's assignments before reading. I will also frequently provide guidance about where to focus your reading and efforts in these announcements.

The final two weeks will use the tools we have learned to dive into four topics that you choose as a class from the following list, which may be updated based on in-class feedback:

- Climate change
- Housing (affordability, homelessness, etc.)
- Policing
- Global trade
- Foreign aid
- Drug policy
- Financial aid
- Universal basic income
- Financial regulation / banking (think: Silicon Valley Bank)

I will post a survey on Canvas, and we will read about and discuss the four topics that receive the most votes. **You must complete the survey by 11:59pm on Wednesday, April 5.**

E-mail Policy

Please use the designated forums on the Canvas discussion board for all course- and assignment-related questions that are not personal so that everyone can benefit from the information. Due to the size of the class, this will be the most efficient way for us all to communicate. I am also always available during office hours and after class to discuss questions and other issues. Please make sure to put the course number (POLI 160AA) in the subject line so that I can locate your emails.

Additionally, please use email and do not use the Canvas messaging function if you need to reach out to the TAs or me directly. In my experience, there are issues with these messages showing up for professors and TAs, and I do not want to miss messages from students.

COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

April 4 Introduction

Readings:

1. The Impact podcast, Vox Media (2017). "How California saves moms from dying in childbirth." <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/how-california-saves-moms-from-dying-in-childbirth/id1294325824?i=1000395590142>

Discussion Questions:

1. What is public policy?
2. Why do we need it?
3. How do we make public policy?

April 6 Rationality + Collective Action

Readings:

1. Kenneth Shepsle (2010). *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. Chapter 2 (p. 13-35).
2. Joel Waldfogel (2007). "The Irrational 18-Year-Old Criminal: Evidence that Prison Doesn't Deter Crime." Slate.com http://www.slate.com/articles/business/the_dismal_science/2007/01/the_irrational_18yearold_criminal.html
3. Mancur Olson (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action*. p. 5-16
4. Kai Kupferschmidt. (2020) "'Vaccine nationalism' threatens global plan to distribute COVID-19 shots fairly" <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/07/vaccine-nationalism-threatens-global-plan-distribute-covid-19-shots-fairly>

Discussion Questions:

1. What is instrumental rationality and how is it built into policy?
2. Are humans irrational or do policymakers misestimate their beliefs/preferences?
3. What is the collective action problem and why is it relevant to policy analysis?

WEEK 2

April 11 The Role of Electoral Systems and Political Parties

Readings:

1. Kenneth Shepsle (2010). *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. Chapter 7.
2. Lawrence Hurley (2019). "Virginia Republicans lose in U.S. Supreme Court racial gerrymandering case." Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-court-gerrymandering/virginia-republicans-lose-in-u-s-supreme-court-racial-gerrymandering-case-idUSKCN1TII1TN>
3. American Political Science Association (1950). "Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Report of the Committee on Political Parties." Summary of Conclusions and Proposals. *American Political Science Review*.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the form of electoral system and voting method affect the policy we get?
2. How would we make policy at a state and federal level without parties?
3. Can polarization be useful from a policy perspective?

April 13 Market Dynamics

Readings:

1. Michael C. Munger (2000). *Analyzing Policy*. Chapter 3 (pages 54-69)
2. Paul Heyne (1997). *The Economic Way of Thinking*. Chapter 2 (pages 17-38)
3. Jon Hartley (May 2016). "India's Price Ceiling On Uber Rides Hurts Riders, Drivers And The Economy." *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jonhartley/2016/05/31/indias-price-ceiling-on-uber-rides-hurts-riders-drivers-and-the-economy/#41935cc82e0e>

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do markets seem to appear throughout human history?
2. How are public policy and markets connected?

WEEK 3

April 18 Market Failures (monopolies, natural monopolies, etc.)

Readings:

1. Kenneth Bickers and John Williams (2001). *Public Policy Analysis: A Political Economy Approach*. Chapter 7.
2. Robert Kuttner (1997). "The Limits of Markets." *The American Prospect*. <https://prospect.org/economy/limits-markets/>
3. Read/listen to at least one of the following:
 - a. Maureen Tkacik and Krista Brown. (2022) "Ticketmaster's Dark History." *The American Prospect*. <https://prospect.org/power/ticketmasters-dark-history/>
 - b. Decoder with Nilay Patel. "Taylor Swift vs. Ronald Reagan: The Ticketmaster Story." <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/decoder-with-nilay-patel/id1011668648?i=1000605176402>

Discussion Questions:

1. Are market failures a policy failure?
2. How do we know when market dynamics are failing?
3. How do we figure out the difference between a successful company and a monopoly?

April 20 Market Failures, cont. (inequality, money in politics)

Readings:

1. *Inequality for All*. Directed by Jacob Kornbluth. 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvAFPHLFMa0>
2. "The Numbers Game: How's the Middle Class Doing?" PolicyEd. 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXI_ADnp22c
3. Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page (2014). "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics*.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean that the government sets the rules of the economy?
2. Is income inequality something policy makers should care about?
3. Why do you think it's so hard to quantify the impact of money in politics?

WEEK 4

April 25 Stages of Policy Analysis, Agenda Setting, Defining the Problem

Readings:

1. James Anderson (2003). *Public Policymaking*. Ch. 3 (p. 79-101).
2. Mark H. Moore (1976). "Anatomy of the Heroin Problem." *Policy Analysis*. **Skip appendices.**

Discussion Questions:

1. How do issues become defined as problems?
2. How do problems get on the government agenda?
3. What role do interest groups play in agenda setting and problem definition?

April 27 Evaluating Policy (Jasper Cooper, guest speaker)

Readings:

1. Jennifer Doleac and Benjamin Hansen (2020). "The Unintended Consequences of 'Ban the Box': Statistical Discrimination and Employment Outcomes When Criminal Histories Are Hidden." *Journal of Labor Economics*.
2. Hristos Doucouliagos and T.D. Stanley (2009). "Publication Selection Bias in Minimum-Wage Research? A Meta-Regression Analysis." *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. **Focus on introduction and conclusion, you can skim the body.**

Discussion Questions:

1. What mechanisms can we use to test the outcomes of policy interventions?
2. How do publication biases affect the information we use to evaluate policy?

Note: No office hours on April 27. Instead, I will hold office hours on both Tuesday and Thursday of Week 5 (12:30 – 2:00pm) in advance of the midterm in Week 6.

WEEK 5

May 2 Policy Variables (Coercion Levels, Targeting vs Universal)

Readings:

1. James A. Anderson. (2003) *Public Policymaking*. Ch. 6
2. The Impact (2018). "Food fight!" <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-impact/id1294325824?i=1000423970930>
3. Greg Rosalky (2021). "The Case for Universal Pre-K Just Got Stronger." NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2021/05/18/997501946/the-case-for-universal-pre-k-just-got-stronger>
4. Anya Kamenetz (2022). "A top researcher says it's time to rethink our entire approach to preschool." NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/10/1079406041/researcher-says-rethink-prek-preschool-prekindergarten>

Discussion Questions:

1. How do we decide what level of coercion is justifiable for a given policy?
2. What is the best rationale for making a policy targeted? Universal?

May 4 Midterm Review

WEEK 6

May 8 Extra Pre-Midterm Office Hours (10:00am – 11:50am)

May 9 **!! IN-CLASS MIDTERM – LAPTOP/TABLET REQUIRED !!**

May 11 Political Consequences (Justin de Benedictis-Kessner, guest speaker via zoom)

Readings:

1. Justin de Benedictis-Kessner and Christopher Warshaw (2020). “Accountability for the Economy at All Levels of Government in United States Elections” *American Political Science Review*.
2. Andrew Healy and Neil Malhotra (2009). “Myopic Voters and Natural Disaster Policy.” *American Political Science Review*.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do voters hold elected officials accountable? At what level? For what policies?
2. What is the connection between accountability and policy choice?
3. Why do we care about accountability?

WEEK 7

May 16 Cost Benefit Analysis and Decision Making

Readings:

1. James Anderson (2003). *Public Policymaking*. Chs. 4 (pgs. 119-125) and 7 (pgs. 264-269)
2. Dana Kamerud (1988). “Benefits and Costs of the 55 mph Speed Limit: New Estimates and Their Implications.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you value a human life?
2. Should we value human benefits greater than monetary costs?
3. How are cost benefit analyses driven by social values?

May 18 Race and Gender in Public Policy

Readings:

1. Devah Pager, Bart Bonikowski, and Bruce Western (2009). "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment." *American Sociological Review*.
2. **Read at least one of the following:**
 - a. Timm Betz, David Fortunato, and Diana O'Brien (2020). "Women's Descriptive Representation and Gendered Import Tax Discrimination." *American Political Science Review*.
 - b. Ariel White, Noah Nathan, and Julie Faller (2014). "What Do I Need to Vote? Bureaucratic Discretion and Discrimination by Local Election Officials." *American Political Science Review*.
3. The Impact (2018). "Denmark's paternity leave problem."
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-impact/id1294325824?i=1000425790707>

Discussion Questions:

1. Why might descriptive representation affect policy outcomes for different racial, ethnic, and gender groups?
2. How can policymakers account for societal biases when designing policy?
3. Are measures meant to combat discrimination motivated by market failures or non-market rationales?

WEEK 8

May 23 Courts as Policy Makers [POLICY MEMO 1st DRAFT DUE @ 11:59PM!]

Readings:

1. *Brown v Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/347/483.html>
2. Jonathan Adler (2023). "Should There Be Three-Judge Panels for National Injunctions." <https://reason.com/volokh/2023/02/07/should-there-be-three-judge-panels-for-national-injunctions/>

Discussion Questions:

1. The judiciary is traditionally not viewed as a policy-making branch. Do you think that is accurate? Why or why not?
2. *Should* the judiciary have a policy making role? Why or why not?
3. How do we define what is and is not policy making by courts? Does it even matter?

May 25 Tax Code as Policy Tool (Haney Hong, guest speaker)

Readings:

1. Valentino Larcinese and Alberto Parmigiani (2023). "Income Inequality and Campaign Contributions: Evidence from the Reagan Tax Cut." LSE. **Focus on sections 1, 2, 5, and 8.**
2. Political Economy with Jim Pethokoukis (2022). "A Tax Policy Primer."
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/political-economy-with-jim-pethokoukis/id589914386?i=1000581718162>
3. Read at least one of the following:
 - a. Kalena Thomhave (2017). "Reimagining the Tax Code, Getting There with Grassroots Activism." *The American Prospect*. <https://prospect.org/economy/reimagining-tax-code-getting-grassroots-activism/>
 - b. Victor Fleischer (2019). "Create a More Progressive Tax Policy." *The American Prospect*. <https://prospect.org/day-one-agenda/create-a-more-progressive-tax-policy/>

Discussion Questions:

1. The tax code is frequently used as a policy tool by both liberals and conservatives. Why do you think it's used so frequently?
2. Think back to the first week of class and our discussion of rational actors. Do tax code changes make sense as motivator for individual behavior? Firm behavior?

WEEK 9

May 30 Climate Change

Readings:

1. The Impact (2020). "Green New Germany." <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-impact/id1294325824?i=1000463334170>
2. Jariel Arvin (2021). "One weird trick to fix climate change: Close the offshore wealth loophole." *VOX*. <https://www.vox.com/2021/3/5/22310179/carbon-tax-climate-change-wealth-tax>
3. Leah Stokes (2021). "Bill Gates and the problem with climate solutionism." *MIT Technology Review*. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2021/02/16/1017832/gates-robinson-kolbert-review-climate-disaster-solutionism/>
4. Leah Stokes and Sam Ricketts (2021). "This popular and proven climate policy should be at the top of Congress's to-do list." *VOX*. <https://www.vox.com/22265119/biden-climate-change-renewable-energy-clean-electricity-standard-congress>

June 1 Universal Healthcare / Public Health

Readings:

1. The Impact (2020). "How Taiwan got Medicare-for-All." <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-impact/id1294325824?i=1000463992918>
2. David Dayen (2020). "Monopolies Are Why Salt and Water in a Bag Became a Scarce Item." *The American Prospect*. <https://prospect.org/culture/books/monopolies-are-why-salt-and-water-in-a-bag-became-scarce-dayen-monopolized-book/>

WEEK 10

June 6 Housing

Readings:

1. <https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/blog/why-does-it-cost-so-much-to-build-housing-california/>
2. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/07/10/california-needs-to-build-more-apartments/>
3. <https://direct.mit.edu/rest/article-abstract/105/2/359/100977/Local-Effects-of-Large-New-Apartment-Buildings-in?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
4. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2023/04/17/more-flexible-zoning-helps-contain-rising-rents>
5. <https://evictionlab.org/>
6. <https://www.browndailyherald.com/article/2023/04/bill-aims-to-create-50-million-revolving-housing-fund-in-rhode-island>

June 8 Urban Planning / Transportation

Readings:

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-nicholas-bagley.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>
2. <https://www.niskanencenter.org/the-procedure-fetish/>

June 13

POLICY MEMO FINAL DRAFT DUE BY 11:59PM!