

Policy Analysis

Last Updated: Fri, 12/19/2025

Course prefix: PUBP

Course number: 30303

Section: TW

CRN (you may add up to five):

30256

Instructor First Name: Travis

Instructor Last Name: Whetsell

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

A fundamental principle of good governance is making decisions based on sound reasoning and good information. In this course we will develop the skill of analyzing public policies in a structured way using systematic logic and empirical evidence. Good policy analysis applies abstract theories in a practical way that generates insights useful to decision makers.

This course is based on two major themes of public policy and administration. The first is the concepts and process of public *policy analysis*, defined as “Client-oriented advice relevant to public decisions and informed by social values”. The second major theme is analytical methodology, including prospective tools and retrospective models used to make inferences about the likely or actual impacts of policies.

Course learning outcomes:

1. Apply policy analysis frameworks and theories to evaluate public problems
2. Work in a team setting to conduct analysis of a public policy problem
3. Write a formal policy analysis document
4. Present the findings of a formal policy analysis
5. Critically engage in policy discussion by articulating theory and evidence-based positions

Required course materials:

These are the general textbooks will be used frequently in this course. The first is our main book. The rest I am just using chapters from, which will be posted on canvas.

1. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. Weimer, Vining (WV)
2. *Theory and practice in policy analysis*. Morgan (M)
3. *Handbook of Impact Evaluation*. Khandker, Koolwal, Samad (KKS). - FREE
4. *Impact Evaluation In Practice*. Gertler, Marti, Prem, Rawl, Verm (GMPRV) - FREE

You may want to buy a physical copy of WV, since it is a classic book that you will likely use in more than one course. KKS and GMPRV are available for free on the world bank website. I will be providing other readings throughout the semester, which will be indicated in the Readings section in the weekly schedule. Other readings will appear below in the schedule.

Grading policy:

This is a list of the assignments and each grade percentage summing to 100%. This course follows the general guidelines for correspondence of percentage grades to letter grades. Percentage grades will be rounded. For example, 89.5 will be rounded up to an A.

1. 10% Activities
2. 10% Attendance
3. 10% Rough Drafts of Final Paper (2)
4. 30% Exams (2)
5. 30% Final Paper Parts (2)
6. 10% Policy Analysis Presentation

Attendance policy:

The data show that a big part of success in this course is showing up to class consistently. I will take roll manually at the beginning of class. If you arrive after I take roll, it is your responsibility to notify me that you are present after the lecture or class activities are done. There are also in class activities assessed based on participation with accompanying deliverables initiated in class and then finished later for submission at the end of that week.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

PUBP 3030 develops Core Impacts competencies through the study of public policy. Students strengthen Communication by crafting policy briefs and delivering presentations. The course emphasizes Community and Social Responsibility by examining how policies affect different populations. Ethical reasoning is cultivated as students navigate competing values and the moral responsibilities of analysts. Students engage in Research and Inquiry by applying quantitative and qualitative methods to real-world policy problems. Together,

these experiences prepare students to contribute thoughtfully to public discourse and democratic governance.