

**Boston University**  
**The Future of Public Policy**

Spring 2015  
PO 320: Public Policy and State Society Relations  
Tuesday, Thursday: 6:00-7:20pm  
Location: CAS 237  
Version: 1/20

Professor: Taiyi Sun  
Office: 232 Bay State Road, No. 305  
Office hours: Tuesdays 7:30-9pm, Thursdays 4:30-6pm, or by appointment  
Phone: 626-384-7919  
E-mail: [suntaiyi@gmail.com](mailto:suntaiyi@gmail.com)

Course Description:

This course examines how countries, particularly the US, confront critical choices in public policy and the effectiveness of the policies they choose. Public goods pricing, poverty, crime and punishment, social security and welfare, environment, political campaign, education, NGO, organized interest, international trade, corporate social responsibility and a few other relevant ongoing issue areas will be explored to demonstrate how policy is constructed, analyzed, implemented, and critically evaluated. Political feasibility and state-society feedback will also be examined.

Course requirements:

*Attendance and participation (30%):*

Required, unless you are sick or have an official BU conflict. You must notify me of your absence in advance. (Repeatedly being late might also accumulate to an absence.) Participation is crucial, and this requires that you keep up with the course readings.

- *News presentation:* you will be assigned to present news or current events once during the semester. You will need to send out the web link of the news article to the entire class by noon before the day you present. Your presentation should be about 10 minutes and should be related to the topic of the week. Describe what happened and why this is important.
- *Public policy events:* attend two public policy related events during the semester and email me three things you've learned from each event. Such events can vary from a talk or conference on a particular topic to a public event on a particular issue.
- *Reading notes:* use about two pages to write down key points, thoughts and comments of the readings assigned for the week after, and post them on blackboard by each Sunday at 11:59pm (The first due date is Sunday Jan.25). When directly quoting, please cite (Author Page#).
- *Attendance:* you are expected to attend all classes and actively contribute to the discussions. Absences may be excused for medical, religious, official and personal reasons. Absences for illness for more than two days require a medical certificate. Absences for religious observances and for family or personal reasons require documentation. Absence for purposes of representing the University in authorized athletic events or officially sponsored activities are excused by notification from your sponsoring department or activity. The

stated University policy reads: “Any student who has been excessively absent from a course may be required to withdraw from that course without credit.” I define “excessively absent” for this course to be six absences, excused or not.

*Mid-term exam (20%):* Details to be announced in class

*Individual assignment (20%):*

The individual assignment will be about 10 pages long (double-space) and will be due on **April 9, Thursday**. The assignment will be announced in class and is intended to give you an opportunity to think critically about an important public policy topic and to hone your analytical writing. The paper ought to be written independently. **NOTE:** The assignment must be submitted on time. “On time” means the start of class on the day the paper is due. Late papers will be downgraded 1/3 of a letter grade each day of delay.

Group project (30%):

Use the tools and methods learned from the class and help a real organization form/refine its public policy (can be as small as a student organization on campus, can be as big as state or even national government offices).

- Set an agenda for the entire semester at the beginning
- Decide on a decision making mechanism and assign roles to each member
- Document group meetings and the decisions made
- Keep me informed about your internal and external communications
- You will be graded on the following (not an exhaustive list)
  - Application of the knowledge learned in this class
  - Impact and risk of the project
  - Communication and documentation
  - Effective resource mobilization
  - Project adjustment and management
  - Actual completion of the project
  - Feedback from the client
  - In class presentation
  - Summary report on the project

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to do their own work and to accurately and honestly give credit for information, ideas, and words obtained elsewhere. Plagiarism will be dealt with strictly according to the Academic Conduct Code (<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/>); please review the website for examples of what counts as plagiarism so you know how to avoid it. If you have questions or concerns about how to properly cite outside sources, feel free to contact me and I will be happy to assist you.

### Course Outline

(Articles with \* are optional and are for reference only)

1/20: Introduction

Eugene Bardach, “Introduction”, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The*

*Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. New York: Chatham House Publishers (2009)

Watch Obama's "State of the Union" address

\*Fischer, Frank, Gerald J. Miller and Mara S. Sidney, Part I "Historical Perspectives", Chapters 1-3, *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*. CRC Press, 2007.

1/22: Basic concepts

Fry, Brian R., and Jos C. N. Raadschelders. Chapter 1 "Max Weber: The Process of Rationalization", *Mastering Public Administration: From Max Weber to Dwight Waldo*. Second Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2008.

Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of "Muddling Through"", *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring, 1959), pp. 79-88

David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, Chapter 2 "What is Policy Analysis", *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practices*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Pearson, 2010

1/27: Tools for analysis

Gregory Mankiw, Chapters 1-3, *Principles of Microeconomics*. 6th ed. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2012.

David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, "Assessing the Costs and Benefits of Social Policies", *Investing in the Disadvantaged: Assessing the Benefits and Costs of Social Policies*, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C. 2009

1/29: Case discussion

Steven Danna, Keibun Mori, Jake Vela, and Michelle, Ward, "A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Road Pricing in Downtown Seattle", *Evans school Review*, Vol.2, Num.1, Spring 2012

\*Gregory Mankiw, Chapters 4-6, *Principles of Microeconomics*. 6th ed. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2012.

2/3: Defining the Problem and Assemble Evidences

Eugene Bardach, Part I, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. New York: Chatham House Publishers (2009)

Jerry Mitchell, "The Use (and Misuse) of Surveys Research in Policy analysis", in Fischer, Frank, Gerald J. Miller and Mara S. Sidney ed., *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*. CRC Press, 2007.

Eugene Bardach, Part II, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. New York: Chatham House Publishers (2009)

2/5: Case discussion

The Economist (2011). "The World's Richest Country Tries to Count its Poor." Available at:

<http://www.economist.com/node/17961878>

Gladwell, "Million Dollar Murray," *The New Yorker*, February 13, 2006

2/10: Conducting research

Research on earthquake and social capital accumulation in China

Readings: TBD

2/12: Conducting research

Guest Speaker: Yue Hou on entrepreneur's approach on formal institutions in China

Readings: TBD

2/17: no class (Monday schedule)

2/19: Construct the Alternatives

Eugene Bardach, Appendix B: Things Governments Do, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. New York: Chatham House Publishers (2009)

Adolf Gundersen, "A Brief Description of Interactivity Foundation's Sanctuary and Public Discussions", Interactivity Foundation (December, 2007)

2/24: Case discussions

Jeffrey A. Butts and John K. Roman, "Juvenile Crime Interventions", David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, ed., *Investing in the Disadvantaged: Assessing the Benefits and Costs of Social Policies*, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C. 2009

2/26: Select the Criteria and project the outcomes

Stone, "Understanding Cause and Effect," Huffington Post, July 27, 2013 <  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/geoffrey-r-stone/understanding-cause-and-e\\_b\\_3663960.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/geoffrey-r-stone/understanding-cause-and-e_b_3663960.html) >

\*Burger and Light, "Evaluating Options for U.S. Greenhouse-Gas Mitigation Using Multiple Criteria", Rand Report <  
[http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2009/RAND\\_OP252.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2009/RAND_OP252.pdf)>

3/3: Michael Tanner, "Social Security, Ponzi Schemes, and the Need for Reform", Policy Analysis, No.689, Cato Institute, November 17, 2011

Christian Weller, "Building it up, not Tearing it Down: A Progressive Approach to Strengthening Social Security", Center for American Progress, December 2010

3/5: Mid-term exam

Spring Break

3/17: Confront the Trade-offs and Decide

Clinton J. Andrews, "Rationality in Policy Decision Making", in Fischer, et al.  
Frank Fischer, "Deliberative Policy Analysis as Practical Reason: Integrating Empirical and Normative Arguments" in Fischer, et al.

3/19: Case discussion

"Emissions Rule to Help Americans Breathe Easier," Washington Post, March 29, 2013

"China's Environment: A small breath of fresh air." *The Economist*, Feb 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014

3/24: Tell your story

Marshall Ganz, "Why Stories Matter", *Sojourners*, March 2009

Boas Shamir and Galit Eilam, "'What's your story?' A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development", *The leadership quarterly* 16, 2005, 395-417

Video: Obama's 2004 Democratic National Convention Speech (first eight minutes)

3/26: Construct and tell your own story

TBD

3/31: Evaluation

Anne T. Coghlan, Hallie Preskill, and Tessie Tzavaras Catsambas, "An Overview of Appreciative Inquiry in Evaluation", *New Directions for Evaluation*, no.100, Winter 2003

Paul J. Gertler, Sebastian Martinez, Patrick Premand, Laura B. Rawlings, and Christel M. J. Vermeersch, Chapter 1 "Why Evaluate?" *Impact evaluation in Practice*, the World Bank, 2011

4/2: Case discussion

Governmental Accounting Office, Financial Education and Counseling Pilot Program, 2011

4/7 & 4/9: Public Policy and NGO

Burton A. Weisbrod, "The nonprofit mission and its financing: Growing links between nonprofits and the rest of the economy", *To profit or not to profit: the commercial transformation of the nonprofit sector*, Weisbrod ed. Cambridge University Press, 2000

Nidhi Srinivas, "Against NGOs? A Critical Perspective on Nongovernmental Action", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Volume 38 Number 4, August 2009

\*Peter Frumkin, *On Being Nonprofit*, Harvard University Press, 2002 Chapter 1-3

4/14 & 4/16: Organized interest

Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech, *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who wins, who loses, and why*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009 Chapter 1 "Advocacy, Public Policy, and Policy change"; Chapter 3 "Structure or Chaos?"; Chapter 10 "Does Money Buy Public Policy?"

4/21 & 4/23: Corporate Social Responsibility

David Vogel, *The Market for Virtue: The potential and Limits of Corporate Social Responsibility*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2005 Chapter 1 "The Revival of Corporate Social Responsibility"; Chapter 2 "Is There a Business Case for Virtue?"; Chapter 3 "Is there demand for virtue?"; chapter 6 "Corporate Responsibility for Human Rights and Global Corporate Citizenship"

4/28 & 4/30 Group presentations