

School of Government

PUBL 306

THEORY AND METHODS OF POLICY ANALYSIS

Trimester One 2009

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Co-ordinator: **Professor Claudia Scott**
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Tutor: **Tina Robilliard**
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Trimester Dates

Monday 2 March to Wednesday 1 July 2009.

Class Times and Room Numbers

| | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Lectures: | Wednesday | 9.30 – 10.20am | GBLT3, Pipitea Campus |
| | Friday | 9.30 – 10.20am | GBLT2, Pipitea Campus |
| | | 10.30 – 11.20am | GBLT3, Pipitea Campus |
| Tutorials: | Wednesday | 12.40 – 1.30pm | RWW127, Pipitea Campus |
| | Thursday | 12.40 – 1.30pm | RWW127, Pipitea Campus |

Withdrawal dates: Information available via
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Course Learning Objectives

This course develops a student's ability to apply core theories and methods of policy analysis to policy issues. Its focus is on the design and assessment of policy options which can underpin robust policy advice for decision makers and citizens. Each student will have hands-on experience in applying theories and methods to a specific policy issue. Students will enhance the knowledge, skills and competences required to become experienced analysts and advisers.

The course will enhance a student's ability to apply core theories and methods when undertaking policy analysis, which involves:

- Scoping and defining a given policy problem;
- Assembling evidence that illuminates a problem's causal and contributing factors;
- Examining various values and impacts which impinge on a specific policy issue, problem or opportunity;
- Interpreting the government of the day's policy agenda and placing it in larger context;
- Constructing a broad range of policy options;
- Articulating criteria for assessing the policy options;
- Testing the options against the criteria via multiple methods;
- Developing recommendations for action.

Attention is given to how information and evidence can enhance the quality of analysis and advising. What kinds of tools does the policy analyst need? In the words of public policy scholar Aaron Wildavsky (1987, p. 3), these must include: "Qualitative political theory, for refining our picture of where we want to go; quantitative modelling, for systematizing guesswork on how to get there; microeconomics, for disciplining desire with limited resources; and macro-organisation theory, for instilling the will to correct errors: each has its place". We will focus on a combination of hard and soft tools including values clarification, programme evaluation, systems analysis, scenario writing (including intervention logic), regression, modelling and common sense.

Students will learn about and apply various methods and techniques to policy issues – including statistics, modelling, regression and other qualitative methods and learn about professional standards of good practice in the field. This course addresses both questions within the larger context of New Zealand's policymaking system via three broad types of activities: familiarising students with the chief tools of policy analysis and advising, including both theories and techniques; helping students apply these tools to a set of contemporary policy issues; and defining and encouraging those dispositions and habits of mind which are associated with best practice in policy work.

There are a number of desired dispositions and habits of mind which are attributes of a good policy analyst. A preliminary list includes curiosity, ingenuity, imagination, openness to

varied perspectives, healthy respect for evidence, a desire to question commonly held assumptions, a knack for connecting theory with reality, a strong appetite for argument and debate, a taste for clarity of communication, capacity to learn from both success and failure, political dexterity and willingness to make oneself unpopular when necessary.

Students who pass the course will (1) demonstrate a good working knowledge of the theories and analytical tools presented in the course; (2) understand the key features of a specific policy issue and successfully apply theories, frameworks and analytical tools to this issue; (3) develop an appreciation of the role of information and evidence to support policy analysis and advisory work; (4) be able to understand and critique the methods and approaches to policy analysis and to suggest variations and alternatives.

| Course Objectives: By the end of this course, students should be able to: | | Major Attributes |
|--|--|--|
| 1 | Apply core theories and methods of policy analysis to generate robust policy advice for decision makers, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping and defining a given policy problem; • Assembling evidence that illuminates the problem's causal and contributing factors; • Explaining multiple interest-based and values-based perspectives on the problem; • Interpreting the government of the day's policy agenda and placing it in larger context; • Constructing a broad range of policy options; • Articulating criteria for assessing the policy options; • Testing the options against the criteria via multiple methods; • Developing recommendations for action. | MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4, MA5, MA6, MA8, MA9, MA10, MA11, MA13 |
| 2 | Critique the eight-step approach to policy analysis as set out in Course Objective #1 and suggest variations or alternatives. | MA4 |
| 3 | Design strategies for balancing competing pressures on policy advice from ministers and elected representatives, interest groups and various stakeholders. | MA1, MA4, MA9, MA13 |
| 4 | Explain some contemporary policy topics, including contentious issues, strengths and weaknesses of existing policy proposals and fresh ideas for addressing the issue. | MA1, MA9 MA11 |
| 5 | Identify the dispositions and habits of mind that characterise skilled policy advisers and promote professional standards of good practice. | MA1, MA6 MA10 |

| Major Attributes: PUBL majors will be able to: | |
|---|---|
| MA1 | Judge the defining features of good policy analysis and advice and appraise how they are best produced |
| MA2 | Demonstrate an understanding of the influence of political ideas and philosophies, and of constitutional and political institutions on public policy |
| MA3 | Demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of quantitative and qualitative methods in policy analysis |
| MA4 | Identify the nature and respective roles of state and civil society in the development, implementation and evaluation of public policy, and demonstrate an understanding of the distinction between government and governance |
| MA5 | Appraise different disciplinary contributions to the development, implementation and evaluation of public policy |
| MA6 | Judge the relevance and importance of evidence in policymaking |
| MA7 | Apply the comparative method to policy analysis, and identify insights that might be drawn from other policy jurisdictions |
| MA8 | Judge and articulate the relevant criteria that might be used in assessing the advantages and disadvantages of particular policy options |
| MA9 | Analyse complex policy issues from multiple perspectives and identify opportunities for innovation |
| MA10 | Express ideas succinctly and persuasively both in written form and orally |
| MA11 | Construct and articulate rationales for public policy intervention |
| MA12 | Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of ethics and accountability in the study and practice of public policy |
| MA13 | Interpret the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) in the study and practice of public policy in New Zealand |

Course Content

Theory of Policy Analysis (Claudia Scott)

- What is policy analysis and advising?
- Bardach's eight-fold path
- What is the problem/opportunity?
 - Wicked and tame problems
 - Intervention logic: A place to begin analysing the problem/opportunity
 - A systems approach to modelling policy issues
- Criteria and outcomes
 - What are the government's values and priorities?
 - What do stakeholders and the public say they want?
 - By what standards should options be assessed and compared?
 - What outcomes are considered desirable and by whom?

- What are the options?
 - Frameworks for policy issues
 - Government's role *vis a vis* the private and community sectors
 - Matching issues and policy instruments
- Projecting outcomes and making recommendations
- Critique of Bardach method and other options for consideration
- Roles and skills of policy analysts and advisers

Methods of Policy Analysis (Antong Victorio)

- Information and evidence for policy-making
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Statistics
- Regression
- Other methods for projecting outcomes

Expected Workload

Each week, students are expected to attend 3 hours of lecture and 1 hour of tutorial (starting in week 2). In addition, reading for lectures and reviewing notes should occupy an average of 3 hours per week, and research on your policy topic and preparation of course assessments should take about 3 – 5 hours per week on average.

Readings

Readings correspond with lectures, so please complete the related readings before each lecture. Tutorials will be devoted to a mix of discussion about the readings and hands-on practice of techniques and methods being introduced.

The text for the course is Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, Second Edition, CQ Press, 2004. It is available from VicBooks, Student Book Centre, Pipitea. Bardach is a simple, elegant and easy-to-read introduction to the basics of policy analysis. Required supplementary readings are contained in a bound packet available from VicBooks, Student Book Centre, Pipitea, and are essential reading to supplement the text and in particular, to deal with the second part of the course which deals with methods.

It is essential to keep up with the readings and students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day's assigned readings. The trick to a successful university career is learning to read fast and selectively! Don't read every word, but do look through everything to pick up the main points. Focus on the main conceptual point or argument of each article, or the technique being demonstrated, and think about how it relates to the policy topic you are exploring. If you are short of time, then read the introduction, conclusion and subheadings.

Assessment Requirements

| ASSIGNMENT | DUE DATE | WEIGHT | MAX WORDS |
|--|--------------------|--------|-----------|
| Policy Scoping Paper Relating to Objective 1-5 | Friday 27 March | 20% | 2000 |
| Policy Outcomes Matrix Relating to Objective 1, 4 | Wednesday 29 April | 30% | 2000 |
| Terms test (50 minutes) Relating to Objective 1 | Wednesday 27 May | 25% | |
| Policy Methods Report Relating to Objectives 1-5 | Wednesday 3 June | 25% | 2000 |

Assignments are due by 5pm on the date specified. For the policy memos, please email a copy of each assignment to sog-assignments@vuw.ac.nz and to the appropriate lecturer (Claudia.Scott@vuw.ac.nz or Antong.Victorio@vuw.ac.nz). Policy work will be marked electronically, using the 'track changes' function in Word, so you should send your papers in a format that allows this (no pdf's, thanks). Please indicate your document's word length on the cover sheet and don't forget your name. Further details on what is required will be provided in class.

Policy Scoping Paper

Due Friday 27 March, 5pm (2000 words max)

Apply Bardach's first four steps to the problem/opportunity topic you have selected. You need to consult at least five other qualifying sources of information such as government papers, academic studies, or think tank reports on the selected issue. Feel free to read Wikipedia entries to inform yourself, but these and related sources should not be cited as authoritative. The scoping paper should address all of the following questions:

- What is the main policy problem/opportunity? Do key stakeholders agree about how to define the problem? If not, describe the disagreement(s).
- Describe and draw a picture of the policy system in which this issue is located.
- What policy options are being discussed or are used in other countries to address this issue?
- Outline at least three options different to the status quo. Identify some values and criteria which are influencing the policy debate on this issue. Be sure to create options which differ with respect to the role(s) for government, choices of policy instruments, underlying theories of causes and effect.

Policy Outcomes Matrix

Due Wednesday 29 April 5pm (2000 words max)

Further develop the options analysis presented in the policy scoping paper – based on further research and analysis. Be bold and creative here, but not outrageous. Think outside the square. Try to break out of the tired old formulas for addressing these sorts of problems. This memo should:

- Describe additional options including:
 - how they would work in practice;

- how and why they are different from the options discussed in your earlier policy scoping memo;
- Explain why you chose these options and the evidence to support them;
- Test each new option using intervention logic. Discuss assumptions and risks for each;
- Put these options (together with the status quo) and some appropriate criteria into a policy outcomes matrix.

Policy Methods Report: Projecting Policy Options
Due Wednesday 3 June 5pm (2000 words max)

Write an essay which discusses how particular methods can help you to project the outcomes from the options and criteria outlined in the information and evidence base for defining and evaluating policy options for the issue you are analysing. Explain exactly how particular models/methods can assist you to evaluate specific option(s) and associated impacts. Be sure to draw on research and analysis to underpin your arguments and analysis.

Terms Test, Wednesday 27 May, will cover cost-benefit analysis, statistics, and regression.

Tutorial attendance and contribution will be taken into account in the assessment of final grades, with respect to borderline cases.

Penalties

A late assignment will have its mark reduced by 3% (of the total mark) for each day it is overdue unless there is a very good reason why it was late. Assignments will not be accepted that are over a week late. A written assignment (exclusive of references) that exceeds the word limit by more than 100 words will be penalised by 5 marks and those which exceed limits beyond 100 words will not be assessed.

Mandatory Course Requirements

You must sit the terms test, submit all three written assignments, and receive a final grade of 50 or above to pass this course.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information for students will be communicated by email. Please be sure that you provide us with an up-to-date email address. If you are absent from class or tutorials, you must take personal responsibility for obtaining any information or material provided during missed lectures or tutorials.

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general

enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building on the ground floor (EA005). This counter is the first point of contact for:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <<http://www.turnitin.com>>. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. *At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin.* You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website www.victoria.ac.nz/fca under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: including the work of others will not be considered plagiarism as long as the work is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalised severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 6015. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.