

School of Government

GOVT 523
POLICY METHODS AND PRACTICE
(WELLINGTON)
(15 Points)

Trimester 2 / 2016
(CRN 27118)

COURSE OUTLINE

Prescription

Qualitative and quantitative techniques for collecting, analysing, interpreting and applying information and evidence to advance policy objectives particularly under conditions of complexity and uncertainty and in light of given task requirements.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Determine the specific evidence requirements for a given policy research or analysis task;
2. Select or adapt and justify policy methods and practices for various tasks involving a range of challenges with particular issues, situations and contextual settings;
3. Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed;
4. Interpret, summarise and judge the adequacy of evidence.

Course Content

See below for a detailed description and assigned readings.

Trimester Dates

From Monday 11 July to Monday 31 October 2016.

Withdrawal from Course

Formal notice of withdrawal must be in writing on a Course Add/Drop form (available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or from the course administrator). Not paying your

fees, ceasing to attend lectures or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a formal notice of withdrawal.

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before **Friday 22 July 2016**.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 7 October 2016**. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an 'Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late' including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/publications/Application-for-late-withdrawal-2010.doc.

Names and Contact Details

**Course Coordinator and:
Contributor:** **Dr Amanda Wolf**
Room RH 804, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
Telephone: (04) 463 5712
Email: amanda.wolf@vuw.ac.nz

Other Contributor: **Dr Valentina Dinica**
Room RH 802, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
Telephone: (04) 463 5711
Email: valentina.dinica@vuw.ac.nz

Administrator: **Darren Morgan**
Room RH 821, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
Telephone: (04) 463 5458
Fax: (04) 463 5454
Email: darren.morgan@vuw.ac.nz

School Office Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Class Times and Room Numbers

This course is delivered in a modular format.

Module One:	Wednesday 13 July 2016	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Two:	Wednesday 31 August 2016	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Three:	Wednesday 19 October 2016	9.00am – 5.00pm

Locations: Classes will be held on the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to each module by email. The timetable is also available to view on the Victoria University website at www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables.

Attendance is expected at all teaching days.

Course Delivery

This course is delivered in a modular format over three days (three ‘modules’) of 6 hours contact time each (18 hours total) between 9.00am and 5.00pm on the days indicated above, supplemented by 6 hours (online-mediated) between module meetings, as detailed in the course outline below. **Attendance is expected at all teaching days.**

If, before enrolment for a course, you are aware that you will not be able to attend for part of a day, you must notify the Director of Professional Programmes when you enrol explaining why you will not be able to attend. The Director will consult with the relevant course coordinator. In such circumstances, you may be declined entry into a course.

If you become aware after a course starts that you will be unable to attend part or all of a day (i.e. more than two hours), or cannot complete the online learning requirements within the prescribed timeframes, you must advise the course coordinator explaining why you are unable to do so. The course coordinator may require you to complete compensatory work to ensure that you have successfully met the course requirements and fulfilled the learning objectives.

Readings

There is no required text for this course. See below for detailed course content and assigned readings.

Expected Workload

The learning objectives set for each course are demanding and to achieve them you must make a significant commitment in time and effort to reading, studying, thinking and completion of assessment items outside of contact time. Courses vary in design but all require preparation and learning before the first day of the course and regular learning is also necessary (students who leave everything to the last moment rarely achieve at a high level). Expressed in input terms, on average, the time commitment required usually translates to approximately 150 hours for a 15-point course. Some of that is set contact time. The rest is your study time and we recommend you balance your time between preparing for modules and working on assessment and to work steadily throughout the course.

Assessment

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf .

Submit all items through the assignments section of Blackboard, unless directed otherwise. DO NOT SUBMIT PDFs. You should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Overview of Assessed Work

Assessment Items Overview		Due Date	Length	%	CLOs
1	Inter-module work A	Monday 25 July 2016	300 words; approx. 2 hours	5	3
2	Essay	Monday 15 August 2016	1,500 words	25	1, 2, 3
3	Review paper and power-point poster	Monday 26 September 2016	2,000 words; 300–500 word conference style poster	45	2, 3, 4
4	Inter-module work B	Monday 10 October 2016	No set limit on words; approx. 4 hours required	10	2, 3, 4
5	Participatory process design plan	Monday 31 October 2016	1,500 words	15	3

Assessment Detail

- *Marking rubrics will be provided in advance of assignment due dates*
- *Word number breakdowns within assignments are provided as guidance only*
- *References are not included in word count. To count your words for recording on the cover sheet, first save your work. Then save a renamed file. In the renamed file, delete all non-counted material (cover page, references). Note and record the resulting word count. Reasonable over- or under-allowances are acceptable.*
- ***IT IS ESSENTIAL TO READ AND FOLLOW DETAILED GUIDANCE AND TO SEEK ADVICE AS NEEDED FROM THE COURSE COORDINATOR***

1. Inter-module work A: Due midnight, Monday 25 July 2016; approximately 300 words; 2 hours

The assignment, which involves planning and simulating a short interview in interviewer-interviewee pairs, will be handed out in class on 13 July. It will require each person in the pair to prepare notes prior to the simulation, to complete the simulation (face-to-face or via skype) and then to complete a short reflective note (approximately 300 words, drawing on the preparatory notes as needed) after the simulation.

Why this work? This exercise assesses one course learning objective:

- *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed (CLO 3).* The method (interview) is assigned. The scenario in the assignment provides you with background to help you gauge what is required; in the simulation you will practice the interview method (as interviewer or interviewee) and your reflection will show your critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed.

NOTE: for the remaining assignments, you are asked to choose an issue. You MAY NOT choose issues or objectives that relate to (a) overconsumption of sugar; (b) misuse of alcohol; (c) crime reduction; (d) bullying.

2. Essay: Addressing evidence challenges: Due midnight, Monday 15 August 2016; 1,500 words; Complete parts A, B, and C

A. Set the scene for your essay by choosing and describing a *reasonably narrow* policy objective. (100–150 words)

For example, imagine a ‘decision maker’ who is in charge of community safety for Wellington. There has recently been a series of late-night attacks in and around Victoria University. Your decision maker’s objective is to *increase students’ sense of security*.

B. Identify some of the evidence challenges in your selected situation, and explain the nature of the challenges. (350–500 words)

In the example case, you could look at some evidence challenges with defining and measuring students’ sense of security, the challenges posed by aspects of the political or social context, and the challenges of linking changes in sense of security to specific policy initiatives.

C. Select TWO methods from Module 1 (literature review, systematic review OR realist synthesis, interview, focus group, observation, Delphi technique, scenarios) that could be used to provide evidence for the decision maker, in light of the policy objective set out in (A) and the challenges in (B). **Justify the appropriateness** of the two methods, with attention to and needed **adaptations** to account for their **strengths and limitations for your selected application**. (850–1,000 words)

Why this work? This essay assesses three course learning outcomes:

- *Determine the specific evidence requirements for a given policy research or analysis task;* (CLO 1) You will discuss the evidence needed for a particular ‘need to know’, with attention to challenges in gaining good evidence.
- *Select or adapt and justify policy methods and practices for various tasks involving a range of challenges with particular issues, situations and contextual settings;* (CLO 2) You will show that you can ‘match’ methods to challenges in a specific situation.
- *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed;* (CLO 3) You will show your awareness of the strengths and limitations of two methods.

3. Assessing evidence: This assignment has two linked outputs: a review paper and a poster: Due midnight, Monday 26 September 2016.

For the **Review Paper** (2,000 words):

A. Set the scene by selecting and describing a policy objective (you can choose either the same or a different objective than that in Assignment 2). (100–150 words)

B. Describe a method to assess the quality of studies that might provide evidence bearing on the objective in (A). Your method may be based on an existing ‘evidence hierarchy’, or a method that you develop for your purposes. **Justify your method with reference to the qualities that are important to your objective**. (350–500 words)

- C. **Find FIVE ‘items’** (such as research articles and other documents, including grey literature; media reports; opinion pieces) that provide information or claims that could inform a decision maker with respect to the policy objective in (A).
1. Ensure that your selected set of items vary widely in **type of material** (e.g. peer-reviewed article, opinion) and in **method** (include *at least one item that is a quantitative study and one that is a qualitative study* in your set);
 2. At least one of your items should be drawn from a *non-academic source*.
 3. Include *a table* with summary information on the five items in your report; (not part of your word limit).
 4. Ensure your *selected items are available*: If material is available online, include access information; if not, submit as attachments to your review.
- D. **Rate or rank the items** according to the method set out in (B).
- E. **Explain your rating** of the items’ findings or claims and discuss the **strengths and limitations** of your quality assessment method based on the policy objective and the ‘weight’ of the evidence. (1,500 words)

For the **Poster** (1 power-point slide saved as pdf, approximately 300–500 words)

- F. **Present your review** in a single **power-point slide**

Note: bear in mind that the ‘audience’ for the e-conference (see Assignment 4) is comprised of your course colleagues, who are ‘experts’ in methods and practices for policy. Stay focused on the methods and their practice, and don’t get distracted by the substance of the policy objective and research findings

Posters are an increasingly common feature of academic meetings, and similar to the ‘A3’ used in policy briefings. At a poster session, attendees to pick and choose where to direct their attention (compared with sitting through a set schedule) and where time is short, they allow for more participation. For this assignment, your posters will only be viewed online (in Assignment 4.) There is a lot of advice on the web about how to prepare a poster in power-point and how to prepare a poster with impact. Here are a few pages (poster examples will also be shown in class):

<http://guides.nyu.edu/posters>

<http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/posterdesign>

www.studentposters.co.uk/templates.html

Why this work? This assignment assesses three course learning outcomes:

- *Select or adapt and justify policy methods and practices for various tasks involving a range of challenges with particular issues, situations and contextual settings;* (CLO 2) You will demonstrate your skills in working with literature; you will select or construct and justify an approach to assessing evidence quality; you will also assess different policy methods (according to your method) in a specific application.
- *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed;* (CLO 3) You will use your quality assessment method to rate a range of items and reflect on the value of using such methods.
- *Interpret, summarise and judge the adequacy of evidence* (CLO 4). You will discuss the adequacy of the evidence for a specific policy purpose as revealed by your rating of items; you will summarise and visually present your review.

- 4. Inter-module work B: e-conference for methods and practice experts:** Due Opens 30 September and closes 10 October 2016; participation in an online discussion based on the posters from Assignment 3; approximately 4 hours.

All posters from Assignment 3, Part F, will be posted on Blackboard, which will signal the opening of the e-conference, *GOVT 523 2016 Methods and Practice Experts Meeting*. To attend the e-conference, you should browse the various posters and ask the ‘presenters’ questions and/or offer constructive comments and suggestions (what you like and why; what they might have done differently and why). As a presenter yourself, you will need to respond to others’ questions, comments, or suggestions. You are expected to spend about 4 hours looking at posters and participating by adding comments, questions and responses. It is up to everybody to spread the attention around – if one presenter has a lot of attention already, you need to move on; don’t duplicate someone else’s question or comment. Your participation mark is based on evidence that you have actively taken part in the e-conference and the learning it supports.

Why this work? This assignment takes the place of in-class presentations and discussion of Assignment 3, and so contributes to the same course learning outcomes (but with an added emphasis on critical awareness through comparing your own and others’ work).

- 5. Participatory process design plan:** Due midnight, Monday 31 October 2016; 1,500 words
Choose a policy challenge of interest and briefly explain it. You may continue with the example you have been investigating, or choose a new one. According to your preference, focus on two of the three participatory dimensions included in Dinica’s analytical framework (the three are: recruitment methods, participatory objectives, and types of policy-making activities; see the readings and the session overview below). Present a public participation plan and explain your choices.

Why this work? This assignment assesses one course learning outcome:

- *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed;* (CLO 3) You show that you can apply an analytical framework and explain your application

If you believe that exceptional circumstances may prevent you from meeting the assessment requirements, contact the Course Coordinator for advice as soon as possible.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Penalties

The ability to plan for and meet deadlines is a core competency of both advanced study and public management. Failure to meet deadlines disrupts course planning and is unfair on students who do submit their work on time. It is expected therefore that you will complete and hand in assignments by the due date. Marks will be deducted at the rate of five per cent for every day by which the assignment is late and no assignments will be accepted after five working days beyond the date they are due. For example, if you get 65% for an assignment, but you handed it in on Monday when it was due the previous Friday, you will get a mark of 50%.

If ill-health, family bereavement or other personal circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the deadline for submitting a piece of written work or from attending class to make a presentation, you can apply for and may be granted an extension to the due date. You should let your course coordinator know as soon as possible in advance of the deadline (if circumstances permit) if you are seeking an extension. Where an extension is sought, evidence, by way of a medical certificate or similar, may be required by the course coordinator.

Group Work

There is no assessed group work. However, the course requires 6 hours of work between modules, which is to be considered as part of classwork. Rather than being accommodated in a longer module day (i.e. 8.30am to 6.00pm), the equivalent of small-group discussion and presentations/report-back is set up to be flexibly scheduled as detailed below. You will work with others, but be assessed individually.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the Use of Turnitin

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must still acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- material from books, journals or any other printed source
- the work of other students or staff
- information from the Internet
- software programs and other electronic material
- designs and ideas
- the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Acknowledgement is required for *all* material in any work submitted for assessment unless it is a 'fact' that is well-known in the context (such as "Wellington is the capital of New Zealand") or your own ideas in your own words. Everything else that derives from one of the sources above and ends up in your work – whether it is directly quoted, paraphrased, or put into a table or figure, needs to be acknowledged with a reference that is sufficient for your reader to locate the original source.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity simply because it is a form of lying, stealing and mistreating others. Plagiarism involves stealing other people's intellectual property and lying about whose work it is. This is why plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may be penalised under the Statute on Student Conduct. You should be aware of your obligations under the Statute, which can be downloaded from the policy website (www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx). You could fail your course or even be suspended from the University. Plagiarism is easy to detect. The University has systems in place to identify it.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. 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.

There is guidance available to students on how to avoid plagiarism by way of sound study skills and the proper and consistent use of a recognised referencing system. This guidance may be found at the following website www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx . If in doubt, seek the advice of your course coordinator.

Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk.

Student Feedback

Feedback was last sought in 2015. Comments were generally positive, with students valuing the flexibility of assignments, in-class discussion and support for critical thinking. A number of students asked for fewer readings and/or more guidance to the readings. This has been addressed in this course outline.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php .

Access to Blackboard

Blackboard is Victoria University's online environment that supports teaching and learning by making course information, materials and other learning activities available via the internet through the myVictoria student web portal. Ensure that you can access Blackboard before the course begins.

To access the Blackboard site for this course:

1. Open a web browser and go to www.myvictoria.ac.nz .
2. Log into myVictoria using your ITS Username (on your Confirmation of Study) and password (if you've never used the Victoria University computer facilities before, your initial password is your student ID number, on your Confirmation of Study, Fees Assessment or student ID card – you may be asked to change it when you log in for the first time).
3. Once you've logged into myVictoria, select Blackboard (from the options along the top of the page) to go to your Blackboard homepage.
4. The "My Courses" section displays the courses you have access to – select the appropriate link to access the course-specific Blackboard site. Please note that only courses that are actually using Blackboard and have been made available to students by their respective course coordinator will be displayed.

If you have any problems gaining access to Victoria University's computer facilities, such as myVictoria and Blackboard, you should contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-servicedesk@vuw.ac.nz . See www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/ for more information.

Power-point slides and other lecture materials that are posted on Blackboard may differ from the presentations used in class, as the copyright rules for archived presentations differ somewhat from those for live presentation.

Communication of Additional Information

Information will be communicated via Blackboard. It is **essential**, therefore, that you activate your @myvuw.ac.nz email account (the free email account created for you when you enrol and accessed via the myVictoria student web portal) before the start of the course. Once you have activated your @myvuw.ac.nz email account, if you want to receive these emails at your preferred email address (e.g. your home or work email address), you must modify the settings so all emails sent to it are automatically forwarded to your preferred email address. For more information, please go to www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/FAQs.aspx#Email_Forward .

Link to General Information

For general information about course-related matters, go to www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information .

Note to Students

Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

School of Government Service Standards

Good learning and teaching outcomes for students in School of Government courses depend on many factors, including open, transparent and accountable relationships between teaching and support staff, and students in their various activities. The following service standards indicate some of the key expectations that teaching staff and students can have of each other. In all cases, they represent what the School believes should be ‘normal’ practice; exceptional circumstances can and will be negotiated as required.

Please note that there are University-wide policies relating to assessment – including rights of review and appeal. Details may be found in the Assessment Handbook (which is reviewed and updated from time to time – www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications).

In general terms, any concerns that a student or students may have should be raised with the course coordinator in the first instance. If that course of action is not appropriate, the School’s programme support staff will direct you to the relevant Programme Director/Coordinator.

Standards relating to staff timeliness of responses to email and phone queries:

- Email or phone queries from students will be responded to in 48 hours

Standards relating to availability of course materials:

- Students on modular or intensive courses will usually have course materials at least 4 weeks before the course starts
- Students on weekly courses will usually have course materials available on the first day of the course

Standards relating to attendance:

- It is expected that students will attend all contact teaching sessions for a course. If a student is aware that they will be unable to attend part of a course prior to it commencing, they are required to advise the course coordinator. In such a situation, the student may be declined entry into the course.
- Where a course coordinator approves some non-attendance before the class commences, the course coordinator may set additional item(s) of assessment of learning and teaching objectives for the course for students unable to attend. Advice relating to the submission and assessment of any such additional assessment will be provided by the course coordinator.

Variations to the assessment details provided in the course outline:

- Any variation to the assessment details in the course outline will be formally agreed between the course coordinator and students at the earliest possible time, preferably at the beginning of the course.

Standards relating to assignments – turnaround and feedback:

- Unless otherwise agreed between students and the course coordinator, items of assessment will be marked within 15 working days of submission.
- Comments on pieces of assessment will allow students to understand the reasons for the mark awarded, relative to the teaching and learning objectives specified in the course outline, and will usually include advice on how the student can improve their grades in future assignments.

Detailed Course Content and Readings

GOVT 523 is one of four courses comprising the MPP core. It complements GOVT 522 (Policy Analysis and Advising), which looks broadly at the policy process and system, and the key parts of policy analysis, taking into account the need to clarify the policy problem or opportunity, the interests and values at stake, possible options, and the support of decision makers. GOVT 523 looks in critical detail at the methods and practices needed to produce analysis and advice on specific questions. Both GOVT 522 and GOVT 523 emphasise the development of analytic reasoning and communication of policy arguments in written form. Understanding and competencies initially introduced and developed in 521, 522 and 523 are further developed in GOVT 524 (Policy Workshop), which provides a number of opportunities to apply learning to new challenges.

The course includes a fairly large number of topics, and requires that students think critically and creatively about the applicability and relevance of the topics for various policy challenges. Most policy challenges are challenging in several key respects – people may disagree on the nature of the problem or the desired features of a solution; there may be significant uncertainties about the current situation and the amenability of the problem to different solutions; time and other resources are often critically short. Mastery of the methods and practices covered in this course provides a policy analyst or advisor with an intellectual and practical toolkit to contribute to better policy decisions and so to better policy outcomes.

Overview and Work Planner

Description: Module topics and assignments	Date
Module 1: Evidence challenges; Uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity; Getting information from the ‘literature’; Getting and working with ‘qualitative’ information	13 July 2016
1. Inter-module work A: Interview exercise (in pairs)	25 July 2016
2. Essay (evidence challenges)	15 August 2016
Module 2: Cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness/multi-criteria analysis; Getting and working with ‘quantitative’ information; Big data and randomised controlled experiments; Assessing quality of evidence	31 August 2016
3. Review paper and poster (assessing evidence)	26 September 2016
4. Inter-module work B: e-conference based on assignment 4	30 September – 10 October 2016
Module 3: Policy argument; Participatory methods; Learning in and from unique events	19 October 2016
5. Participatory design plan	31 October 2016

Content and Readings in Detail

- *Readings are shown in alphabetical order*
- *A guide to required readings will be provided prior to modules*
- *Suggestions for further study are available as resources during this course and for those continuing on to other courses, such as GOVT 524 (Policy Workshop) and GOVT 562 (Research Paper)*
- *‘Applications’ are examples of the topics discussed in class.*

Module 1

A: Setting the scene: Evidence and its challenges

This session introduces the course and critically examines what is ‘evidence’ and three requirements for working with evidence: working out what is needed, addressing the inevitable gap between what is needed or usable and what can be gotten, and working out the best way to minimise the gap through inquiry practices.

- Introduction and course learning expectations
- Information and evidence
- The decision maker’s need to know
- The design of inquiry (policy research, evaluation)

Required readings:

- Banks, G. (2009). Challenges of evidence-based policy-making. (Australian Government Productivity Commission, speech delivered as the ANZSOG/ANU Public Lecture Series, Canberra, Feb 4).
- Head, B.W. (2016). Toward more “evidence-informed” policy making? *Public Administration Review*, 76(3), 472–484. And response: Shergold, P. (2016). Commentary: Lost in translation? The challenge of informing public policy with evidence. *Public Administration Review*, 76(3), 484–485.

Ingold, J., & Monaghan, M. (2016). Evidence translation: An exploration of policy makers' use of evidence. *Policy & Politics*, 44(2), 171–190.

For further study:

Head, B.W. (2008). Three lenses of evidence-based policy. *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 67(1), 1–11. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8500.2007.00564.x

Majone, G. (1989). *Evidence, argument and persuasion in the policy process* (pp. 42–68). New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction*. London and New York: Routledge: Chapters 1 to 5

B: Evidence complications: Uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity

This session examines some of the limits to 'evidence' due to qualities of available information, the nature of the policy 'receiving environment', competing perspectives and so on.

Required readings:

Pawson, R. (2013). *The science of evaluation: A realist manifesto* (pp. 33–46). London: Sage. (Blackboard)

Schmidt, M. R. (1993). Grout: Alternative kinds of knowledge and why they are ignored. *Public Administration Review*, 53(6), 525–530

For further study:

Eppel, E. (2012). What does it take to make surprises less surprising? The contribution of complexity theory to anticipation in public management. *Public Management Review*, 14(7), 881–902. doi:10.1080/14719037.2011.650055

Morgan, M. G., & Henrion, M. (1990). The nature and sources of uncertainty. In *Uncertainty: A guide to dealing with uncertainty in quantitative risk and policy analysis*, (pp. 47–72). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Peterson, A. C., Janssen, P. H. M., van der Sluijs, J. P., Risbey, J. S., Ravetz, J. R., Wardekker, J. A., & Hughes, H. M. (2013). *Guidance for uncertainty assessment and communication* (2nd ed). The Hague: PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/cms/publicaties/PBL_2013_Guidance-for-uncertainty-assessment-and-communication_712.pdf

Room, G. (2011). *Complexity, institutions and public policy: Agile decision-making in a turbulent world*. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Sanderson, I. (2009). Intelligent policy making for a complex world: Pragmatism, evidence and learning. *Political Studies*, 57, 699–719. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00791.x.

C: Finding out what is 'known'

Some potential evidence already exists, in the sense that it is recorded and stored somewhere. This session looks at the skills and practices needed to find, select, summarise and work with (mainly) text information in published form.

- Literature review
- Systematic reviews
- Realist syntheses

Required readings:

Hagen-Zanker, J., & Mallett, R. (2013). *How to do a rigorous, evidence-focused literature review in international development: A guidance note*. Overseas Development Institute <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8572.pdf> .

- Pettigrew, M., & Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide* (Chapter 1). Malden, MA: Blackwell
- Wong, G., Westhorp, G., Pawson, R., & Greenhalgh, T. (2013). *Realist synthesis: RAMESES Training materials*. www.ramesesproject.org/media/Realist_reviews_training_materials.pdf

Application:

- Smith, K. A., & Cordery, C. (2010). *What works? A systematic review of research and evaluation literature on encouragement and support of volunteering*. Prepared for the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs. [www.communitymatters.govt.nz/vwluResources/publications-lottery-WhatWorksVolunteering/\\$file/publications-lottery-WhatWorksVolunteering.pdf](http://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/vwluResources/publications-lottery-WhatWorksVolunteering/$file/publications-lottery-WhatWorksVolunteering.pdf)

For further study:

- The RAMESES projects. Various online resources for realist research approaches. www.ramesesproject.org/index.php?pr=Home_Page
- The Campbell Collaboration. Various online resources. www.campbellcollaboration.org/resources/training/The_Introductory_Methods.php (especially the first two videos)

D. Getting information from people

Needed information often does not already exist in accessible published form. This session looks at the skills and practices used in primary research, when the desired information needs to be brought out by asking people or observing people and situations. Interviews, focus groups and observations can be used for a wide range of selected purposes, covering experiences, behaviours, wishes, teasing out similarities and differences, etc. A particular need is to ascertain expert views about both what is and what might be, and techniques for this are examined.

- Interviews and focus groups
- Observation
- Information from ‘experts’: Delphi techniques and scenarios

Required readings:

- Cabinet Office and Government Office for Science (United Kingdom). (2014). *The futures toolkit: Tools for strategic futures for policy-makers and analysts*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/futures-toolkit-for-policy-makers-and-analysts>
- O’Leary, Z. (2014). *The essential guide to doing your research project* (2nd ed.). (pp. 216–242). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Swanson, D., & Taylor, S. (2009). Integrated and forward-looking analysis. In D. Swanson & S. Bhadwal (Eds.). *Creating adaptive policies: A guide for policy-making in an uncertain world* (pp. 25–40). SAGE.

Applications:

- Kaufman, R., Merritt, A. P., Rimbatmaja, R., & Cohen, J. E. (2015). ‘Excuse me, sir. Please don’t smoke here’: A qualitative study of social enforcement of smoke-free policies in Indonesia. *Health Policy and Planning*, 30, 995–1002. doi:10.1093/heapol/czu103
- Kirveenummi, A., Mäkelä, J., & Saarimaa, R. (2013). Beating unsustainability with eating: Four alternative food-consumption scenarios. *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*, 9(2), 83–91.

For further study:

- Linstone, H.A., & Turoff. (2002). *The Delphi method: Techniques and applications*. <http://is.njit.edu/pubs/delphibook/>

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction*. London and New York: Routledge: Chapters 6, 9 and 11.

Module 2

This module looks at skills and quantitative analytic reasoning in a selection of frequently used methods in policy practice

A: Economic analysis and multi-criteria analysis

Some analysis of costs compared with benefits is almost always a part of a policy analysis. Some analyses look at economic efficiency or cost-effectiveness alone, or in order to contribute to a decision; multi-criteria analysis techniques structure the analysis of comparisons and trade-offs among criteria when gauging the desirability of alternative policies.

- Cost-benefit analysis
- Cost-effectiveness analysis
- Benefit-cost ratios and other variants
- Multi-criteria analysis

Required readings:

New Zealand Treasury. (2015). *Guide to social cost benefit analysis*. Wellington: The Treasury.
Proctor, W. (2008). Multi-criteria analysis. In G. Argyrous (Ed.) *Evidence for policy and decision-making* (pp. 72–93). Sydney: UNSW Press.

Applications:

Albuquerque, E. (2013). The NZ Transport Agency's appraisal framework [a response to Pickford]. *Policy Quarterly*, 9(4), 66–70.
Pickford, M. (2013). State highway investment in New Zealand: The decline and fall of economic efficiency. *Policy Quarterly*, 9(3), 28–35.
Pickford, M. (2013). A brief reply to Ernest Albuquerque. *Policy Quarterly*, 9(4), 71.
Wright, J. C., Bates, M. N., Cutress, T., & Lee, M. (2001). The cost-effectiveness of fluoridating water supplies in New Zealand. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 25(2), 170–178.

For further study:

UK Department for Communities and Local Government. (2009). *Multi-criteria analysis: A manual*. www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1132618.pdf

B. Working with quantitative information

This session introduces statistical concepts and reasoning. The aim is to assist students to know enough about statistical methods to read statistical reports with greater confidence and to engage productively with statistics experts.

- Survey
- Descriptive and inferential statistics
- Statistical relationship

Required readings:

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction* (pp. 118–137). London and New York: Routledge.

Application:

Black, H., Gill, J., & Chick, J. (2010). The price of a drink: Levels of consumption and price paid per unit of alcohol by Edinburgh's ill drinkers with a comparison to wider alcohol sales in Scotland. *Addiction Research Report*, 106, 729–736.

For further study:

Arnold, R., & Forbes, S. (nd). *Introductory statistics: Notes prepared for Victoria University of Wellington, School of Government MAPP 526: Policy Methods and Practice*. Wellington.

Mukherjee, C., & Wuyts, M. (2007). Thinking with quantitative data. In A. Thomas & G. Mohan (Eds.). *Research skills for policy and development: How to find out fast* (pp. 231–253). London: Sage.

C: Atheoretical approaches

Increasingly, tools and techniques are focused on answering 'what'-type questions, without the need to understand 'why'. We consider big data and experimental trials under the rubric of 'behavioural insights'.

Required readings:

Australian Public Service. (2015). *Better practice guide for big data*. Version 2.0.

Haynes, L., Service, O., Goldacre, B., & Torgerson, D. (2012). Test, learn, adapt: Developing public policy with randomised controlled trials. Cabinet Office Behavioural Insights Team (United Kingdom).

D: Assessing the quality of evidence

This session examines the criteria for assessing the quality of evidence for specific policy purposes, and introduces evidence classification tools, which can help to prioritise or weight existing information.

Required readings:

Kmet, L. M., Lee, R. C. & Cook, L. S. (2004). *Standard quality assessment criteria for evaluating primary research papers from a variety of fields*. Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. www.ihe.ca/documents/HTA-FR13.pdf

Leigh, A. (2009). What evidence should social policymakers use? *Economic Roundup*, 1, 27–43. <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=745238039000337;res=IELAPA>

Nutley, S., Powell, A., & Davies, H. (2013). *What counts as good evidence?* Alliance for Useful Evidence.

For further study:

Argyrous, G. (2014). A quality assessment tool for non-specialist users of regression analysis. *Evidence and Policy*, online first: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1332/174426414X14042146202920> .

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Dillon, L. (2003). *Quality in qualitative evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence*. United Kingdom Cabinet Office. www.alnap.org/resource/10033

Module 3

A: Policy Argument, Claims, Reporting

Policy analysts and advisors need to work with claims – their own and others' – about what may be if one or another course of action is chosen. This session considers how to produce and critique written policy arguments and how to present policy analysis and research cogently.

Required readings:

Dunn, W. N. (2008). *Policy analysis: An introduction* (4th Ed.), (pp. 377–385; 414– 417). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

B: Participatory Methods (Dr Valentina Dinica)

Designing participatory policy processes can be a complex task. There are currently more than one hundred participatory methods available. But how do we know what works, when, in which contexts and for which types of policy challenges? These sessions explore the usefulness of an analytical framework that suggests how to organize the search for participatory methods, and the design of participatory processes, by asking three basic questions:

- *which method(s) of recruitment would be most helpful (given the desired level of representativeness for ‘the public’?*
- *for which policy activities is participation being sought? and*
- *what participatory objective should be pursued for each envisaged policy activity?*

Based on policy simulations in class, the usefulness of a limited number of participatory methods will also be explored.

Required readings:

Dinica, V. (2016). “Public engagement and sustainability: An analytical framework and approaches in New Zealand’s protected areas”. Manuscript under review, *Public Management Review*; envisaged for publication on the special issue “Sustainable Public Management”, scheduled for print in June 2017.

Please do not circulate; this version is for class purposes only. The most important parts for the class the policy simulation and assessment are between pp. 4-17.

Dietz, T., & Stern, P. C. (2008). *Public participation in environmental assessment and decision making* (pp. 187–221). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Fiskin J., & Farrar, C. (2005). Chapter 5: “Deliberative polling”, in J. Gastil & P. Levin (eds.). *The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for effective civic engagement in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 58–79). New York: Wiley.

Slocum, N. (2003). *Participatory methods toolkit: A practitioner’s manual* (pp. 27–74). United Nations University.

This includes the sections: “Charette”, “Citizen Jury” and “Consensus Conference”. Available at http://archive.unu.edu/hq/library/Collection/PDF_files/CRIS/PMT.pdf. This reference offers more comprehensive explanations on the three participatory methods. If you are short of time you will find shorter descriptions at the following websites (offering also some interesting links and/or case-study, if you are interested to explore this further, in the context of your job responsibilities):

<http://participationcompass.org/article/index/method> or

http://participedia.net/en/browse/methods?f%255B0%255D=field_completeness%3A5&f%255B1%255D=field_completeness%3A4

C: Evidence and the unique event

One of the most inherently attractive sources of evidence for policy decision making is another example of a very similar challenge and its solution. This session looks at drawing lessons for here and now from what happened then and there. We take our orientation from two adages: History never repeats itself and Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it (Santayana).

- Learning from other events
- Case study
- Learning as you go
- Course wrap-up

Required readings:

Rose, R. (2002) *Ten steps in learning lessons from abroad*, EUI Working Papers 2002/5.
http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/1763/RSCAS_2002_05b.pdf?sequence=1

Application:

Thow, A. M., Swinburn, B., Colagiuri, S., Diligolevu, M., Quested, C., Vivili, P., & Leeder, S. (2010). Trade and food policy: Case studies from three Pacific Island countries. *Food Policy*, 35, 556–564.

For further study:

Bardach, E. (2004). Presidential address. The extrapolation problem: How can we learn from the experience of others? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 23, 205–220.

Barzelay, M. (2007). Learning from second-hand experience: Methodology for extrapolation-oriented case research. *Governance*, 20(3), 521–543.

Eppel, E., Turner, D., & Wolf A. (2011). Complex policy implementation: The role of experimentation and learning. In B. Ryan & D. Gill (Eds.), *Future state: Directions for public management in New Zealand* (pp. 182–212). Wellington: Victoria University Press. (Blackboard)

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction*. London and New York: Routledge: Chapter 8
