

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL POLICY

EDPLY-GE 2030

Course Syllabus – Fall 2016

Professor:

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Office hours: Wed. 10:00 am – 11:00 am, or by appointment

Lecture Wed. 4:55 pm -6:35 pm

194M, Room 202

Course description

This course is designed to introduce students to public policy and provide a foundation for understanding and assessing education policies in particular. We will examine theoretical perspectives in policy formation and evaluation as well as the policy process and the institutions under which policies are formed. Methods and tools for policy analysis, both before and after policies are implemented will be studied. Finally, we will examine the role of institutions as well as policy design.

Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define public policy
- Describe the theoretical models of public policy
- Describe the steps in the policy process
- Assemble evidence and construct policy alternatives
- Engage in policy analysis and writing for public policy analysis
- Choose among policy alternatives

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. It helps to have a basic understanding of the U.S. Federal government.

Course readings

Two books are required and have been ordered by the NYU Bookstore (you can also find them at Amazon or online bookstores)

Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E. M. (2015). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving, 5th Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

Wheelan, C. (2011). *Introduction to public policy*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

Additional articles and book chapters will be available on NYU Classes.

Course requirements

Your grade will be determined as follows:

- Class discussion/participation 10%
- Weekly discussion questions 15%
- Policy briefs 30%
- Policy report memo #1 10%
- Policy report memo #2 10%
- Policy report memo #3 10%
- Policy report (final) 15%

Description of course assignments

A more lengthy description of the assignments will be provided in class, but below is a brief notation.

Class discussion/participation: While this course will have a strong lecture component, some weeks more than others, class discussion is encouraged.

Weekly discussion questions: To encourage class discussion, each week students will submit two discussion questions pertaining to the assigned reading materials centered on an education issue of interest. These should be submitted by midnight before each class in NYU Classes where a forum for each week will be available. The submitted questions will be used in our class discussion. These questions can be related to parts of the readings that you did not understand, ways that you relate the readings to education and social policies of interest to you, or ways in which the readings influenced your thinking.

Policy briefs: Students will craft three policy briefs throughout the semester. Policy briefs will be very concise (2-3 pages), and specific instructions for each will be handed out in class. In the past, policy briefs have included memos to stakeholders, oral testimony, and opinion pieces.

Policy report: The policy report is a semester-long project that will consist of a policy analysis for a topic chosen by the student. The purpose of the policy report is to apply the tools of policy analysis in an area of the student's interest. The format of the analysis will follow that of Bardach's Eightfold Path. This specifically requires students to diagnose a policy problem, assemble evidence, construct an adequate set of alternative policies, select the criteria with which to evaluate them, project the outcome of those policies, and confront their respective tradeoffs.

The specific requirements for the report will be provided in class, and will involve working on the various steps in assignments throughout the semester. These memos will build on one another. Specifically, there will be:

- Policy Report Memo #1: Defines the problem and maps the stakeholders and evidence (2-3 pages)

- Policy Report Memo #2: Incorporates a revised version of Memo #1, as well as sets out policy objectives for addressing the problem and a set of policy options/alternatives for consideration (4-6 pages)
- Policy Report Memo #3: Incorporates a revised version of Memo #2 as well as a set of criteria for evaluating the revised options (6-8 pages)
- Policy Report: Incorporates a revised version of Memo #3, as well as projecting the outcomes, confronting tradeoffs, and a final recommendation for policy adoption (no more than 15 pages). This should also include a one-page executive summary.

Other class information

NYU Classes: All materials pertaining to this course (lecture notes, assignments) will be made available on NYU Classes. Enrollment in the course should automatically give you access to the site. Check frequently for new materials and announcements.

Absences: Please contact Professor Ziol-Guest immediately if you have any conflicts with the scheduled assignments, or anticipate being absent for any reason.

Class etiquette: Please make every attempt to be on time and please turn off and put away your cell phones and other electronic devices while in class.

Academic integrity: NYU Steinhardt policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced in this class. You can find the school's official statement on academic integrity here (http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity).

Withdrawal: If you wish to withdraw from the course, please do so formally with the University Registrar. If you withdraw without authorization, you are at risk for receiving a failing grade for the course.

Accommodations: Any student requiring an accommodation due to a chronic psychological, visual, mobility, or learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing, should register with and consult with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212.998.4980, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor (www.nyu.edu/csd).

Course Schedule: Education and Social Policy

September 7	WEEK 1: Course description and the foundations of American political thought	
September 14	WEEK 2: What is public policy?	
September 21	WEEK 3: Theories of public policy: Understanding behavior	<i>Policy Brief #1 due</i>
September 28	WEEK 4: Social welfare and agenda setting	
October 5	WEEK 5: The political process and policy formation	<i>Policy Report Memo #1 due</i>
October 12	WEEK 6: Markets and government	
October 19	WEEK 7: Tools for policy analysis: Gathering and measuring information	<i>Policy Brief #2 due</i>
October 26	WEEK 8: Tools for policy analysis: Cost-benefit analysis	
November 2	WEEK 9: Tools for policy analysis: Program evaluation	<i>Policy Report Memo #2 due</i>
November 9	WEEK 10: Role of institutions	
November 16	WEEK 11: Policy design and alternatives	<i>Policy Brief #3 due</i>
November 23	WEEK 12: No Class. Thanksgiving Recess!!	
November 30	WEEK 13: Policy implementation: No Child Left Behind (NCLB)	<i>Policy Report Memo #3 due</i>
December 7	WEEK 14: Circumstances outside the classroom	
December 14	WEEK 15: Closing the Opportunity Gap: Social experiments and the Role of Non-Profits	

Your final policy report will be due on or before 5 p.m. Friday December 16.

Course Outline: Education and Social Policy

WEEK 1: Course description and the foundations of American political thought

The Federalist No. 10, No. 51, and No. 78

WEEK 2: What is public policy?

Wheelan, Chapters 1 and 2

Bardach, Introduction and Part I

Musso, Biller, & Myrtle. (2000). Tradecraft: Professional writing as problem solving. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 19, 635-646.

WEEK 3: Theories of Public Policy: Understanding behavior

Wheelan, Chapters 3 and 4

Hardin. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162, 1243-1248.

WEEK 4: Social welfare and agenda setting

Wheelan, Chapter 5

Bardach, Part III

Duncan, G. J. & R. J. Murnane. (2011). Introduction: The American Dream, then and now. In G. J. Duncan and R. J. Murnane (Eds), *Whither opportunity: Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances*.

WEEK 5: The political process and policy formation

Wheelan, Chapter 6

Bardach, Appendix B

Kosar, K. R. (2011). *Ronald Reagan and Education Policy*. Studies in Governance and Politics.

WEEK 6: Markets and government

Wheelan, Chapters 7 and 8

Labaree. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34, 39-74.

WEEK 7: Tools for policy analysis: Gathering and measuring information

Wheelan, Chapter 9

Bardach, Part II

Hout, M., & Janus, A. (2011). Educational mobility in the United States since the 1930s. In G. J. Duncan & R. J. Murnane (Eds) *Whither opportunity: Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances*.

WEEK 8: Tools for policy analysis: Cost-benefit analysis

Wheelan, Chapter 12

Barnett, W. S. (2013). *Getting the facts right on pre-k and the President's pre-k proposal*. National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) Policy Report.

Bartik, T. J. (2014). *From preschool to prosperity: The economic payoff to early childhood education*. W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Bartik, T. J., Belford, J. A., Gormley, W. T., & Anderson, S. (2016). *A benefit-cost analysis of the Tulsa University Pre-K Program*. Upjohn Institute Working Paper; 15-261.

Schweinhart, L. J. [2003]. *Benefits, costs, and explanation of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program*.

WEEK 9: Tools for policy analysis: Program evaluation

Wheelan, Chapter 13

Bardach, Part IV

Burdick-Will, J., Ludwig, J., Raudenbush, S. W., Sampson, R. J., Sanbonmatsu, L., & Sharkey, P. (2011). Converging evidence for neighborhood effects on children's test scores: An experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational comparison. In G. J. Duncan & R. J. Murnane (Eds). *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances*.

WEEK 10: Role of Institutions

Wheelan, Chapter 14

Bardach, Appendix C

Molnar, A., & Garcia, D. R. (2007). The expanding role of privatization in education: Implications for teacher education and development. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 34*, 11-24.

WEEK 11: Policy Design and Alternatives: Case Study, Black-White Test Score Gap

Wheelan, Chapter 15

Ladd, H. F. (2008). School policies and the test score gap. In K. Magnuson & J. Waldfogel (Eds.) *Steady gains and stalled progress: Inequality in the black-white test score gap*.

WEEK 12: NO CLASS

WEEK 13: Federal Policy Implementation: No Child Left Behind

Rhodes, Chapters 4, 5, and 6

WEEK 14: Circumstances outside the classroom

Reeves, R. V., Sawhill, I. V., & Howard, K. (2013). The parenting gap. *Democracy, 30*, 40-50.

Simon, N. S., & Evans, G. W. (2014). Poverty and child development: Beyond the schoolyard gate. In J. Hall (Ed.) *Underprivileged school children and the assault on dignity: Policy challenges and resistance*.

Schwartz, A. E., & Stiefel, L. (2014). Linking housing policy and school reform. In A. Lareau, & K. Goyette (Eds.) *Choosing homes, choosing schools*.

WEEK 15: Closing the Opportunity Gap: Social intervention influencing policy

Putnam, R. D. (2015). *Our kids: The American dream in Crisis*, Chapter 6.

Whitehurst, G. J. & Croft, M. (2010). *The Harlem's Children's Zone, Promise Neighborhoods, and the broader, bolder approach to education*. Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings.

Dobbie, W., & Fryer, R. G. (2011). Are high quality schools enough to increase achievement among the poor? Evidence from the Harlem Children's Zone. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 3*, 158-187.