



Syllabus

PPGA 504: Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation

Section #001

Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:00am to 10:30am

At the *x^oθathiqatam* “Place of Many Trees”

Instructor: Dr. Grace Jaramillo
Email: grace.jaramillo@ubc.ca
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 3:00pm, or by appointment
C.K. Choi Building Office 372 or by Zoom (the link is available on Canvas)

Head TA: Daniel Rojas
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TA2: Erin Litzow
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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course covers the fundamentals of policy analysis and program evaluation. We will focus on understanding the policymaking process and effectively evaluating different policy options both quantitatively and qualitatively that should be used in a professional context. We will cover the methods used for policy analysis and apply these tools to real-world cases to make immediate connections between specific theoretical frameworks and real case scenarios. This is a hands-on class that is intended to prepare you for conducting policy analysis and program evaluation for government, NGOs, and international organizations. Part of these objectives include learning to communicate effectively and operate in a professional context.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define and explain a public policy problem in public policy terms
- Use the standard tools of policy analysis to design policy interventions
- Assess trade-offs and identify winners and losers associated with policy changes, mapping actors.
- Conduct policy analysis and risk assessment.
- Learn how to professionally build sets of policy alternatives for public decision-making.
- Design and implement systems for monitoring and evaluating policy
- Engage with clients and stakeholders, and present findings in a professional context
- Master the writing of policy analysis in the form of policy briefs and policy memos.

Prerequisites: PPGA 503 or equivalent

COURSE FORMAT

The new environment makes us all adjust to an online-only environment, at least for the upcoming term. We will make the best of this experience. PPGA 504 will combine a seminar format on Tuesdays and a Workshop and hands-on learning on Thursdays. All the materials will be available on Canvas and CLAS, additional reading materials could be accessed through the library portal.

On Tuesdays, the seminar will start with a 40–45-minute lecture followed by a Q&A period and then open discussion. Only the lecture part will be recorded and uploaded to students who have asynchronous time schedules. Everybody else is expected to attend these meetings.

On Thursdays, the class will start with a lecture of just 20 minutes and the rest will be dedicated to in-class activities, group discussions and presentations discussing and applying the readings and learnings of the week. The weekly assignment will be based on the weekly learnings and the workshop. Students who follow the course

asynchronously will have access to all discussions in a separate workshop with the TAs in a time schedule previously agreed upon with them. We will apply skills learned in 503 as much as possible using STATA.

To successfully achieve the learning objectives of this course, students should complete the readings and be adequately prepared to participate in class lectures, class assignments and group activities. No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval and justification. Moreover, on time preparation will be essential to professionally interact with clients towards the final project which will be an *experimental learning* activity with actual clients, addressing pressing policy design/policy evaluation issues.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

- Class participation, in-class workshops: 10%
- Assignments (30%): For the 6 take-home assignments during the term
- Midterm Exam (15%): In-class
- Final Exam (15%): April 12th
- Final Project (30%): Group project

Class participation: Thursdays' workshops with in-class assignments will be determinant to the final class participation grade. Your presence on-site or online (depending on the COVID circumstances of that day), along with your active participation with in-class activity will be marked. TAs will be responsible to insert a mark for each of those workshops for a total cumulative number that will be weighed at the end to account for the final 10%.

Assignments: Each Thursday you will be send an assignment (a total of 6 during the term), consistent in writing policy briefs/policy memos -or parts of them- applying the concepts, tools, and learnings of the week. Policy briefs and memos are the essential tool of professional communication about policy issues, mastering the art of writing them is one of the objectives of this course. Dunn's book offered good guidance and samples on how to write them concisely and effectively in the annexes of his book. The assignments should not be more than two-pages long, with very few exceptions. **The assignment is due the next Monday on Turnitin and CANVAS by 12:00AM, except for the days where the outline states there is no assignment.**

Midterm Exam: The exam will be written in class on **February 17th** using Zoom. Students who cannot attend in person, must have their cameras and audio on Zoom during the entire length of the exam of 1.5 hours.

Final Exam: A take home exam, covering all the material, but with especial emphasis on the second half of the course will be written on **April 11th**. The duration of the exam will be 4 hours, from the time the exam is accessed on Canvas to the time when the document is uploaded.

Client-centered Final Project: This is the first experiment working with clients during your program; a preview of what would be a GP2 in second year. The instructor -along with some help from SPPGA- will provide a selection of client organizations where students will have the opportunity to apply what they are learning in class. Their mission is to work with their chosen client on policy designs/evaluation alternatives to clients' pressing policy problems that will have direct impact in specific target population. In specific cases, where conflictive schedule and preferences arise, students may choose their own client/project to pursue, as long as it is a hands-on approach to learning and the other party is willing to abide by PPGA504 Client-Student Protocol and rules of engagement.

Students will make groups of four/five members and work with those clients to develop research, analysis and fresh alternatives to the policy problem posed by them. Students need to engage with the client early on and follow the steps of policy analysis learned in class to help them, either providing alternatives of either policy design, briefs, or policy evaluation or even background comparative analysis to inform their choices. An important component of your learning experience is to engage with your clients professionally and efficiently.

By the end of the term, student groups must present a report with their policy recommendations/policy evaluation designs to those clients and the class. Clients will determine the final mark based on how your effort help them with useful or innovative ideas, research, and inputs. The instructor and TAs will guide the students throughout the exercise and help solve their questions and tutoring them into a successful engagement during office hours. Please refer to the *Protocol for Working with Client 2022* uploaded on Canvas more details. Samples of previous client-student final products can be found on Canvas.

CLASS POLICIES

In-class behavior: The instructors are committed to maintaining a productive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Any suggestions for improving our classroom environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

You are expected to come prepared to discuss required readings and to actively participate in class discussions.

You are allowed to use laptops or tablets, but please limit your use to notes. Please refrain from using mobile phones or other electronic devices in class. Use of mobile phones during class will directly impact your final participation grade if the behavior is persistent as it has been proven that there is 70% rate of distraction while in use.

Class etiquette: The instructor will mute everyone during the lecture part of the class to secure a clear recording for the non-synchronous students. However, it is important that everyone who is not speaking using the mute button during the Q&A and class discussions to guarantee an orderly interaction among us.

Recordings: Students are not permitted to record lectures, online office hours, group or personal meetings that happened online. Class recordings will be available after each session on Canvas in addition to other material that is part of the syllabus outline.

Late or missing work: Students are expected to actively participate and contribute to the weekly workshops. For weekly assignments two points per 24 hours will be deducted after the deadline has passed. Missing workshops or late assignments will not be accepted unless there are legitimate reasons for the delay. The instructor understands different health and mental problems that could arise during the course that could grant an extension, but it will only apply if the student approach the instructor or TA before the deadline and in writing or they have a written accommodation notice from Student Services.

Grade review policy: In 504, assignments are a key instrument to boost skills formation and accelerate the learning curve. Thus, students will have the opportunity to present 2 of the 6 assignments a second time. The initial appeal should be made to the TA, maximum a week after receiving your mark. TAs can make a decision to improve the mark if justified. You have the right to appeal to the instructor if you are not satisfied. Her decision is final.

Communication: The instructor and TAs will answer emails (Canvas generated or general UBC) within 24 hours, except for Saturdays that are off for all of us. Office hours and appointments will be respected whether they must be scheduled online or on-site. Additional appointments can also be arranged upon request.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity: *University policy on Academic Integrity will be strictly enforced.* As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your work on essays, exams, and other projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor and/or Teaching Assistant. If you decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others' work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person's permissible contribution. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor or TA.

Academic communities depend on their members' honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others' work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean's Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean's Office. After an interview in the Dean's Office, your case may be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to

account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

COVID-19 Safety: You are required to wear a non-medical mask during our class meetings, for your own protection and the safety and comfort of everyone else in the class. For our in-person meetings in this class, it is important that all of us feel as comfortable as possible engaging in class activities while sharing an indoor space. Non-medical masks that cover our noses and mouths are a primary tool for combating the spread of COVID-19. Further, according to the provincial mandate, masks are required in all indoor public spaces including lobbies, hallways, stairwells, elevators, classrooms, and labs. There may be students who have medical accommodations for not wearing a mask. Please maintain a respectful environment. Please refer to [UBC Respectful Environment Statement](#) for more details.

Illness and absence policy: The public health situation in B.C., Canada and globally is dynamic, and will require much flexibility and patience from all of us in this course. As the University stated, we are going to have online class from January 10th until January 21st inclusive. ***From then on, your self-awareness becomes the most important assessment on how you take the class:***

If you are sick, it is important that you stay home. Complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>

Our approach to grading in this course is to provide flexibility so that you can prioritize your health and succeed academically. ***If you miss class because of illness or exposure to suspected/confirmed illness:***

- Consult the class resources on Canvas. Recorded lectures, recording of in-person and online classes and other materials are available online.
- Arrange online meetings with instructor or TA to discuss any questions that you have regarding the material.
- If you are concerned that you will miss a key activity due to illness, contact the Teaching Assistant and/or myself to discuss further.

If the instructor is ill: If I am unwell or if someone in my household is unwell or exposed to COVID-19, I will not come to class. In this scenario, we will take the class online and we will communicate this to you with as much notice as possible. Our classroom will still be available for you to sit in and attend the online session.

Mental health concerns: If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates. If you are planning to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other commitments, you should discuss your commitments with the instructor before the drop date. The university has a new policy on academic concession. The full policy is available at: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0>

Reach out and ask for help if you need it

University students often encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer student's support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record.

For more information: <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert>

For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness>

Access and Diversity: The university accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Access and Diversity Unit. Students must register with the Disability Resource Centre to be granted special accommodations for any on-going conditions. For more information, please refer to the following guide: <http://students.ubc.ca/about/access>.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (2020) (6th Edition) by Eugene Bardach & Eric M. Patashnik.
- *Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach* (2018) (6th Edition) by William Dunn.

I highly recommend buying Bardach's book because: 1) you will need to read the book in its entirety and; 2) it is a useful manual you will always need for policy analysis. In addition, you will need it for other courses as well such as PPGA 509 and 514.

The materials are available through the Canvas link to the UBC library reserve for the course. If there is any link that is not working, please try looking it up, using the complete reference:

Supplementary texts:

- *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice* (2017) (6th Edition) by David L. Weimer & Aidan R. Vining.
- *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Concepts and Practices* (2000) by Michael Munger.
- *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Comparative Policy Analysis* (2019) by Guy Peters / Guillaume Fontaine.
- *Indigenomics: Taking the Seat at the Economic Table* (2021) by Carol Anne Hilton.
- *Handbook on Impact Evaluation: Quantitative Methods and Practices* by Shahidur Khandker, Gayatri Koolwal, and Hussain Samad (2010). <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2693>
- *Impact Evaluation: Treatment Effects and Causal* (2019) by Markus Frölich & Stefan Sperlich. Just the chapter about Basic Definitions, Assumptions and Randomised Experiments (pp. 3-41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781107337008.003

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

WEEK 1: Introduction to the Course and to Policy Analysis

January 11

We will start by discussing the course, its goals, format, and outline and present the clients we are going to work for.

The central objective of this class will be to answer a very simple question: What is policy analysis?

Readings:

Weimer & Vining, chapter 2

The process of policy analysis in the policy-making process

January 13

The discussion is centered around how, when for whom we usually do policy analysis and how analysis has impacted the policy-making process as a whole.

Readings:

Dunn, chapters 1 & 2

Dan Heat's *Upstream*, Section 1, pp. 21-71

WEEK 2: Defining the problem

January 18-20

Defining the policy problem is the most fundamental building block of the policy process and yet, the most difficult to achieve.

Readings:

Bardach, The Eightfold Path pp. 1-93

Assignment #1: Choose the problem/issue you will address during the semester and define it using Bardach's method. Two pages maximum.

January 24

WEEK 3: Risk assessment

January 25-27

After defining the problem, we need information and setting up principles by which the policy process will be defined. We need to assess risk, establish comparisons, benchmarks, alternatives, trade-offs.

Guest Speaker on January 25th: Carol Anne Hilton, Author of *Indigenomics*

Readings:

Indigenomics, Chapter 13.
Dunn, pp. 10-21 and Chapter 2.

Assignment #2: Build up a basic knowledge about the problem, including past attempts at solving it, literature written about it for context. Two pages maximum. **January 31**

WEEK 4: Discounting and other methods of systematic assessment

February 1-3

We continue to explore methods and tools to assess options of intervention

Readings:

Dunn, chapter 4
Munger, chapter 9 & 10

Assignment #3: Choose one method of assessing policy options and test it in your problem. Two pages maximum. **February 7**

WEEK 5: Cost-Benefit Analysis

February 8-10

Cost-benefit analysis is probably the simplest way of assessing policy alternatives. We will learn how and when it is advisable.

Readings:

Dunn, pp. 209-218; Munger, chapter 11

Assignment #4: Conduct either CBA or CEA in your problem. Try to find actual numbers to your costs and benefits estimation, if not make a good guess to try to be as realistic as possible with the results. Present your conclusions. Two or three pages. **February 14**

WEEK 6: Designing policy towards decision-making choices

February 15

How can we effectively communicate our analysis, options, and choices? This session will discuss how to present policy analysis and decision-making processes.

Readings:

Dunn, chapters 8 & 9.
Munger, Chapter 11

Midterm Exam

February 17

WEEK 7: Winter Session mid-term break

February 21-25

WEEK 8: Program Evaluation

March 1-3

The importance of doing evaluation. The differences between monitoring and conducting proper impact evaluation. Methods.

Guest lecturer: Florencia Tateossian, Director of Program Evaluation of UN Women at New York Headquarters presenting her experience on the ground.

Readings:

World Bank Handbook, chapters 1 & 2
UN Women: <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en/evaluation-handbook>

Chapters 1 & 7 (if possible, also read the country portfolio evaluation guidance in case students want to make more specific questions to the UN Women specialist).

WEEK 9: Treatment effects and causal analysis

March 8-10

Introduction to impact evaluation through quasi-experiments and causal analysis

Readings:

Frölich & Sperlich, Chapter 1

List, John A. 2011. "Why Economists Should Conduct Field Experiments and 14 Tips for Pulling One

Off." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 25 (3).

Assignment #5: Design an impact evaluation using the knowledge you have so far about it. Explain what you are going to measure in terms of a dependent variable, vs. independent(s) variable(s) model. Maximum two pages.

March 14

WEEK 10: Field experiments

March 15-17

Randomized experiments for program evaluations. Its complexity and applications.

Readings:

GREEN, J. (2010). Points of intersection between randomized experiments and quasi-experiments. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 628(1), 97-111. doi:10.1177/0002716209351517

Walser, T. M. (2014). Quasi-Experiments in Schools: The Case for Historical Cohort Control Groups. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 19(5/6), 1–8.

Assignment #6: Draft a quasi-experiment to measure impact. Explain the “treatment” and the “placebo” and how the evaluation will assess causality or impact.

March 21

WEEK 11: Case Comparison and observational studies

March 22-24

Small-N analysis and mix-methods to assess impact.

Guest Speaker: Felipe Duchicela, Senior Advisor for Indigenous Peoples- USAID

Readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapter 14

Additional readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapters 7 & 8

WEEK 12: Surveys, focus groups and other useful tools

March 29-31

Small-N qualitative assessments to evaluate central and specific programs features.

Readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapter 17

Bardach, Part II

WEEK 12: Policy analysis and program evaluation in perspective

April 5-7

Conclusions about policy design and program evaluation. Group presentations.

Readings:

Peters & Fontaine, chapter 9

Final exam

April 11

Main deadlines

Weekly assignments	Mondays before 12:00pm
Mid-term exam	February 17
Final project presentations and report	April 5-7
Final exam	April 12

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