



SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

PAF 101

An Introduction to the Analysis of Public Policy

(3 credits)

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Public Affairs 101, Introduction to the Analysis of Public Policy, provides students with basic research, communication, and decision-making skills used in public policy analysis. In addition, students are required to read and analyze newspaper articles on local, state, and federal public policies. Students chose a public policy topic of interest to them and come up with a policy they would support.

The content coverage of the course, while important, is secondary to the development of a range of applied social science skills that will help the student make more informed choices as a citizen, worker, and consumer. These include the ability to: define and identify the components of public policy issues; communicate ideas and findings with respect to public policy issues; collect information on public policy issues, use graphs, tables and statistics to analyze public policy, examine the use of surveys and informal interviewing procedures; identify a social problem and come up with a proposed public policy to deal with it; list the benefits and costs of a proposed public policy; forecast the impact of the policy on societal conditions; analyze the political factors and develop strategies to implement a proposed public policy; identify essential features of major current public policy issues; and work in teams effectively.

Course Outline

Students complete five Modules (highly structured papers) over the semester covering:

1. Introduction to basic concepts required in the analysis of public policy.
2. Acquiring information: surveys, use of the library, and use of experts.
3. Formulating public policy.
4. Evaluating public policy.
5. Implementing public policy.

One paper will be due for each of the five modules above and should be about five pages in length. It consists of completing the required exercises; each paper is worth on average 20 percent of the student's grade.

Each module consists of a set of exercises that are introduced by the instructor in class. Students practice the exercises in small working groups and then complete the exercises on their own as part of homework assignments. Instructors provide substantive lectures, bring in outside speakers, and use supplementary material on public policy issues of their choice. The students use this information to practice the skills covered in the exercises. While 80% of the grade is determined on the basis of how well students complete the exercises, 40% is determined according to the instructor's own methods of evaluation.

The primary instructional materials are contained in a newly published book written by the instructor for this course, *Public Policy Skills In Action: A Pragmatic Approach*. Students complete their classroom activities and hand in their homework assignments based on the book and materials on this website, <https://paf101.expressions.syr.edu/>

The first two of the course constitute basic training in essential conceptual, information gathering, and analysis tools. This basic work builds on existing skills that students may already have begun to develop by requiring their application to a variety of newspaper articles.

The last three modules require students to conduct specific research on a specific public policy area of their choice. They complete several steps that include, policy formulation, policy evaluation and implementation. In Module Three, they analyze a societal problem and develop a policy to deal with the problem. In Module Four they develop a basis for evaluating their policy by first identifying costs and benefits of the policy and then building a benchmarking model of social conditions with which they estimate the effects of their policy. In Module Five, students analyze the political factors that will determine the feasibility of the policy they have proposed. Students also propose strategies to increase the chances that the policy will be adopted.

During this latter portion of the course, classroom activities help students acquire the skills required to formulate, evaluate, and implement public policies. In addition to the individual student assignment, instructors can have the entire class examine a small number of issues, or divide the class into small groups for analyzing issues. Students also make individual presentations so that the entire class can learn about a large number of contemporary public policy issues.

A series of hands-on activities are required by the course. They include a five-hour community service requirement, a decision-making exercise on a grading policy for the course, a series of practice exercises for each of the modules and presentations to the class. Instructors can add their own materials for as much as 40% of the classroom activities. A set of slides is available for the faculty to use.

The main goal of the course is to provide 38 skills divided into 10 skill sets available on this site, <http://skillswin.syr.edu/> Students practice a problem-solving model that can be applied not just to public policy analysis but to any situation they face as individuals trying to be good citizens and find a path to their future.

Author/Title (Publisher)		Ordering Source
<p><i>Public Policy Skills In Action: A Pragmatic Approach</i> Publication Date: May 1, 2017 Hard Text - ISBN: 9781538100196 eText – ISBN: 9781538100202</p>		<p>Visit rowman.com</p> <p>Search by title or ISBN in search bar. Click “buy” in top right corner of page. Follow online prompts as it walks you through checkout process. Call Customer Service at 1-800-462-6420. Menu option 3 followed by Menu option 2 will lead you to a customer service representative with whom you can place an order.</p>

