

PA 213 Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation Professor Haas

<https://sjsu.desire2learn.com/>

Fall 2011
Clark 318
Tues. eves. 6pm

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Hours: Tues., 3-6pm, and by appt

Office: Clark 455, (also at the Mineta
Institute at 210 N. 4th St., 4th Floor)

Description

This course encompasses two major types of techniques and methods: (1) policy analysis and (2) program evaluation. The major objectives of this course are to expose you to some of the central concepts in both fields and to familiarize you with some of the tools that can be applied to important policy questions. Thus you will become familiar with both the important theoretical issues of policy analysis and the more practical techniques commonly used by analysts in government today. Our study of policy analysis will be concerned primarily with the choice and proper utilization of various analytic strategies, tools, and statistical models. Most of our discussions will be linked to the uses of policy analysis techniques at the subnational and nonprofit level. Our ultimate goal is to achieve a practical synthesis of various approaches to providing useful information to decision makers.

A closely related area of endeavor, program evaluation embraces a wide range of approaches, and is generally directed toward finding out whether (and how) programs work. We will consider a range of techniques, starting with the classic experimental design to more open-ended “formative” evaluation methods. Then we will explore how policy analysis and program evaluation resemble and differ from one another, and seek to synthesize the two topics.

The primary assignment for the course is a research design that will describe the analysis of evaluation of an actual program or policy.

Texts

Required texts for the course include:

Patton and Sawicki, [Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning](#) (2nd Ed.)

Haas and Springer, [Applied Policy Research: Concepts and Cases](#)

Course Requirements

Evaluation of student performance will be based on the following criteria: (1) class participation (20%), (2) two exams (40%); research design paper (30%) and (3) two minor written assignments (10%). The written assignments require you to apply policy analysis concepts to your own agency or one that you are interested in. Details on the written assignments will be forthcoming.

Desire2Learn

Nearly all online communication –including submission of all written assignments and exams – will occur in the context of the “Desire2Learn” online courseware. “D2L” may be accessed via <https://sjsu.desire2learn.com/> ; students are automatically enrolled, using their first and last names (first.last) as userIDS and student ID numbers as passwords. All class related-email should be submitted via D2L.

Class Assignments

August 30 -- (no assignment) – Note: assignment due following week!

September 6 -- (Introduction) What is policy analysis, program evaluation, and policy research? Why do public administrators engage in these activities?

- Assignment: Patton and Sawicki, Ch. 1,2.
- Exercises: complete #1-5, p. 20 and #1-6, p.67

September 13 -- Topic: What are the basic tools of policy analysis? How are policy analysis questions framed?

- Assignment: Patton and Sawicki, Ch. 3,4
- Exercises: complete #7,8, p. 143 and #1-4, pp. 179-181
- Case study: “Budget Cuts in the Basic Health Plan.” Part 2

September 20 -- Establishing criteria for policy choice and identifying policy alternatives.

- Assignment: Patton and Sawicki, Ch. 5-6.
- Exercises: complete #1,2,7 p.222-223 and #2 and 6, p. 255-256.
- Case study: “Budget Cuts in the Basic Health Plan.” Part 3

September 27 -- Analyzing and selecting alternative policies.

- Assignment: Patton and Sawicki, Ch. 7-9.
- Online reading: [An Introduction to Cost Benefit Analysis](#)
- Exercises: #11,12, 20-22 pp. 321-323.
- Case study: “Budget Cuts in the Basic Health Plan.” Part #

October 4 -- *Policy Analysis (paper 1) due.*

- In-class presentations of papers

October 11 --: Program evaluation research designs.

- Assignment: Patton and Sawicki, Ch. 8-9.
- Exercises: #11,12, 20-22 pp. 321-323 and #4 and 9, p. 395-397.
- Online reading: [Example of Program Evaluation in the U.S. Government](#)

October 18 -- Mid-term exam.

October 25 -- What is policy research? (How can public administrators use the techniques of policy analysis and program evaluation in a practical way?)

- Assignment: Haas and Springer, Ch. 1-2.
- Exercises: #1,2 p. 15 and #1-3, p.46

November 1 --: Techniques of program evaluation in practice.

- Assignment: Haas and Springer, Ch. 3-4.
- Exercises: #1-3, p.68 and #-13, p. 81.

November 8 -- How is policy research done in “the real world?”

- Assignment: Haas and Springer, Ch. 5-6.
- Exercises: #1 and 2, p. 107; #1-3, p.133.

Proposal for policy research design (paper II) due.

November 15 -- More case studies in policy research.

- Assignment: Haas and Springer, Ch. 7-8
- Exercises: #1, p. 156, and #2-4, p. 181

November 22 -- Program Evaluation in Practice

- Program evaluation at the state level: Welfare reform in two states
- <http://jlarc.state.va.us/reports/rpt253.pdf>
- <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2000/pe0003.htm>.

November 29 -- Conclusions about policy research.

- Assignment: Haas and Springer, Ch. 12-13.
- Exercises: #1-2, p.280.
- [Program Evaluation of the Death Penalty](#) (!)

December 6 -- Student Research Reports
Papers due – In-class presentations

December 13 -- Final Exam (6pm)