

San José State University
Political Science
PADM 213 – Policy Analysis
Spring 2021

Course and Contact Information

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Class Days/Time:	Thur, 6:00-8:45p
Classroom:	Zoom

Welcome!

Welcome to PADM 213 – Policy Analysis! The purpose of this class is to teach you to think through systematically something you've done informally your entire life – how to make decisions. Specifically, this course will teach how logically present alternatives for addressing a policy problem and analyze them to provisionally assess which alternative best serves society's purposes. Throughout you will learn how to define problems, establish evaluative metrics, craft policy alternatives and analyze those alternatives in a clear, concrete and logical manner.

At the end of this course, you will hopefully be able to apply finance, political, sociological and economic theory in a way that clarifies for decision-makers (and yourself) the proper steps to take. This course will be, at times, challenging at many students are intimidated by the application of systems and economic theory. You will be re-wiring your brain slightly to explicitly deal with uncertainty and present information to non-experts in a manner that is clear, concise and easy-to-understand. This course should be a rewarding and challenging experience but my hope is you will find it to have been, in the end, worth it.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. Please make sure you are consistently reachable via the messaging system as e-mails through the Canvas system and the student's individual e-mails are how I maintain contact with the class over the course of the semester. The responsibility for being up-to-date on developments in the class and assignments lies with the student.

By enrolling in this course you consent to all course requirements listed in this syllabus, published on our Canvas site, and announced in class. You accept responsibility for accessing the Canvas course website to download any required handouts, assignments, or readings. You also accept responsibility for checking

the course website regularly for any announcements. You also accept responsibility for receiving any messages sent via the MySJSU email system. Make sure that MySJSU has your current email address. Contact me by Thursday of week one if you cannot access the Canvas website, download and read .pdf files, link to other websites, or send or receive email.

Communication

It is essential that you check the class Canvas page routinely. This is a course requirement. All course materials will be posted on Canvas. I will also frequently make announcements on Canvas. I will make every effort to promptly return emails between M-F. If I do not respond within 24 hours, please feel free to send me another email. I will answer emails on the weekends and evening, though I can't guarantee prompt response at those times. I am available to meet with you by appointment if you have class or work during my regularly scheduled office hours.

Course Description

From the SJSU Course Catalog: An examination of the application of analytical and administrative tools to solving public problems. Study of the processes of policy formulation and the research and political tools necessary to assess program effectiveness. Prerequisite: Statistics.

The course will focus on two aspects of policy analysis and evaluation: the prospective analysis of policies, and the post-implementation evaluation of policies and programs, applying analytical and administrative tools to the solution of public problems. There are two foci: an exploration of frameworks which help to understand the purpose of policy and why it was formulated, and the research and political tools necessary to assess policy and program effectiveness.

The purpose of public administration is the efficient and effective management of the resources placed in the public trust. The practice of public administration includes the application of political understanding, ethical standards, social science research and statistical tools to the public's business. Since resources available to government are scarce, a critical element in public administration is the determination of the "best use" of these resources for the overall good of the community. On the one hand, "best use" is a subjective statement, since the understanding of what is "best" will be culture bound and specific to time and place. On the other hand, there are objective tools that allow competing "uses" to be evaluated in a relatively value-free manner. A combination of objective and subjective methods of evaluation is needed to make informed judgments on most public policy and program evaluation issues.

This course includes information on the techniques of policy analysis, and the application of these techniques to public policy issues and programs. The application portion will include using policy analysis to choose which policies to implement, which programs to fund, which programs to continue, and which policies to change. Various analytical tools will be reviewed, and their value in differing applications will be considered.

Course Goals

To educate public administration and non-profit professionals about public policy formulation and public program development and implementation as it applies to managing cities, counties, special districts, state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations.

The course has the following learning objectives: (1) Ensure that the student can apply a variety of evaluation tools to public policies and programs, to determine their effectiveness and whether they comply with the legislative intent in their creation. This is assessed through in-class exercises and the

staff report. (2) Ensure that the student understands the governmental environment in which public policies and programs are created and implemented. This is assessed through the completion of an executive summary of Gerston's book and the development of VLF study. (3) Ensure that the student can assess public policy for its legislative intent, background, budgetary impacts, and need for amendment or termination, which is assessed in the Staff Report

Class Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

1. **LO1:** Identify and evaluate the major principles of policy and program analysis. This outcome is assessed by in-class participation, the Executive Summary, the SJSU Student Homelessness Group Project, the Staff Report Problem Statement, the Staff Report Literature Review and the Final Staff Report.
2. **LO2:** Understand the terminology used in policy and program evaluation. This outcome is assessed by in-class participation, the Gerston Book Executive Summary, the SJSU Student Homelessness Group Project, Student Presentations, the Staff Report Problem Statement, the Staff Report Literature Review and the Final Staff Report.
3. **LO3:** Understand intergovernmental relationships as they impact policy making, including constitutional limitations and California governmental factors. This outcome is assessed by in-class-participation, the Executive Summary, SJSU Student Homelessness Group Project and the Final Staff Report.
4. **LO4:** Apply methods for evaluation of a policy or program for a public agency, government department or non-profit organization. This outcome is assessed by the SJSU Student Homelessness Group Project, the Student Presentations, and the Final Staff Report

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

- Weimar, David; Vining, Aidan, *Policy Analysis*, 6th ed. (Routledge, 2017)
ISBN# 9781138216518
- Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 6th ed. (Sage CQ Press, 2019)
ISBN# 9781506368887

Please note: Older editions of these books are perfectly acceptable to purchase. However, key information, page numbers and chapter numbers may vary from edition to edition. It is the student's responsibility to account for these discrepancies when they exist.

In addition, students are expected to have a copy of Microsoft Excel, Google sheets or equivalent for the purposes of class exercises and discussion.

Other Readings/Media

- Emil J. Posavac, *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies*, 8th ed. (Routledge, 2010) — Canvas
ISBN# 0205804977
- Ronald D. Sylvia & Kathleen M. Sylvia. *Program Planning and Evaluation for the Public Manager*, 4th ed. (Waveland Press, 2012) — Canvas
- California Constitution - Local Government and Spending Limitations Section (<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/const-toc.html>)
- Gerston, Larry. *Not So Golden After All*. (CRC Press, 2012) – [Electronic version on reserve in library](#).
ISBN# 1439880123
- Munger, Michael, *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices*. (W. W. Norton & Company, 2000) – Chapters 3 & 4 — Canvas
ISBN# 0393973999
- San Jose City Charter: (<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=397>)\

Course Requirements and Assignments

Understanding Policy Systems Through Simulation (Due Before Class, February 4th)

One of the most stressful parts of learning a new topic is not knowing the boundaries on inquiry or how different elements of the systems you're leaning interact with one another. In this class, we are going to surmount this difficult, in part, through simulations. I will provide to each of you a license for the game Democracy 3. It is a text-and-icon based strategy game that allows you to take control of a country and run it. The game does an excellent job of visualizing the interconnectedness of policy sub-systems, how they relate to one another and the trade-offs and difficulties policy and administration presents.

A 30 minute tutorial on how to play the game is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiHMadFbAxw&t=986s>. After getting themselves acquainted with the game, students should play as the United States under all default settings for at least 1-2 hours (more if they're enjoying themselves). Play long enough so that you make it to at least one election (unless you've been assassinated a few times—yes, there are assassinations in the game). After playing the game, you must submit a minimum 600-word response memo addressing the questions outlined below.

The purpose of these memos is to prepare the class such that we can have a productive and lively discussion of the topic. These memos need not be stressful or particularly detailed. Please address the following:

- 1) What did you do in the game? Why? What policies were most important to you to change? What problems/issues did you first want to address?
- 2) Did you end up changing policies or making decisions you would prefer not to have made for political reasons?
- 3) Did you get re-elected? Why or why not? Did you get assassinated? If so, by whom and why?

If you are having technical troubles installing the game, it is available in the library on the 4th floor. There are two terminals in the KLEVR lab where you can play the game but you must reserve the terminals ahead of time (<https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/klevr-lab>). Or, there are two computers for public use (step of the elevator on the 4th floor and turn 90 degrees left. You will see two Mac computers on the windows on the far side). Those can be used whenever but are available to anyone in the library, so they may be occupied. This assignment evaluates CLOs 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Executive Summary (Due Before Class, February 18th)

Each student will read Gerston, *Not So Golden After All*. You will write an executive summary of the book, in Times New Roman 12 pt. type, double spaced, not to exceed 3 pages. Information on writing executive summaries will be discussed in class. The executive summary is due as noted in the syllabus. One cannot achieve a grade of “A” on the summary without relating the book being reviewed to the relevant issues presented in the assigned class readings on program and policy analysis. This assignment evaluates CLOs 1, 2 and 3.

Problem Statement (Due Before Class, March 4th)

Each student will submit a locally-focused problem statement regarding a policy problem assigned to them in class and the ongoing policy response. The problem statement must outline the scope, magnitude and trend of the problem using no fewer than five, appropriate peer-reviewed academic sources and government reports. In addition to the problem itself, the problem statement must demonstrate a working knowledge of the existing ongoing responses to the problem undertaken by public, private and non-profit institutions. Finally, the student must outline an alternative/opposition construction of the problem. This assignment evaluates CLOs 1 and 2.

Staff Report Literature Review (Due Before Class, March 18th)

Students are to submit a literature review pursuant to the policy issue outlined in the policy statement submitted earlier in the semester. The literature review should outline the scope, magnitude and trend of the problem, one alternative construction of the problem and sources which outline the ongoing status quo policy response and at least two potential alternatives, all backed by relevant sources. Sources must include at least 10 peer-reviewed academic sources and government reports. Additional relevant sources may be included such as online sources and newspaper articles but these must be in addition to the 10 high-quality academic sources. This assignment evaluates CLOs 1 and 2.

Preliminary Cost Benefit Analysis (Due Before Class, April 15th)

Based on the problem statement they developed earlier in the semester, students will develop a detailed cost benefit analysis. In it, they will outline the primary evaluative metric they use, present the calculations pertaining to both the status quo policy and the policy alternatives in a clear and comprehensive fashion and provide an accompanying written description so the reader is able to follow the salient aspects of the analysis. On the basis of the analysis, the student will make a recommendation as to which policy alternative should be implemented and why. This assignment evaluates CLOs 2 and 4.

Group Project (Due Before Class, April 29th)

Students will form groups to consider a policy problem facing a community in the state of California. Each group will make a policy recommendation to relevant stakeholders as to what initiatives, if any, should be implemented to combat this problem. Students will create an analysis and a recommendation, using the class’ standard staff report format. Create a title and draft of any legislation needed to implement the recommendation. Each team will work separately, developing its own approach to the analysis and recommendation. The team will collaborate to create one paper describing their research, analysis and recommendation; and a PPT show of 3 slides to support the presentation of the paper’s

content. Team members will evaluate each other's recommendations and the class will discuss the differing ways each group approach to this project. This assignment evaluates CLOs 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Final Class Staff Report (Due 5:15 pm, May 20th)

On the basis of the individual group projects, the class will develop a number of final, class-wide report. The report must include a presentation of the scope, magnitude and trend of the problem, outline the status quo policy response as well as two alternatives and provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis as to the costs, benefits and relevant stakeholders effected by each policy alternative. At the end of the presentation the student will make a recommendation as to which policy alternative should be implemented and why. Papers must be at least 20 pages of double-spaced word-processed text in Times New Roman 12-point font, with in-text citations in APA format. Additional page (s) will contain the list of Sources Consulted in APA format. Papers must be based on at least 20 references (in addition to the textbooks), including at least 5 from peer reviewed professional journals of the last 5 years, and the rest from appropriate government documents, newspaper reports or other academically acceptable sources. The topic must be on an aspect of policy or program analysis from the attached list. This assignment evaluates CLOs 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Class Participation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes will be delivered via Zoom. Class participation will be judged by the student's preparedness to participate in class discussions and the extent to which they make meaningful and engaged contributions during class time. Given the difficulties attendant to the pandemic, I intend to be as ecumenical as possible with regard to what will qualify as participation. Nonetheless, students are strongly encouraged to be present during classtime with their cameras on (i.e. not a black screen from the instructor's perspective). Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a strange and less-than-ideal learning environment and there may be technical or personal reasons why a student cannot participate in the manner prescribed above. However, students that are not able to abide by these participation guidelines should contact the instructor to explain any extenuating circumstances or required accommodations. Moreover, students are expected to take any reasonable steps they can to mitigate issues that crop up over the course of the semester.

Assignment & Exam Schedule	
Understanding Policy Through Simulation	February 4 th
Gerston Book Executive Summary	February 18 th
Staff Report Problem Statement	March 4 th
Staff Report Literature Review	March 18 th
Preliminary Cost Benefit Analysis	April 15 th
Group Project	April 29 th
Final Class Staff Report	May 20 th

Grading Information

While I expect you to attend class regularly, per University policy F69-24 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf>), students will not be graded on daily attendance. One of the purposes of this class is to help simulate the stamina necessary to stick with a project day-in, day-out even as your interest in it naturally waxes and wanes. It is very, *very* unlikely that a student who misses class regularly will do well. More importantly, classroom discussion will tease out much of the important nuance in the readings. As such, regular attendance is strongly encouraged.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Grading Paradigm		
98 to 100% — A Plus	93 to 97.9% — A	90 to 92.9% — A Minus
87 to 89.9% — B Plus	83 to 86.9% — B	80 to 82.9% — B Minus
77 to 79.9% — C Plus	73 to 76.9% — C	70 to 72.9% — C Minus
67 to 69.9% — D Plus	63 to 66.9% — D	60 to 62.9% — D Minus
Less than 60% — F		

And assignments and exams will be weighted accordingly:

Assignment & Exam Weights	
In-Class Participation	10 points
Policy Simulation Memo	5 points
Gerston Book Executive Summary	15 points
Staff Report Problem Statement	10 points
Staff Report Literature Review	15 points
Preliminary Cost-Benefit Analysis	10 points
AB 1314/SB 291 Group Project	25 points
Final Staff Report	10 points

Make-up/Late Policy

There are no make-up exams or other assignments without appropriate documentation (serious medical illness or serious medical emergency, religious holiday, pre-approved university-sanctioned event or activity, military orders, family emergency) that you were unable to complete the assignment on time.

This also applies to in-class assignments. If you are seriously ill, you must notify me as soon as possible by email or on my office phone that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time. Except in cases of documented medical emergency, you **MUST** notify me before the scheduled assignment. Out of fairness to your colleagues, work, missing an alarm, and generally not feeling well will not be accepted excuses for missing assignments. Be sure you schedule all of our assignments right away. If you have a vacation or similar event planned during one of these assignment days, you may want to take this course during another session or make arrangements to hand in the assignment early.

Major assignments like the policy paper will be graded if handed in late; however, these will be penalized commensurate with how late they were. If you have reason to think you will not make a deadline, always at least discuss it with me first. I can't guarantee anything, but I can guarantee a fair hearing. Communication will always lead to a better outcome for you than not communicating.

Classroom Policies and Protocol

Attendance and participation

Students may be called upon by name to address concepts from the readings. Students should take the time and effort to read the materials when they are assigned, and be prepared to actively participate in discussion of the topics, using both citations of the readings and their own defended views. Small group discussions during class will only enhance learning if each participant is prepared to contribute to the group's learning. In addition to the fact that students are graded on the quality and quantity of classroom participation, regular attendance will enhance your grade by virtue of giving students the opportunity to

develop the knowledge necessary to complete assignments that might not otherwise be available except from class discussion.

Cellphones, laptops, and other technology

You may not use your cell phone in class for non-class purposes. If you need to have it on for family reasons, please let me know ahead of time, turn it on vibrate and keep it out of sight to the extent possible. If you must make an emergency text, feel free to step outside of class. All other texting needs to take place before or after class. Laptops, tablets, and other such technology are allowed in class but for notetaking and educational use only. I reserve the right to bar specific students from using these technologies if they are making inappropriate use of them during class time. Please see me if you have questions about this policy or questions regarding SJSU academic accommodations related to this policy.

Recording of Lectures

I do not intend to record the Zoom lectures online for a number of reasons. (1) I do not record them when the class is in person and, to the extent that it is possible, I am trying to maintain some level of parity with how the class is usually delivered. (2) The primary benefit of a synchronous learning environment is that you may ask questions to probe for clarification in real time. Studies have shown that when students know there will be a recording of class lecture, it provides an incentive for them not to pay full attention in the moment. As such, barring extenuating circumstances, I do not intend to record my lectures for distribution to the class.

Please obtain my permission before taking an audio or video recording of lectures or other class activities. I will almost certainly grant such permission but it is common courtesy to let people know you will be recording them before you do so. Thus, out of respect to your colleagues and to me, please do not record this class without my explicit permission.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Useful Information for Students

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to

become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

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Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Readings/Media	Due
Unit #1 - The Theory of Analysis and Evaluation				
1	28-Jan	What is Policy Analysis?	Weimar & Vining, Ch. 2	
2	4-Feb	The Market Failure Framework, The Practice of Analysis	Weimar & Vining, Chs. 4 & 5	Policy Simulation Memo
3	11-Feb	The Systems Framework	Canvas Readings	
4	18-Feb	Discussing California's Policy History	Gerston	Executive Summary
Unit #2 - The Component Pieces of Policy Analysis and Evaluation				
5	25-Feb	Defining Problems, Understanding Program Goals	Weimar & Vining, Ch. 1; Bardach Part 1	
6	4-Mar	Developing Measures & Marshaling Evidence	Weimar & Vining, Chs. 7 & 14, Bardach, Part II	Problem Statement
7	11-Mar	Process Evaluation & Developing Alternatives	Weimar & Vining, Chs. 10 & 12	
8	18-Mar	Cost-Benefit Analysis I	Weimar & Vining, Ch. 17	Lit Review
9	25-Mar	Cost-Benefit Analysis II	Weimar & Vining, Ch. 17	
10	1-Apr	Spring Break - No Class!		
Unit #3 - The Practice of Analysis and Evaluation				
11	8-Apr	Cost-Benefit Analysis Practice	Canvas Readings	
12	15-Apr	Organizing Your Policy Analysis	Weimar & Vining, Ch. 15, Bardach Part III	Preliminary CBA
13	22-Apr	Group Project Workshop	<i>None</i>	

14	29-Apr	Case Study: College Student Homelessness	<i>None</i>	Group Project
15	6-May	Non-Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Evaluation; Evaluation Ethics and Best Practices	Canvas Readings	
16	13-May	Final Class Staff Report Workshop	<i>None</i>	
Final Project Due – Thursday, May 20th @ 5:15p				