

Gov 93C

Public Policy Practicum

Environmental Track

Fall 2020
Meeting Time: TBA
Meeting Zoom: TBA

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This course provides students with an opportunity to conduct hands-on environmental policy research. At its heart is a semester-long policy analysis project designed and produced by the class as a whole. This semester you will be working on a commission from the [National Resources Defense Council](#), investigating the relationships between electrification, energy efficiency, and affordable housing. Besides making your own contribution to knowledge in this area, you will also learn about policy analysis and writing, along with the politics of environmental policymaking.

This course is the product of a collaboration between the [Government Department](#) and the Kennedy School's [Institute of Politics](#) (IOP). The [IOP Policy Program](#) has a proud tradition of student-led research. This course continues that tradition, while also incorporating elements of a traditional class. Because the research is led by the students themselves, every participant is expected to actively contribute throughout the semester. Success requires both independence (to do your own self-directed research) and collaboration (to work with your classmates to produce a cohesive final paper).

Introductory Sessions

There will be two introductory sessions for this course. You are strongly encouraged to attend one of them. If the provided session timings do not work for your schedule, e-mail me and we will set up an alternative time to meet.

- Tuesday, August 18 at 1:30pm Eastern (GMT+4)
- Friday, August 21 at 9am Eastern (GMT+4)

Learning Objectives

The commission is the capstone project of the course and a project that the students work on together with significant autonomy, but one that will be monitored and evaluated by the instructor to ensure that students are developing core policy writing skills. More broadly, the commission provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of clear learning objectives. These will be assessed in instructor evaluations and structured feedback provided to students. The learning objectives for the commission are as follows.

Students will be able to:

- Use policy information learned in class as well as additional outside information to articulate the relevant substantive policy issues and show they have a strong grasp of the policy area.
- Draw on public policy concepts in analyzing the issues at hand and forming recommendations.
- Follow commonly-recognized policy analysis processes in conceiving, organizing, and writing the commission.
 - Identify a policy problem relevant to the commission.
 - Look to research and other cases to elaborate potential solutions.
 - Determine the criteria with which to adjudicate among a manageable number of policy recommendations.
 - Analyze how the policy recommendations fare against the criteria.
 - Make a recommendation.
- Draw on scholarly research as well as news media, primary sources, and other resources to bolster analysis in all parts of the commission.
- Write in a clear, coherent, professional style.
- Work together as a group to determine the content of the commission and how to go about writing it.
- Participate actively in all stages of the commission-writing process.

The students will work as a class to determine the structure and sequence of the commission. The instructor will be a resource for students throughout the process, ensuring that the students are drawing on policy information, policy process concepts, and policy analysis writing guidelines that they learned in class.

Commission

This semester's project has been commissioned by the National Resources Defense Council, one of the country's best-known environmental advocacy organizations. Our commission will address the relationships between electrification, equity, and efficiency in low-income and affordable housing. In doing so, we will be building on the work of a program which NRDC has helped to found and champion, called [Energy Efficiency for All](#):

"Efficient appliances, windows, and heating systems can save money and reduce dangerous pollution. Yet not everyone can afford to make the upfront investment in energy-saving dishwashers or furnaces. This is especially true for the millions of low-income Americans living in rental housing.

NRDC helped launch the Energy Efficiency for All project to bring the benefits of efficiency to affordable housing in a dozen states across the nation. Low-income families spend up to 20 percent of their money on energy—compared to just 4 percent for the average household. These bills take a bite out of the resources residents have for food, health care, and other necessities. Partnering with the National Housing Trust, the Energy Foundation, and other groups, NRDC is helping families in affordable housing save energy and money.

We work with utilities and state regulators to design efficiency incentives that give a fair share of funding to affordable rentals. We help housing finance authorities to streamline the process for investing in efficiency upgrades. And we collaborate with local community groups to ensure that all building owners and tenants can access efficiency programs."

Our work will focus on integrating electrification into these efforts. Using electricity for things like heating, cooling, and cooking can make a big difference in pollution, efficiency, and costs. But policies to encourage this switch are not always accessible to low-income families. We will try to help bridge that gap.

Note: the text of the commission is still being finalized with the NRDC, and the specific project details may change before the start of the semester. That's the first lesson of policy work: be prepared to be flexible.

Course Structure

Class sessions will take a full period block (2 hours and 45 minutes), and will generally be split into three parts:

1. General instruction on policy analysis and the subject area of the commission. This is the part of the class that will most closely mirror a traditionally-taught, small-group course. Early in the semester this will last up to 2 hours, while later in the semester it might only be 1 hour long.
2. Review of the students' progress over the last week, with opportunities for the students to raise issues that have arisen and get advice. This would last between 15

minutes and 30 minutes.

3. Independent group work by the students. Time will set aside each week for students to plan and organize their work for the next week. The instructor will not necessarily be present for this part. This will last between 15 and 45 minutes, depending on the needs of the students.

This structure is preliminary and experimental, and may be modified over the course of the semester.

Course Policies

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on a SAT/UNSAT basis. Evaluation will take into account:

- Regular attendance and participation
- Active engagement with the taught component of the course
- Active contribution to the production of the policy brief
- Individual written assignments

Online Instruction

All classes will take place over Zoom. The meeting time for the course will be determined once the roster is set, so that all students can attend at a reasonable hour.

Moving instruction online is harder for some students than others. I understand that internet connectivity, equipment reliability, crowded homes, and other issues that don't normally affect the classroom experience may arise. I sympathize with how hard this may be for some of you. If there are any difficulties that come up, please let me know. I am committed to making this semester the best that it can be under the circumstances.

Office Hours

I will be available to students by appointment.

Accessibility

If you are registered with the Accessible Education Office, please send me your letter within the first two weeks of the semester, so I can make the appropriate accommodations. For more information, see <http://aeo.fas.harvard.edu>.

If you have preferences about how you would like to be addressed that are not reflected in the University's databases, feel free to e-mail me so I can address you correctly.

Respectful Discourse

This course will deal with issues that are relevant to current politics, and some of them are the subject of controversy. You will be regularly analyzing and criticizing the ideas of your peers. Throughout, you will be expected to treat your fellow classmates and their contributions with respect, even if you disagree with their views. If you feel you are having trouble doing that, or you feel uncomfortable, you are encouraged to raise the issue with me and I will work with you to resolve the situation.

Collaboration

The final product of this course will be a collectively-written piece of policy writing to which all students will contribute. But prior to this, there will be several writing assignments throughout the semester which will be evaluated individually. These assignments will often contribute to the final policy paper, but before they are edited collectively I will review them to evaluate your progress and offer feedback.

When preparing these individual assignments, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates and share sources. However, you should ensure that the written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in the discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts from peers or others) prior to submission, you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Admission

Admission to the course is determined by application. Enrollment is capped at 12 students.

1. To receive full consideration, submit the form at forms.gle/ijyFb1FN29eUTf577 by midnight in your time zone on **Friday, August 21st**. Admitted students will be informed by e-mail.
2. If you are admitted, you need to submit a **petition to enroll** through my.harvard.edu.
3. Once your petition is accepted, you need to **confirm your enrollment** in the class. If you are unable to take your spot for any reason, please inform the instructor as soon as possible so another student may be admitted.

Assignments

Readings

Reading for the course will include both assigned texts and your own individual research. One book is required reading for the course, and can be purchased from the [Harvard](#)

[Coop](#) or other online retailers. If you live outside the United States and are having trouble obtaining the book, let me know and we will work out a solution.

Eugene S. Bardach and E.M. Patashnik (2016). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. Fifth Edition. CQ Press/Sage

The rest of the assigned readings will be provided online. Weekly reading assignments will be designed to be manageable, with the expectation that you will be conducting substantial individual research as well. The reading list is pending the final commission agreement with the NDRC.

Meetings

This is a draft version of the weekly topics and readings. I have only included the readings for the first half of the semester, since the organization and assignments will change in response to the decisions you make about the research.

Session 0: Introduction

No assigned readings.

Session 1: Elements of Policy Analysis

Bardach and Patashnik, Introduction and Part I.

Session 2: Affordable Housing and Energy Efficiency

Jack Balderrama Morley (2017). *Young Architect's Guide: Every Type of Affordable Housing, Explained*. URL: architizer.com/blog/practice/details/affordable-housing-101/

Matthew Yglesias (2015). *Everything you need to know about the affordable housing debate*. URL: <https://www.vox.com/2014/4/10/18076868/affordable-housing-explained>

Environmental Protection Agency (2011). *Energy Efficiency in Affordable Housing: A Guide to Developing and Implementing Greenhouse Gas Reduction Programs*. EPA-430-R-09-035. Washington, D.C.. URL: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/affordable%7B%5C_%7Dhousing.pdf

Session 3: Policy Research Methods I

Bardach and Patashnik, Parts II and III.

Christopher M. Weible (2020). *Guideline for Analyzing Journal Articles*. URL: <https://medium.com/policy-process-matters/be-like-mark-a-guide-to-analyzing-journal-articles-235c79ccd117>

Session 4: Policy Writing I

HKS Communications Program (N.D.). "The Policy Analysis Exercise: The Writing Guide". John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, pp. 17-26.

George Orwell (1946). "Politics and the English Language". In: *Horizon* 13.76, pp. 252–265. Available at https://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit

Anne Lamott (2005). "Shitty First Drafts". In: *Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers*. Ed. by Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark. Ninth. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, pp. 93–96

Session 5: Politics of Policymaking

Bardach and Patashnik, Appendix D.

Leah C. Stokes and Hanna L. Breetz (2018). "Politics in the U.S. Energy Transition: Case Studies of Solar, Wind, Biofuels and Electric Vehicles Policy". In: URL: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8v19r289>

Michaël Aklin and Johannes Urpelainen (July 2013). "Political Competition, Path Dependence, and the Strategy of Sustainable Energy Transitions". In: *American Journal of Political Science* 57.3, pp. 643–658. URL: <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/ajps.12002>

Session 6: Environmental Justice

Kevin C. Foy (2012). "Home is Where the Health Is: The Convergence of Environmental Justice, Affordable Housing, and Green Building", *Pace Environl. L. Rev.* 30(1). URL: <HTTPS://DIGITALCOMMONS.PACE.EDU/PELR/VOL30/ISS1/1/>.

Justin Worland (July 2020). "Why the Larger Climate Movement Is Finally Embracing the Fight Against Environmental Racism." In: *Time*. URL: <https://time.com/5864704/environmental-racism-climate-change/>