Spring 2013
January 2013

Social Policy Project Course

Syllabus

Douglas J. Besharov
Douglas M. Call

This course is meant to be the capstone learning experience for social policy students at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. It is a client-based workshop in which students integrate their prior course instruction with real-world experiences grappling with current questions in policy or programming and the practical needs of policy makers and managers.

The course is required for all 48-credit (MPP) Social Policy students. Work must be completed before graduation.

Possible projects cover all the major elements of policy analysis, policy planing, and program evaluation including developmental evaluations, process evaluations, performance measurement, summative evaluations, economic evaluations, and policy analyses. (See http://www.welfareacademy.org/pubs/capstone/index.shtml.)

With the help of the instructors, students are matched with a preselected group of potential clients, usually by early in the Fall semester before the formal course. Students work with their clients to develop the details of their projects and to determine the type of analysis to be performed.

Students will prepare a project report for their clients, and also will present their findings to their clients, classmates, and other invited guests (such as MSPP professors and other government officials). (The project reports and presentations are described below.)

The course will be taught jointly by Douglas J. Besharov and Douglas M. Call.

Professor Besharov is generally in his campus office (2202J Van Munching Hall) on Wednesdays (and irregularly on other days), but it is best to call to make an appointment. His campus phone number is (301)405-6341. If you cannot reach him on campus, please feel free to call him at home (301)986-1969 (preferably between 8:30-10 p.m.) or e-mail him at besharov@umd.edu.

Professor Call is available in his office (2202J Van Munching Hall) M-F, between 8:00

and 5:00. Students are welcome to drop by at any time. His campus phone number is (301)405-5910. If you need to reach him outside of office hours, his home phone number is (301)725-4327, but e-mail (dcall1@umd.edu) is strongly preferred outside of office hours.

Please refer to the appendices for information on the Honor Code and medical absences.

Clients and projects

Potential clients were invited to submit project proposals in the summer. Clients were provided with a list of the types of analyses that students are able to perform. Students should have learned about these analyses in Program Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis and other courses in the School of Public Policy. The types of analyses are:

- *Conduct a needs assessment:* Final product would be an analysis to determine whether there is a problem that needs to be addressed and, if so, its size and severity, who it affects, why it exists, and who might benefit from a possible program. (Includes GAO pre-job research projects.)

- *Plan or develop a program:* Final product would be a design for a new or existing program which includes the program theory, inputs, activities, outputs, and expected outcomes.

- *Design and/or conduct a process evaluation:* Final product would be a description of the operations (inputs, activities, and outputs) of a program, and, where appropriate, an analysis of the extent to which they match the original program design.

- *Identify and develop performance measures:* Final product would be a description of existing measures used to assess a program's outputs and immediate outcome, and, where appropriate, a design for new or revised measures.

- *Plan a summative (impact) evaluation:* Final product would be the design of a summative evaluation to estimate the effects of a program or policy (outcomes and impacts). Because of the time constraints of the class, students would not conduct the evaluation without the express permission of one of the instructors.

- *Conduct a case study of a program:* Final product would be a detailed description of the program gathered through interviews, observation, and surveys with an analysis of how well the program is working.

- *Design and/or conduct an economic analysis:* Final product would be a description of the costs of a program, and, where appropriate, an analysis of the cost of achieving the program's goals (cost-effectiveness, cost-feasibility, or cost-benefit analysis).

- *Conduct a policy analysis:* Final product would be a description of a policy problem (including size, nature, severity, and causes), possible options to ameliorate the problem, assessments of the possible options, and final recommendations.

After students have been matched with clients, students should contact their clients immediately and begin working on framing their projects. Although the proposals have been approved, circumstances may have changed since the proposals were submitted and clients may need to change the project. In addition, students may need to work with clients to limit the scope of the project.

Students are ***strongly*** encouraged to have finalized their research questions and determined the scope of their projects by the class meeting in late November and to begin work on their projects over the Winter Break, if not before.

Classroom procedures

All students are expected to come to class prepared, having read and digested the readings. (Supplemental readings are optional.) If some unavoidable circumstance prevents you from being prepared, please inform Professor Besharov or Professor Call. If you have not done so before class begins, we will assume that you are affirming your being prepared to fully participate in the class discussion.

We prefer that laptops not be open during class. As mentioned below, please bring printed versions of the assigned readings to class, as we will frequently refer to them in class.

A word about the classroom discussion. We will often use a version of the Socratic method. Please see Appendix 1 for a reasonably accurate description of the method and its purpose. Although it is written about law teaching, it will give you an idea of how class discussion will be handled.

Grading

Exercise #1: Construct a logic model for your project	5%
Presentation #1: Logic model	5%
Narrative outline	5%
Draft project report	10%
Presentation #2: Rehearsal presentation	10%
Presentation #3: Final presentation	20%

Project report	30%
Class participation (including constructive feedback to other students during classes)	15%

PLEASE NOTE: Except under exceptionally extenuating circumstances, grades for assignments will be automatically reduced by *one-half grade point* for each full or part day the assignment is late.

Assignments

Please submit all assignments via e-mail to both Professor Besharov and Professor Call. Please use the following naming convention for your assignments: Course name _Last name_Assignment name_Date. (Example: "Project Course_Smith_Logic Model_12_1015.")

Exercise #1: Construct a logic model for your project. Using the template of the logic model, students will create logic models for their projects. In general, the logic models should be of the programs being assessed by the students. In some situations, it may be more appropriate for students to create logic models of their own *projects.* Both types of logic models are acceptable for this assignment. Students will also prepare one-page memos detailing the elements of the logic model that apply to their projects. The exercises are *due the Monday before the course begins (January 21) by 5:00 p.m*.

Presentation #1: Logic model. Students will present their logic models to the rest of the class. Half the class will present logic models on January 24 and the other half on January 31. Students should focus their presentations on the elements of the logic model that apply to their project, and the presentations should be no more than five minutes. The schedule for student presentations will be based on the type of analysis being conducted and will be finalized at the pre-course meeting on November 28 or November 29.

Narrative outline. Students will prepare narrative outlines of their reports. The narrative outlines will be due on Monday, March 25 by 5:00 p.m.

Draft project report. Students will prepare drafts of their project reports. The drafts should be near completion with placeholders for any (minor) incomplete sections. Drafts that are only in outline form or that lack sufficient content will receive lower grades. The draft project reports are due on Monday, April 15, by 5:00 p.m.

Presentation #2: Rehearsal presentation. Students will make rehearsal presentations to the class and the professors about two weeks prior to the final presentations. Students should prepare for these presentations as if they are presenting their final presentations to their clients. The rehearsal presentations will be a total of twenty-five minutes, with roughly fifteen minutes for presenting and ten minutes for questions. Due to the large number of students in the class, rehearsal presentations will be scheduled for three different days during the week of April 22–26. Students are expected to attend class the day they present. The rehearsal presentations are due on Friday, April 19, by 5:00 p.m.

Presentation #3: Final presentation. The final presentations, at the end of the term, will be formal and strictly limited to fifteen minutes per student. (Some clients, such as the GAO, request shorter presentations; students will be informed of the required length of their presentations the month before the presentations are scheduled.) Clients, classmates, professors, and others (such as government officials) will be in attendance. Final presentations are due three days before students are scheduled to make their presentations. (In years past, final presentations have been made in Baltimore, Rockville and downtown D.C.; we expect to be able to make similar arrangements this year.)

Project report. The following are *general* guidelines for the structure of the project report, but the structure of the project report may vary based on the type of analysis that is being performed: (1) a section describing the program; (2) a literature review, if relevant; (3) a methodology section that describes how the project was conducted; (4) a findings/recommendation section; and (5) a conclusion.

Please view the guidelines as a jumping off point for thinking how to structure your report, and not as a required format.

The minimum length of the report is forty double-spaced pages, in a readable font (such as Times New Roman 12), with standard margins and line spacing. This can include a reasonable number of tables and charts inserted in the text, as long as they directly support the analysis. There is no maximum page limit.

These guidelines for the report are subject to the desires of your client. If the client requests a final product that is substantially different than the report described above, please contact us immediately so that we can determine if the final product can be considered to satisfy the course requirements. The project reports are due on Friday, May 17, by 5:00 p.m.

Students may find project reports from past classes useful in determining how to structure their reports. Past projects may be found at http://welfareacademy.org/pubs/capstone/index.shtml. The passwords for projects from 2009, 2010, and 2011 are UMDPC2009, UMDPC2010, and UMDPC2011, respectively.

READINGS AND CLASS MEETINGS

Note: This is a *tentative* schedule for readings and assignments. Dates and readings may change based on class needs (and class size). The classes are designed to provide greater depth on topics covered in Introduction to Policy Analysis and in Program Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis. They focus on the types of analysis that the majority of students are conducting. Supplemental readings for other types of analyses are available upon request. Also, this course has a discussion section so that we may arrange site visits. These visits will be voluntary; students need not rearrange work schedules or other class schedules to attend.

Required and assigned readings

The required text for this class is:

- Carl Patton, David Sawicki, and Jennifer Clark, *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013) ISBN-10: 0137495099 | ISBN-13: 978-0137495092

We strongly recommend that students review the "exhibits" that were assigned in Program Evaluation and Cost-Benefit Analysis and which will also be posted on the Blackboard site for his class.

Most of the assigned readings will be available on Blackboard (elms.umd.edu). We will provide URLs for those readings that are not available on Blackboard.

Even when the articles assigned in this course are available in electronic format, please make sure to bring a printed copy to class to facilitate class discussion and note taking.

Pre-course meeting. November 28 or 29 (depending on student availability). Course overview and how to prepare a logic model. Review of syllabus, class schedule, and student projects. Discussion of the use and preparation of logic models.

Readings
Douglas J. Besharov, *Logic Models* (College Park, MD: Welfare Reform Academy, December 2010).

Class #1. January 24. Logic model presentations (pt. 1).

Note: This class will be divided into two sessions: 1:30–3:00 and 3:15–4:45. Students will be assigned to attend and present their logic model in one of the two sessions, with seven students attending and presenting in session one and seven students attending and presenting in session two. Students are expected to provide useful feedback to their classmates about their logic models.

Class #2. January 31. Logic model presentations (pt. 2).

Note: Same as class #1 for the remainder of the class.

Class #3. February 7. Using a narrative outline to prepare a policy briefing (with overheads). How to design and conduct case studies.

Readings
Douglas J. Besharov, *Narrative Outlines* (College Park, MD: Welfare Reform Academy, 2012) (2 pages).

RAND, *Guidelines for Preparing Briefings* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1996), http://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate_pubs/CP269/CP269.pdf (27 pages).

Karin Martinson and Carolyn O'Brien, "Chapter 8: Conducting Case Studies" in *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, eds. Joseph S. Wholey, Harry P. Hatry, and Kathryn E. Newcomer, 3rd edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010): 163-181 (19 pages).

Douglas J. Besharov and Peter Germans, *Full-Engagement Welfare in New York City: Lessons for TANF's Participation Requirements* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland School of Public Policy, Welfare Reform Academy, August 2004), 1–14, 143–152, http://welfareacademy.org/pubs/welfare/nyc_hra.pdf (24 pages).

February 14. Individual student meetings with professors.

Note: Instead of class, students will meet individually with the professors for about fifteen minutes (or more) to discuss the status of their projects and any difficulties they might be having.

Class #4. February 21. How to prepare policy analyses (pt. 1).

Readings
Carl Patton, David Sawicki, and Jennifer Clark, "Chapter 2.4: The Analytic Process" and "Chapter 2.5: Basic Policy Analysis in Six Steps," in *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013), 40–55 (15 pages).

Carl Patton, David Sawicki, and Jennifer Clark, "Chapter 4: Verifying, Defining, and Detailing the Problem," *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013), 140–167 (28 pages).

Carl Patton, David Sawicki, and Jennifer Clark, "Chapter 6: Identifying Alternatives" in *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013), 315–234 (20 pages).

Class #5. February 28. How to prepare a policy analysis (pt. 2).

Readings
Carl Patton, David Sawicki, and Jennifer Clark, "Chapter 5.3: Commonly Employed Evaluation Criteria" in *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013), 194–203 (10 pages).

Carl Patton, David Sawicki, and Jennifer Clark, "Chapter 8: Displaying Alternatives and Distinguishing Among Them" in *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013), 314–334 (21 pages).

Jacob Krimmel and Douglas M. Call, *A Policy Analysis of New York City's Poop Scoop Laws* (College Park, MD: Welfare Reform Academy, 2011) (6 pages).

Class #6. March 7. How to design and conduct implementation evaluations.

Readings
Arnold Love, "Chapter 3: Implementation Evaluation," in *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, eds. Joseph S. Wholey, Harry P. Hatry, and Kathryn E. Newcomer (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004): 63–69, 80-96 (24 pages).

Stephen Walsh, Deana Goldsmith, Yasuyo Abe, and Andrea Cann, "Chapter 3: Implementing the CET Model," in *Evaluation of the Center for Employment Training Replication Sites: Interim Report* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Policy Associates, June 2000), 3-1--3-39 (39 pages).

Class #7. March 14. How to design and implement a performance measurement system.

Readings
Theodore H. Poister, "Chapter 4: Performance Monitoring," in *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, eds. Joseph S. Wholey, Harry P. Hatry, and Kathryn E. Newcomer (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004): 98–125 (28 pages).

Lewin Group, *Performance Measurement Development for Hawaii Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Positive Youth Development Programs* (Falls Church, VA: Lewin Group, May 2007), 1–12, 38–62, http://hawaii.gov/dhs/quicklinks/HI%20Final%20Report.pdf (37 pages).

March 21. Spring Break.

March 25. Narrative outline due by 5:00 p.m.

Class #9. April 4. Individual student meetings with professors.

Note: Instead of class, students will meet individually with the professors for about fifteen minutes (or more) to discuss their narrative outlines and any difficulties they might be having with their projects.

April 15. Draft project reports due by 5:00 p.m.

April 19. Rehearsal presentations due by 5:00 p.m.

Week of April 22-26. Rehearsal presentations. Schedule to be determined.

May 2. Student meetings with professors.

Note: Instead of class, students will meet individually with the professors for about fifteen minutes (or more) to discuss their presentations and final paper.

Mid-May. Final presentations for clients. Dates, times, and locations are to be determined.

May 18. Final papers due.

Appendix 1

The Socratic Method

"In a typical class setting, the professor asks a question and calls on a student who may or may not have volunteered an answer. The professor either then continues to ask the student questions or moves on to another student.

The employment of the Socratic method has some uniform features but can also be heavily influenced by the temperament of the teacher. The method begins by calling on a student at random, and asking about a central argument put forth by one of the judges (typically on the side of the majority) in an assigned case. The first step is to ask the student to paraphrase the argument, in order to ensure that the student has read and has a basic understanding of the case. . . . Assuming the student has read the case and can articulate the court's argument, the teacher then asks whether the student agrees with the argument. The teacher then typically plays Devil's advocate, trying to force the student to defend his or her position by rebutting arguments against it.

These subsequent questions can take a few forms. Sometimes they seek to challenge the assumptions upon which the student based the previous answer until it breaks. Further questions can also be designed to move a student toward greater specificity, either in understanding a rule of law or a particular case. The teacher may attempt to propose a hypothetical situation in which the student's assertion would seem to demand an exception. Finally professors use the Socratic method to allow students to come to legal principles on their own through carefully worded questions that spur a particular train of thought.

One hallmark of Socratic questioning is that typically there is more than one "correct" answer, and more often, no clear answer at all. The primary goal of the Socratic method in the law school setting is not to answer usually unanswerable questions, but to explore the contours of often difficult legal issues and to teach students the critical thinking skills they will need as lawyers. This is often done by altering the facts of a particular case to tease out how the result might be different. This method encourages students to go beyond memorizing the facts of a case and instead to focus on application of legal rules to tangible fact patterns. As the assigned texts are typically case law, the Socratic method, if properly used, can display that judges' decisions are usually conscientiously made but are based on certain premises, beliefs, and conclusions that are the subject of legitimate argument.

Sometimes, the class ends with a discussion of doctrinal foundations (legal rules) to anchor the students in contemporary legal understanding of an issue. At other times the class ends without such discussion leaving students to figure out for themselves the legal rules or principles that were at issue. For this method to work, the students are expected to be prepared for class in advance by reading the assigned materials (case opinions, notes, law review articles, etc.) and by familiarizing themselves with the general outlines of the subject matter."[1]

[1]Wikipedia, "Socratic Method," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socratic_method

Appendix 2

University Honor Code

Please note the following statement from the Student Honor Council regarding the University Honor Code and plagiarism:

> The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu.
>
> To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see the resources provided by the University at http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/plag_stud_what.html.

Appendix 3
Medical Absences

Please note the following statement on medical absences from the UMD Provost's office:

In the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy is as follows:

- For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made to notify the instructors in advance of the class. When returning to class, students must bring a note identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate.

- If a student is absent more than two time(s), the instructor may require documentation signed by a health care professional.

- If a student is absent on days when a presentation is scheduled, he or she is required to notify the instructor in advance, and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional.

Additional information about the University of Maryland's attendance policies can be found at http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540.