SOSC 3600: Public Policy Analysis

Fall, 2020
Meeting Time: Wednesdays and Fridays, 3:00pm – 4:20pm
Course Canvas Site: https://canvas.ust.hk/courses/32669

Course Information
This course introduces students to conceptual frameworks and analytical techniques in approaching various contemporary public policy issues, such as ageing, urbanization, technological innovations, and security. It will help students to understand not only how policies are made, implemented and evaluated, but also how analytical techniques and tools can be used to improve the effectiveness of policy interventions. Strong emphasis will be given to the learning and application of analytical techniques widely used in the practices of policy analysis, such as stakeholder analysis, cost-benefit analysis, multi-criteria analysis, and randomized control trials.

Instructor: Prof Kira MATUS **Office:** Room 4616D **Email:** kmatus@ust.hk **Phone:** (852) 3469 2730 **Office Hours:** Mondays from 2pm-3pm	**TA:** Rachel GANLY **Email:** rganly@connect.ust.hk

Learning Objectives

1. Appreciate the role of public policy in determining social well-being
2. Familiarize with major approaches to public policy
3. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of major policy instruments
4. Understand the process and institutions for policy-making
5. Diagnose policy problems and devise policy measures to address them
6. Apply analytical techniques in policy analysis and evaluation

Assessment

Assignment	%	Due Date
Participation: Discussion Posts/Class work/Annotations/Attendance	20	*Ongoing*
CBA/Systems Modeling Assignment	5	Monday, October 12, 2020
RCT Assignment	5	Friday, November 20, 2020
Case Essay 1	10	Friday, October 30, 2020
Case Competition Group Video Posters	20	Friday, November 6, 2020
Case Essay 2	10	Friday, November 27, 2020
Final Project -Group Video Presentation	10	Friday, December 4, 2020
Final Project - Group Write up	15	Wednesday, December 16, 2020
Final Project- Reflection and Peer Review	5	Friday, December 18, 2020
Total	**100**	

Technical details

Classes will be over Zoom for the entire term. The Zoom meeting information can be found on the course Canvas site: https://canvas.ust.hk/courses/32669/external_tools/2420.

All readings will be available electronically. Readings will be available either directly on the course website as pdfs, or via links to e-reserves on the HKUST library website.

Office hours will be on Zoom. I will post details and sign-ups on the Canvas site.

*We will make use of **Perusall** for annotation and discussion throughout the course.* Please go to https://app.perusall.com/home and create a free account. Then use code **MATUS-YFRWP** to enroll in the course. I will also post directions on the Canvas site.

Communication: The instructor and TA are available by email and "in-person" (Zoom) during office hours or by appointment. We will endeavor to return emails within 24-48 hours during the week (possibly slightly longer over the weekend).

Class Participation:

The more every student participates, the better and more interesting the class will be. In order to facilitate this, you will be asked to actively engage in a variety of ways. We are all Zoom pros by now, so I expect that you have mastered the basics of navigating features like polls, chat, annotations, reactions and breakout rooms (and don't worry – we will do some Zoom refreshing, and the TA and I are always available to help).

This course is highly interactive, so you will not be able to master the material simply by watching the videos later (though we will make recordings available). Attendance is required, but not sufficient, to satisfy participation requirements.

There are many ways to contribute your participation. This includes contributing to the annotation and discussion board activities, actively engaging during in-class activities, and taking part in live discussions.

I also request that, if at all possible, you turn your cameras on – especially during breakout groups. However, I am aware that many of you have challenges related to connection strength/quality, background noise, etc… *If you cannot keep video on at any point, please make sure you have an image* (selfie, bitmoji, etc..) to represent you in the Zoom. Also, be aware that the TA may check in with you if you are not on camera, to make sure that you're still there.

WAYS TO ENGAGE IN A BLENDED ONLINE COURSE

CLASS PARTICIPATION

USE RAISE HAND FEATURE
To keep our conversation open to all students, click the "Raise Hand" button to add to our class discussion.

CONTRIBUTE VIA CHAT
Raise new topics, respond to others' comments, ask a question, post relevant links. The chat is a great tool to deepen our discussion!

ATTEND LIVE CLASS MEETINGS
Have your camera on whenever possible, and keep your mic on mute if you're not talking to prevent background noise.

USE REACTIONS
A quick way to show engagement and understanding during our calls.

PARTICIPATE IN BREAKOUT ROOMS
Serve as facilitator, note taker, time keeper, or reporter. Engage in the given activity, and prepare to share your discussion with the whole class.

ADD TO CLASS NOTES
Add your perspective to a shared document that can later serve as collaboratively created class notes.

SYNCHRONOUS

ASYNCHRONOUS

WATCH CLASS VIDEOS
Watch pre-recorded lecture and live-recorded class meetings. For best results, take handwritten notes while viewing. Complete any related quizzes.

COMPLETE CLASS READINGS
Use any provided pre-reading assignments to dig into posted readings. Note major themes, and make connections with ongoing class discussions.

ENGAGE VIA ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARDS
Explore material further by adding your own discussion topics, and commenting on posts made by your classmates.

ASK FOR HELP
Reach out to your instructors and/or classmates with questions or concerns about content, assignments, or course management. You can email your instructors, post to a course discussion forum, or book an online meeting.

Template Created by Dr. Angel Kaur, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience
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Readings and Classwork:

This is a course for third and fourth year (advanced) undergraduates. By this point in your university career, I expect that you are responsible, independent students. At the same time, the topic matter (or most of it) will be new to many of you. This can mean a heavy load (intellectually) at times. The expectation is that you will do the readings (or watch videos, etc… as appropriate) for each session before the lecture, and I am making every effort to confine the required readings to manageable quantity. But because we will cover a lot of ground methodologically and topically, I will also post supplemental resources and articles for those of you with specific interests or needs for your various other projects (i.e. capstones).

The reason that it is so important to do the readings and class assignments is that this course is only as good as what you each are willing to put into it. Discussions will only work well if you are prepared, and come to class willing to engage in fruitful discussions. This is not a brain-transfer from the instructor to the classroom.

At HKUST we have fantastic students. You bring to the classroom a wealth of perspectives and experiences. So while vigorous discussion is encouraged, disrespect, inside of the classroom or out, will not be tolerated. We will work under Chatham House rules- what is said in the classroom stays in the classroom. Furthermore, under no circumstances will any student resort to personal attacks, however dry or witty. Any disrespectful or disruptive students will be asked to leave the class.

Graded Work and Academic Integrity:

For all of your formative and assessed work, it is expected that all assignments are original products produced by YOU. While we do a great deal of group work, the final product is your sole responsibility (except for the group presentations and report). So do no plagiarize, and make sure to be meticulous in citing your sources. If you have questions about the proper forms for citations, or issues around paraphrasing or use of quotations, please come talk with me. If you have any concerns at all about your work, please feel free to come see me during my office hours. I am always happy to help, whether you need someone to take a look at your writing, or to try out different ideas, want some extra explanation of a concept, or even just to chat about sustainability issues that interest you.

Late work:

Please submit work on time. If you need an extension for any reason, please let me, or the TA, know as soon as possible, and we will arrange reasonable accommodation. Late assignments will be penalized 3pts/day (capped at 20 pts after 1 week – in other words, it's still better to turn something in later rather than not at all).

Course Schedule

Topics

Week	Date	Topic
**Module 1** *Introduction to Public Policy and Public Policy Analysis*	
1	September 9	*Introduction to Public Policy and Policy Analysis*
1	September 11	*Problems, Causes, Goals and Objectives*
2	September 26	*Constructing Alternatives: Policy Tools*
2	September 18	*Stakeholders, Criteria, Interests and Values*
3	September 23	*Projecting Outcomes, Tradeoffs, and Decisions*
	Module 2 Cost Benefit Analysis and Systems Approaches	
3	September 25	*Cost Benefit Analysis*
4	September 30	*Systems Dynamics and other modeling approaches*
	Module 3 Case 1: Policy Design (I): Problems and Alternatives	
5	October 7	*Analyzing problems, causal mechanisms, and goals*
5	October 9	*Mapping alternatives to problems and causes*
6	October 15	*Features of effective policy reports*
	Module 4 Case 2: Policy Design (II): Criteria, Stakeholders, Rational v. Polis	
6	October 16	*Stakeholder mapping: interests, power, conflicting interpretations*
7	October 21	*Decision criteria, values, rational vs. polis*
7	October 23	*Tradeoffs and implementation implications*
	Module 5: Case Competition	
8	October 28	*Problem introduction, work session*
8	October 30	*Work session, instructor feedback*
	Module 6 Evaluation: Did it Work?	
9	November 4	*Introduction to types of evaluation and uses of causal inference for policy*
	Module 7 Case 3: Academic Evaluation and Lesson Drawing	
9	November 6	*Techniques for academic evaluation*
10	November 11	*Lesson drawing from experiences of others*
	Module 8 RCTs	
10	November 13	*Basics of RCTs for policy evaluation*
	Module 9 Case 4: RCTs in the Wild	
11	November 18	*Problem scoping (do we need to know causes?)*

11	November 20	*Experimental design*
12	November 25	*Insights and limitations*
Module 10 Final Project		
12	November 27	*Topic introduction/ Case Competition Finals*
13	December 2	*Group work session*
13	December 4	*Wrap-up*