



The School of Law and Government  
Master's Programme in Public Policy

# Public Policy Analysis

## LG 5003

Fall 2021

**Module leaders:** Markus Pauli & Volkan Yilmaz  
Fall 2021, Wednesdays 6-7pm and Thursdays 1-2pm  
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### Module description

Public policy is about failure. It is often the failure of markets, co-ordination failures, collective action problems, technical failures, implementation failures, among others. These problems or failures cut across many different areas: management, industry, design, law, economics, psychology, and politics. Some failures are failures of policies themselves. Public policies affect and are suffered by everyone—they're public. Given a society's limited resources, public policy is required to take decisions between conflicting preferences and goals. Public policy tries to "weave the future". But do policies work, and how would we know in advance?

This course aims to teach students how to design and analyse policies from a "positive" standpoint—that is, given a specific problem, what policy might we adopt to address it? Does this policy, or is it likely to, do what is said it will do? This course aims to cover the design and implementation of public policy. The course will show students how to analyse policies and practice this by examining real-world examples of policy successes and failures from Ireland and abroad. We will develop skills to design, analyse, and evaluate different policies so that we might choose the best ones, given some normative conditions for our choice.

It will be a course in which you will draw on your existing knowledge to think about how policies can be designed and improved. We do not assume that you are familiar with concepts

of public economics such as externalities, public goods, rent-seeking activities. But you should try to pick these up quickly. The most important resources you can bring to the course are imagination, creative thinking, and a bit of hard work. It will not be a course on the public policy process, i.e. studying the nature of the political decisions made. We will not explore why some policies get chosen rather than others.

### **Learning outcomes**

On completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Define policy problems
2. Design policy solutions
3. Identify the consequences of these solutions
4. Evaluate the policies in terms of some (explicit) social goals

### **Assessment overview**

There are three means of assessment in the course. The framing memorandum (assignment 1), a literature review (assignment 2), and the policy report (assignment 3) will focus on the same policy question.

(1) **Framing memorandum (15%)** (one-page proposal; deadline: 11 Oct – for peer feedback; 18 Oct – for marking.)

(2) **Literature Review (25%)** (Reviewing the relevant academic literature on your policy challenge: deadline: 29 Nov)

**Word Count:** 1500 max. (excluding bibliography & possible footnotes)

Identify, understand & classify the academic debate  
Summarize, explain & evaluate the academic debate

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### **How do scholars answer your research question?**

- Both in general as well as specifically, e.g. referring to a specific country or state.

### **Finding good, academic sources.**

- Sources are good if they provide answers to your research question.
- Literature research & reading: do less of “collecting” and more of (targeted) “hunting”.
- Better half a dozen excellent sources, which you use in-depth, then many more, which you merely mention.

### **Aim: Determine the commonalities and differences of the different authors.**

- Group the articles/ books according to different “schools of thought”.
- Spot similar approaches and methods.
- Are certain factors regarded as central causes by a group of scholars?

**Present the different answers** (e.g. by “schools of thought”, chronological, or by specific aspects) to your research question and **evaluate their strength and weaknesses**. Make each answer as strong as possible before you criticise it.

Introduce, explain and discuss **concepts, theories** (& optional: models, hypotheses) – and **evaluate the findings**.

Aim: Which theories (& optional: models, hypotheses) and findings (answer to your research question) do you find **most convincing**? Explain **why**.

(3) **Policy Report (60%)** (deadline: 5 Jan)

Your report should be between 4,000 and 5,000 words in length (excluding bibliography and footnotes).

Students are expected to attend and participate fully in our live sessions. It will be a practical class in which we will first discuss the ways to identify policy problems and how to compare them by considering their abstract similarities.

To make the course work best, you should have several policy problems that interest you. Find out about these problems, look at what other countries have similar issues, and examine how other countries approach solutions.

We expect you to:

- Actively engage in our seminar;
- Read the core reading(s) for each session;
- Sign up for our online office hours if you would like feedback;
- Please give us early feedback if you need more input on an assignment – e.g. on defining a policy problem, researching & using literature, structuring and writing your report;
- Help create a great learning experience for everyone in our seminar.

## **Outline of the module and core readings**

**Week 1** *Introduction and overview* (Markus Pauli & Volkan Yilmaz)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC's Policy Analytical Framework, Atlanta: CDC.

**Week 2** *Defining policy problems* (Volkan Yilmaz)

Peters, G.B., 2005. The problem of policy problems. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 7(4), pp.349-370.

Baldwin, R., Cave, M. and Lodge, M., 2012. *Understanding Regulation: Theory, Strategy, and Practice*. Oxford University Press, pp. 15-24.

**Week 3** *Policy tools I* (Markus Pauli)

Wheelan, Charles J. *Introduction to Public Policy*. WW Norton & Company, 2011; *Chapter 3: Understanding Behavior: Rational Man and Women*, p. 69 - 138.

**Week 4** *Policy tools II* (Volkan Yilmaz)

Birkland, T.A., 2016. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. Routledge, pp. 241-271.

**Week 5** *Policy comparisons, benchmarking, and learning* (Volkan Yilmaz)

Freeman, R., 2008. Learning in Public Policy, in: Goodin, R.E., Moran, M., Rein, M. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*. Oxford University Press, pp. 367–388.

**Week 6** *Cost-benefit analysis* (Markus Pauli)

Wheelan, Charles J. *Introduction to Public Policy*. WW Norton & Company, 2011; *Chapter 12: Cost-Benefit Analysis*, p. 69 - 138.

**Week 7** *The policy process and stakeholder analysis* (Volkan Yilmaz)

Clemons, R.S. and McBeth, M.K., 2020. Power, Policymaking, and Democracy (including Stakeholder Analysis) in *Public Policy Praxis: A Case Approach for Understanding Policy and Analysis*. Routledge, pp. 25-39.

**Week 8** *Human-centred design for public policy* (Markus Pauli)

Mintrom Luetjens (2016) *Design Thinking in Policymaking Processes: Opportunities and Challenges* (10 pages)

Portable Report (2015) *Hacking the Bureaucracy: Exploring the key drivers of innovation within Government*; Read Part 1: *Innovating in Government* (19 pages); Skim Part 2: *Hacking the Bureaucracy - A practical guide for making change*

**Week 9** *Policy implementation, outcomes, and impact evaluation* (Markus Pauli)

Smith Larimer (2018) *The Public Policy Theory Primer* – Read Ch 7 *Evaluation* & Ch 8 *Implementation*, pp. 141-185

**Week 10** *Wrap-up* (Volkan Yilmaz & Markus Pauli)