

COURSE SYLLABUS
Dartmouth College, Fall 2008 Term
PBPL 45:
Introduction to Public Policy Research

Professor Ronald G. Shaiko, Senior Fellow and Associate Director, Rockefeller Center

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Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays
12:30pm-2:30pm and by
appointment

Class Hours: 10A: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 10:00am-11:50am
X-Period: Wednesdays, 3:00-4:05pm

Classroom: Rockefeller 209

Lab room: Rockefeller 201

Course Webpage: blackboard.dartmouth.edu

- 1. Prerequisites:** This class is open to students who have taken one of the social science statistical methods classes offered as prerequisites for social science majors (e.g., Econ. 10, Govt. 10, Psych. 10, Socy. 10). It is also useful for students to have taken PBPL 5: Introduction to Public Policy, but this course is not required. The course will serve as one of the two methods courses necessary to complete the Public Policy minor in the Rockefeller Center, although the class is not limited to Public Policy minors. The course will also serve as the training ground for prospective applicants wishing to serve in the Rockefeller Public Policy Research Shop during the winter and spring terms.
- 2. Course Objectives:** This course focuses on strategies for, and actual practice of, conducting research relevant to public policy discussions. The key objectives for this course are:

Knowledge-based

- Familiarize you with the legislative process at the state level, with particular emphasis on New Hampshire and Vermont, the ways that policy research may influence this process, as well as the relationships between the executive and legislative branches in these states;
- Develop personal expertise with specific policy issues and key policy options for addressing these issues;
- Develop your understanding of how differences in geography, economy, and government influence the options for policy alternatives; and
- Familiarize you with the policymaking process at the local level in the Upper Valley.

Skills-based

- Further develop and practice key research competencies, including conducting literature reviews, background research, and data collection and analysis;
- Further develop your research writing skills and ability to produce 'professional quality' policy research reports (including writing executive summaries);
- Improve your public speaking skills through oral presentations of research findings; and
- Improve your skills at providing constructive feedback and working in a team environment.

3. **Professor's Role** – Like other courses at Dartmouth, the professor will supervise the working environment and, together with input from reviewers, will assign your grade. Unlike other courses at Dartmouth, the professor is not necessarily an expert in the substantive area you are researching and will not always be the best person to consult about specific research questions.
 - The professor will meet with individual students on a regular basis to review progress and make suggestions for how best to proceed with the work on your project.
 - As part of the work product review process, the professor, together with faculty mentors, will critically review your interim and final products.
4. **Student's Role** – This course will rely primarily on student initiative to find, summarize, and synthesize the existing knowledge on three specific policy projects.
 - Actively collect and analyze information on relevant area of study.
 - Come to class prepared, whether doing the reading and coming to class with questions or showing up to progress report/feedback sessions with materials to share.
 - Be aware that the course is front-loaded with academic readings; the bulk of your research occurring during the last two thirds of the course.
 - Work cooperatively and collaboratively with fellow students.
 - Write, edit, revise, and proofread all final products prior to their public presentation.
5. **Expert Consultations (X-Hours)** – To the extent possible, X-Hours will provide an opportunity for you to work directly with experts from your specific area of research. We will arrange for Dartmouth faculty and experts in relevant fields from the area to give special presentations that address elements of your research topic. In some cases, a speaker may present on a topic relevant to the entire class. In others, multiple speakers may be in class at one time and we will arrange for a place for each group to meet. These periods will also provide opportunities for you to get input from the instructor and fellow students on your project progress.
6. **Required Readings** – The following books, articles, and websites will be used throughout the term. The required books will be read in their entirety and will be available at Wheelock Books.

John Hird, Power, Knowledge, and Politics: Policy Analysis in the States, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005); Chapters 1-2, (posted on Blackboard).

Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., Carolyn J. Heinrich, and Carolyn J. Hill, Improving Governance: A New Logic for Empirical Research (Georgetown University Press, 2001).

Eugene Bardach, A Practical Guide to Policy Analysis: An Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving, (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2004).

Kevin B. Smith, Alan Greenblatt, and John Buntin, Governing States and Localities, 2nd Edition, (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007).

Charles E. Lindblom and David K. Cohen, Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979).

W. Phillips Shively, The Craft of Political Research, Chapter 1: "Doing Research," pp. 1-12; (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1990), (posted on Blackboard).

P. Nelson, J. Nicholson, and E. Stege, "The Baby Boom and Nonmetropolitan Population Change," Growth and Change, 35 (4), 2004, pp. 525-544, (posted on Blackboard).

Electronic files:

National Conference of State Legislatures. Updated January 2008. Full-time and Part-time Legislatures. http://ncsl.org/programs/press/2004/backgroundunder_fullandpart.htm.

Empire Center for New York State Policy. Legislative Salaries per State, March 2007.
http://www.empirecenter.org/html/legislative_salaries.cfm.
National Conference of State Legislatures. 2008 Partisan Composition of State Legislatures.
<http://www.ncsl.org/statevote/partycomptable2008.htm>
National Conference of State Legislatures. Governors' Political Party Affiliations in 2006 (Post-Election). <http://www.ncsl.org/statevote/GovParty2006post.htm>.
2008 New Hampshire State of the State Poll, Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences, May 21, 2008. <http://rockefeller.dartmouth.edu/assets/pdf/NHStatePoll.pdf>
2008 New Hampshire State of the State Poll—survey instrument (posted on Blackboard).

7. Grading--

Class Participation: 20% (attendance, participation in feedback discussions, class assignments)
Policy Project I (Analysis of NH State of the State Poll data): 20% (15% Report, 5% Feedback)
Policy Project II (Group Projects): 35% (10% Presentation, 25% Report)
Final Project/Research Design/Grant Proposal: 25% (5% Presentation, 20% Paper)

8. Course Outline --

Week 1: Thursday, September 25: Introduction to the Seminar and Public Policy Research Shop

During our first class meeting, we will discuss the content of the seminar, the context within which the course is designed, the possibilities of working in the Rockefeller Public Policy Research Shop (PRS) during the winter and spring terms following the course, and the roles of Professor Shaiko and Professors Hurt and Chaudhury (PRS) in each of these enterprises. In addition, we will discuss the format of the class, X-Period utilization, invited speakers, and the production of work products for the course. We will also discuss a stand-alone module on public speaking, prepared by the Rockefeller Center staff, that will be offered to students in this class.

Attend: Montgomery McFate, Senior Social Scientist, Human Terrain System, US Army, "Using Social Science Research in Conflict Situations: The Human Terrain System in Afghanistan and Iraq." September 25, 4:30pm, Rockefeller 3.

Week 2: Tuesday, September 30: The Role of Social Science Research in Social Problem Solving

Read: W. Phillips Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Chapter 1: "Doing Research," pp. 1-12 (posted on Blackboard);

Lindblom and Cohen, *Usable Knowledge*, Chapters 1-5, pp. 1-71;

Hird, *Power, Knowledge, and Politics*, Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-67 (posted on Blackboard).

Analyze: The limits and possibilities of applied social science research in public policymaking.

Wednesday X-Period (October 1) - Writing Policy Reports (executive summaries and the body of the report) and practical strategies for collaborative writing; introduction to *Policy Project I: 2008 New Hampshire State of the State Poll Data Analysis*. During the Spring Term 2008, students and faculty affiliated with the Policy Research Shop conducted the first statewide policy survey for the Rockefeller Center. This "State of the State Poll" will be conducted annually by students in the PRS. Following the completion of the survey data collection by students, a brief synopsis of the findings was published by the Center. A copy of the survey instrument and the

Poll Report are available on Blackboard. Your task is to undertake a more comprehensive analysis of the data, focusing on one of the policy topics addressed in the poll. You will go beyond simple frequency distributions to conduct an in-depth analysis of voter opinions on policy issues by linking those opinions to a variety of demographic variables available in the poll. The data set, constructed using STATA, will be made available to students. Students from this class who continue on in the Policy Research Shop will then conduct the 2009 State of the State Poll next spring and next year's fall PBPL 45 class will be analyzing your data.

Read: ROCKEFELLER CENTER STATE OF THE STATE POLL_FINAL.doc – survey instrument (posted on Blackboard) and 2008NHStateoftheStatePollFinal.pdf – final report (posted on Blackboard).

Thursday, October 2: Public Policy Research at the State Level: The Importance of Political Context

Read: Lynn, Jr., Heinrich, and Hill, Improving Governance, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-77.
Smith, Greenblatt, and Buntin, Governing States and Localities, Chapters 1-5, pp. 1-181.

NCSL 2008. Full-time and part-time legislatures.

Empire Center 2007. Legislative Salaries per State.

NCSL 2008. Partisan Composition of State Legislatures.

NCSL 2006. Governors' Political Party Affiliations.

Analyze: Age, occupation, length of tenure, and constituencies of NH and VT legislators; assess the institutional limitations of policymaking in nonprofessionalized legislatures.

Week 3: Tuesday, October 7: What Is Public Policy Analysis? What Forms Does It Take? What Constitutes Data for Analysis?

Read: Bardach, A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, Parts I-II and Appendix A, pp. 1-89, 107-121.

Lynn, Jr., Heinrich, and Hill, Improving Governance, Chapters 5-6, pp. 78-119.

Smith, Greenblatt, and Buntin, Governing States and Localities, Chapters 6-9, pp. 182-359.

Analyze: Locate an example of applied social science research that has had a significant impact on public policymaking in the United States; prepare a one-page summary of this work.

Thursday, October 9: Key Issues of Concern for State Governments—I. Education, II. Energy and the Environment, III. Health and Social Welfare, IV. Information Technology, V. Infrastructure

Read: Smith, Greenblatt, and Buntin, Governing States and Localities, Chapters 13-15, pp. 463-575;

Bardach, A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, Appendix B, pp. 123-131.

Lynn, Jr., Heinrich, and Hill, Improving Governance, Chapters 7-8, pp. 120-178.

Analyze: Medicaid expenditures in NH and VT; find out who administers Medicaid in each state and how much is paid annually to this contractor. What is “contracting out” and how prevalent is this phenomenon in NH and VT?

Week 4: Tuesday, October 14: Governance and the Political Environments of Montpelier and Concord

Read: Handouts on Vermont and New Hampshire legislatures (to be distributed in class).
Analyze: Continue work on Policy Project I.

Thursday, October 16: Demographic Changes and Public Policy Responses: Surviving the Baby Boom at the State and Local Levels of Government

Read: Nelson, Nicholson, and Stege, "The Baby Boom and Nonmetropolitan Population Change," *Growth and Change* 35 (4), 2004, pp. 525-544 (posted on Blackboard).

Smith, Greenblatt, and Buntin, *Governing States and Localities*, Chapters 10-11, pp. 360-431.

Analyze: **Policy Project I Report due in class.** Form working groups for Policy Project II on issues to be identified in class.

Week 5: Tuesday, October 21: Introduction to Policy Project II

Guest Speakers: State representatives and staff members from the NH and VT Legislatures will be in class on Tuesday and on Wednesday during the X-hour.

Read: Approximately 7-9 working groups will begin gathering information on policy topics and identifying sources of data relevant to the topics.

Analyze: Begin work on Policy Project II. Professor Shaiko will serve as the faculty advisor for all of the projects; each group will also work with a faculty mentor.

Wednesday X-Hour (October 22): Guest Speakers: NH and VT legislators and staff.

Analyze: Begin data gathering and division of labor for Policy Project II.

Thursday, October 23: What Makes "Good" Public Policy Research? What Are the Impacts of Values on Social Science Research?

Read: Lindblom and Cohen, *Usable Knowledge*, Chapters 6-8, pp. 76-101.

Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis*, Part III and Appendix C, pp. 91-105, 133-140.

Analyze: **Meet with Faculty Mentors at a mutually agreed upon time.**

Week 6: Tuesday, October 29 and

Wednesday X-Hour (October 30): Policy Project II: Proposals and Roundtable Discussion

In class on Tuesday and during the Wednesday X-Period we will have each of the groups make presentations of their proposed analysis. Classmates and faculty will provide feedback. We will complete up to five proposal reviews on Tuesday and the remaining during X-Hour on Wednesday. By the end of the class on Wednesday, we should have successfully defended proposals from all groups.

Thursday, October 30:

During class time on Thursday or at some other time of mutual convenience, faculty mentors will meet with their groups to discuss the steps necessary to bring the proposals to fruition as policy reports. Groups mentored by Professor Shaiko will meet with him on Wednesday evening or on Saturday, November 1.

Week 7: Tuesday, November 4: Status Report and Feedback Session

Groups will continue working on their projects in class. Specifics regarding format of reports and time allotments for presentations will be discussed. Faculty advisors will be available during the Wednesday X-Periods to observe and give final advice and comment to groups in rehearsals of formal presentations.

Wednesday X-Hour (November 5): Public Speaking Module

Sadhana Hall, Associate Director, Rockefeller Center,
and Professor Shaiko.

The module will last approximately 2.5 hours. Please keep the remainder of the afternoon free so that we can meet for the extended period. Students with conflicts, please see Professor Shaiko prior to the class meeting.

Thursday, November 6: Updates on Policy Project II Reports

Each group will continue working on its project with specific attention to the oral presentations and written documents.

Week 8: Tuesday, November 11: Formal Oral Presentations of Project II and Brief Introduction of Final Research Project

Class will begin with a brief explanation of the Final Research Project. The introduction will allow you to begin thinking about a policy issue and a range of foundations that may be targeted for your proposal. Then, we will begin formal oral presentations of Project II. Each group will be given 15 minutes to make a formal presentation of its research findings; each presentation will be followed by a 5-10 minute question-and-answer period. Formal written reports will accompany the oral presentations. We may need to have an additional session in order to complete all of the presentations—perhaps Wednesday evening. If so, food will be provided.

Wednesday X-Period (November 12): Formal Oral Presentations of Project II Continue

Thursday, November 13: Formal Introduction to Final Research Project:

Research Designs for Policy Analysis/Grant Proposals

Guest Speakers: Ms. Amy Stockman, Assoc. Director, Office of Development and Ms. Sally Eshleman, Assoc. Director, Office of Foundation Relations

“Grant Writing from a Foundation/Nonprofit Perspective.”

Read: “Proposal Writing Short Course,” (New York: Foundation Center, 2005);

Lucy Knight, “Write on the Money: The Basics of Effective Proposal Writing, from Content to Structure to Length.” and “Foundation and Corporate Funding Resources.” (Readings are posted on Blackboard.)

Analyze: The grant making process.

Week 9: Tuesday, November 18: Progress Reports/Feedback Session

Read: Readings based on final projects of students.

Analyze: Continue work on Final Projects.

Thursday, November 20: Don’t Forget the Bottom Line: Budgeting at the State Level

Read: Smith, Greenblatt, and Buntin, *Governing States and Localities*, Chapter 12, pp. 432-463.

Week 10: Tuesday, November 25: Last Chance for Feedback/Assistance on Final Projects

This will be the last class meeting before Thanksgiving break and the last meeting before final oral presentations of research designs/grant proposals begin on Tuesday after the break. Format for the final presentations will be discussed. Your final written project will **NOT** be due at the time of the oral presentation. You will have several days to make final changes in your written report, based on comments made at the oral presentation.

Week 11: Tuesday, December 2 and

Wednesday, December 3: Formal Oral Presentations of Final Projects

Each student will make a formal presentation of his/her research design/grant proposal during class on Tuesday or on Wednesday. Based on comments received, final revisions will be made in the written report. We will likely plan for another session in order for each student to have the opportunity to make a final project presentation.

Week 12: Sunday, December 7: Final Written Projects will be due in Professor Shaiko's office by 3:00pm during our allotted final examination time. If you have completed your final project prior to the deadline, please feel free to hand it in early.