Course meeting time and location
The course will meet on Wednesdays afternoons, 2:00-4:50 in the RESD seminar room 500-M in the RESD suite on the 5th Floor of O’Leary Library.

Course Description and Objectives
Most of the resources, goods, and services in the United States are distributed through some kind of market process involving private enterprises. But many resources and products are distributed directly through the public sector, or are controlled or influenced by collective action and politics. Further, governments shape much of what the private sector does, for better or for worse, through regulations and laws, taxes and subsidies, for example. As a political body, government responds to power and influence--interest groups, lobbyists, ideology, and voters, but mostly big money.

This course has two goals. The first is to understand the role of public policy in a society that relies so heavily on and whose ideology extols markets, and to understand the various ways economic and political interests shape policy. The second is to develop some tools for doing policy analysis. How do we determine whether a policy accomplishes its purposes? On what terms should we evaluate it? How do we decide whether the policy is a good policy, an efficient policy, an equitable policy, a fair and just policy and crucially a politically feasible policy? What might make it more or less politically feasible? What might tilt it more or less towards low-income groups? How do we choose among policy alternatives? And, how do we write and communicate policy analysis so that it is useful for decision makers?

We will consider the rationale for public policy from various points of view, drawing on economics and politics. We will analyze various ways to evaluate policies and programs, and we will do case studies of policies in several fields, including the environment, social needs, and community development.

Course Requirements
Attendance and informed participation is critical. **One-fifth (20%)** of your final grade will be based on class participation, which will be evaluated on quality first, and quantity
second. Quality is determined by how well you have read and thought through the readings, and how well you can articulate what you have written about in the assignments due in a particular class.

Other than attendance, and informed participation, here are the products I will ask you deliver to me:

- Two very short memos summarizing and reacting to particular readings—one selected by me and one selected by you.
- Four memos that develop the policy or program you choose to work on. In the first you will identify your policy or program and set it in context. You will use the tools of politics and economics that we have developed to analyze the rationale and development of your policy or program to write the second memo. For the third memo, you will outline the elements of an evaluation of your program. The fourth memo assignment is an integration of the first three memos into a policy analysis report for a decision maker that will persuade her to make a decision in favor of this policy or program.
- A short presentation of your report to the class at the end of the term.

**Approximate weight of the course requirements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two reading memos</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memos 1 - 3</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Memo</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the issues discussed in this course are controversial. Like everyone else, I have opinions about them. I do NOT expect that you will necessarily agree with me. I DO expect you to offer reasoning and evidence to support your opinions, whatever they are.

In all written work, we expect you to identify all sources of data, information, and ideas. When quoting, excerpting, or paraphrasing someone else’s work, **cite the source.** This is especially crucial and easily overlooked when you use the Internet. If you have any questions about citing from the Internet, please ask me. Almost every semester I have to remind a student not to quote or paraphrase from the internet without fully citing the source. Please be careful about this. You will have received a memo from the department giving you the rules for taking material and citing material from the internet. **Be sure to read it.**

Our preferred form of citation is the author-date form. For example:

The data on firm size indicate that small business’s contributions to U.S. growth are actually relatively modest (Harrison 1994, Chapter 2).

Then at the end of the paper, have a complete list of references. For example:


**Using someone else’s information or ideas without citing the source is misleading, prevents a reader from following up on interesting ideas, and defeats the educational purpose of the assignments (which is to build on other people’s work to**
come up with your own ideas and conclusions). It is forbidden by university rules and can result in serious penalties. Please don’t do it. The rules and penalties for plagiarism given in the graduate school catalog and are available online at http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/discipline/default.htm
Required Texts
There are two required texts:


These books are available in the university bookstore. We will read substantial portions, but not all of each of these books. All other readings will be provided either as photocopies or as electronic copies.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

I) COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC POLICY

**Week 1 and Week 2, Introduction to the course (September 5 and September 12)**

- What makes a “good” policy?
- Policy analysis at the level of social science concepts: Stone, Chapter 1: The Market and the Polis
- Policy analysis at the staff and policy analyst level: Bardach: Introduction and Part I, 1. Define the Problem (pages 1-7)

***Memo 1 assignment handed out***

**Week 2, Markets, Efficiency, and “Rational Policy” (September 19)**

Stone, Ch. 3 “Efficiency”


***First draft of Memo 1 due***

**Week 3, Continue Markets and Efficiency: Market Failures (September 26)**


Week 4, Critiques of the Market Failure Approach to Policy (October 3)
- The conservative economics point of view:
- The Politics point of view: Stone, Ch. 2, “Equity”
- The Social Justice and participatory decision making point of view:

Environmental Justice Reading.

***Memo 1 due***

***Memo 2 assignment handed out***

Week 5, Continue the Politics Point of View (October 10)
Stone, Ch. 6, “Symbols,” Ch. 7, “Numbers,” Ch. 8, “Causes,” Ch. 9 “Interests”
[Sorry, folks. This week has a lot of reading. Most other weeks will not be so burdensome.]

***First draft of Memo 2 due***

Week 6, Tasks of the “Policy Analyst” (October 17)

***Memo 2 due***

***Memo 3 assignment handed out***

Week 7, Evaluating Policies and Programs I (October 24)
- Classical design of an evaluation:
- Understanding the Implementation of Policies
  Alan Werner, “Introduction to Implementation Research,” mimeo, 1999
Bardach, Part II, “Gathering Data for Policy Research” pp. 47-69 (You can spread the reading of this over the next couple of classes)

Week 8, Evaluating Policies and Programs II (October 31)
Valuing the impacts of policies and programs—Cost benefit analysis:
  Carol Weiss, Evaluation, portion of Ch 10, pp. 244-251

***First draft of Memo 3 due***
Week 9, Evaluating Policies and Programs III: Pros and Cons of benefit cost analysis and alternatives in the context of environmental programs (November 7)

Lisa Heinzerling and Frank Ackerman. 2002. PRICING THE PRICELESS: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Environmental Protection, Georgetown Environmental Law and Policy Institute Georgetown University Law Center
Stone, Ch. 10, “Decisions.”

Week 10, Social Policy and Community Development Policy I (November 14)

***Memo 3 due***
***Memo 4 assignment handed out***

Week 11, Social Policy and Community Development Policy II (November 21)
Affordable housing:
Michael Stone et. al, 2000. Meeting the Housing Needs of Massachusetts Lower Income Residents, Center for Social Policy, McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston
Selections to be assigned.
The Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute. Rethinking Local Affordable Housing Strategies: Lessons from 70 Years of Policy and Practice, selections to be assigned.

Week 12, Affordable Housing continued (November 28)

Week 13, Catch Up and discussion of policy of the class’s choice (December 5)

Week 14, Policy Presentations (December 13)

***Memo 4 due December 20***