Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management

MPP19
Summer Term
RESEARCH METHODS FOR PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

Teaching Team

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Development Policy and Management	Yooil Bae	yooil.bae@fuv.edu.vn
Applied Microeconomics, Public Economics and Regional Development	Huynh The Du	du.huynh@fuv.edu.vn
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Development Finance and Project Appraisal	Nguyễn Xuân Thành	thanh.nguyen@fuv.edu.vn
Tutor	Thach Phuoc Hung	phuochung105@gmail.com

Class Meetings

Lectures: Tues and Thurs, 10:15 – 11:45

Office Hours

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Vu Thanh Tu Anh		15:00–17:00		15:00–17:00	
Thach Phuoc Hung		13h30 – 15h		13h30 – 15h	

Members of the teaching team are also available at other times by appointment.

Objectives

This course is designed to prepare students to write their thesis, which is in essence a public policy analysis exercise. It introduces the conceptual foundation for and the process of doing policy analysis. It also reviews and introduces the methods, models, and tools used in the analysis of public policy so that at the end of the course, students are equipped with sufficient methodological grounding to undertake the thesis. Important topics for research will also be suggested for master thesis.

Description

The course is structured in three parts. The first part will introduce topics, tools and approaches in policy analysis from perspectives covered in FSPPM curriculum including: (i) Microeconomic Management, (ii) Development Policy, (iii) Trade, (iv) Regional Development, (v) Public Sector Economics, (vi) Development Finance, (vii) Public Investment Appraisal, (viii) Law and Public Governance, (ix) Public Management and Leadership. Important elements of methodology and policy issues will be stressed and presented again for thesis topic consideration.

The second part will introduce the fundamentals of research design and methodology choices, both quantitative and qualitative approaches. By the end of this part, students will be able to explain basic concepts of research methodology, criticize and assess a research design of a policy paper, as well as his or her own research design.

Part three will present policy analysis rocess, starting from identifying/framing a policy issue to solving it. During the process, the students will learn different analytical methods (be it quantitative, qualitative or mixed), data/information sources, models and tools for constructing solution options and evaluating them and making policy recommendations accordingly. The course ends with general guidance on how to write and present an effective policy analysis, including morality concerns and discussion of instances where values and interests are in potential conflict.

Course outcomes

Upon course completion, the students will be able to:

- Apply acquired knowledge to assess and criticize a research design and methodology of a policy paper of different topics

- Make proper choice of research design and methodology to her/his own policy questions/topics

- Conduct a complete policy analysis, starting from identifying a policy issue, asking *the* policy question, to choosing analytical framework and providing policy recommendations

- Make effective presentation, both in writing and oral forms, of research paper/policy analysis

- Be aware of moral issues in policy research, understand instances where values and interests are in potential conflict, and know how to deal with these situations.

Requirements and grading

Students are expected to read all required readings before classes, actively apply class lessons in comment, assessment, and criticism of policy papers and research. Active participation in class discussion and completion of class assignments are compulsory. All assignments should meet the deadline of 8:20 AM and are original works of each student. Plagiarism is prohibited.

Please refer to the Students' Handbook for guidelines on plagiarism and other related issues.

Course grading will be structured as follows:

- Class participation: 10%

- Research design criticism: 30%

  o Each student will choose a policy paper or analysis (including course readings), then write a paper of 1000 words assessing/criticizing the reading's research design. Deadline of submission is 8:20 am July 27, 2018.

- Research design paper: 60%

  o Provides clear research question, argument and hypothesis, reasoning and alternatives; proposes a research method and explains why it is most appropriate in assessing arguments and testing hypothesis, thus providing best answers to the research question. The paper must not exceed 2500 words and due by 8:20 am Sept. 14, 2018.

Readings

There is no single text book for this course. Required and suggested readings are selected from books and other sources. Required readings are marked with an asterisk (*) in the course outline below. Students are expected to read the required readings prior to coming to class. Suggested readings, which are not necessarily translated into Vietnamese, will also be provided. The following books, which are on reserve in the library, are useful references:

Main readings

- Brady, Henry and David Collier (2010). Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards. 2nd Edition.

- Dunn, William N. (2008). *(Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction),* 4th edition, Pearson: Prentice Hall.

- Creswell, John W. (2003). *(Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches),* 2nd Edition. Sage Publications.

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Weimer, David L. and Aidan R. Vining (2005). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*, Pearson: Prentice Hall.

Reading References

Bardach, Eugene, (2005). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis*, 2nd Edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Berg, Bruce L. (2006). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences,* 6th Edition, Pearson.

Bickers, Kenneth N. and John T. Williams (2001). *Public Policy Analysis: A Political Economy Approach*, Wadsworth Publishing

Fischer, Frank; Gerald J. Miller; and Mara S. Sidney (2005). *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*, CRC Press.

Friedman, Lee S. (2002). *The Microeconomics of Public Policy Analysis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press;

Judd, Charles M. (1991). *Research Methods in Social Relations*. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Kaye, Sanford (1989). *Writing Under Pressure*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Kraft, Michael E. and Scott R. Furlong (2004). *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. CQ Press.

Stokey, Edith and Richard Zeckhauser (1978). *A Primer for Policy Analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen B. Rossman (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research*, 2nd Edition, Sage Publications

Seidman, Irving (2006). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, Teachers College.

Singleton, Royce A. and Bruce C. Straits (2010). *Approaches to Social Research*, Oxford University Press.

Yin, Robert (2002). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I: Policy areas introduction

1. **Tuesday (19/6): Topical and methodological issues from law and public governance perspectives**

   (Phạm Duy Nghĩa)

   a. Roles of law in economic development

   b. Roles of law in public policy

   c. Accountability and challenges

   d. Social participation and supervision in public governance

   Readings:

   *WB, MPI, Vietnam 2035, pg. 92-121

2. **Thursday (21/6) Topical and methodological issues from finance and project appraisal perspectives** (Nguyễn Xuân Thành)

   a. Corporate finance

   b. Development finance

   c. Cost-benefit analysis in public investment

   Readings:

   *The World Bank, Economic Analysis of Investments, Ch. 1.
   *John Campbell, Andrew Lo, and Craig MacKinlay, The Econometrics of Financial Markets, Ch. 1.

3. **Tuesday (26/6): Topical and methodological issues from microeconomics, public sector economics, and regional development perspectives** (Huỳnh Thế Du)

   a. Perfect competition criteria

   b. Rationales for government intervention

   c. Limitation of government intervention

   d. Government failures vs. market failures

   e. Fixing government and market failures

   Readings:

*Weimer and Vining, Ch. 4

*Weimer and Vining, Ch. 8

*Weimer and Vining, Ch. 10

4. **Thursday (28/6): Topical and methodological issues from public management and development policy** (Yooil Bae)

    a. Comparison in political and policy study

        - Comparative method logics

        - Benefits and limitation of comparative method

        - Forming "the riddle" and research question

        - Research design and practice

    b. Case study in public management and governance

        - Case study objectives

        - N Large vs. N small?

        - Examples

Readings:

* Lim, Timothy C. (2010). *Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Approaches and Issues*, p.31-46.

* Hall, Peter A. (1986). *Governing the Economy: the Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France*, p.3-47.

Part II: Research Design and Methods

5. **Tuesday (3/7): Introduction to Research Design and Method**

    a. Qualitative and quantitative methods

    b. Components of research design

Readings:

 * King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV), Ch. 1.

De Vaus, David (2001). Research Design in Social Science, Chapter 1.

6. **Thursday (5/7): Descriptive Inference**

a. General Knowledge and Particular Facts

b. Purpose of Data Collection

c. Criteria for Judging Descriptive Inferences

Readings:

*King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV), Ch. 2.

7. Tuesday (10/7): Causality and Causal Inference

a. Defining Causality

b. Assumptions Required for Estimating Causal Effects

c. Criteria for Judging Causal Inferences

d. Rules for Constructing Causal Theories

Readings:

*King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV), Ch. 3.

Jones, Benjamin F. and Benjamin A. Olken. 2009. "*Hit or Miss? The Effect of Assassinations on Institutions and War*." American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics 1(2): 55-87.

8. Thursday (12/7): Determining What to Observe

a. Indeterminate Research Designs

b. The Limits of Random Selection

c. Selection Bias

d. Intentional Selection of Observations

Readings:

*King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV), Ch. 4.

9. Tuesday (10/7): Understanding What to Avoid

a. Measurement Error

b. Excluding Relevant Variables

c. Including Irrelevant Variables

    d. Endogeneity

Readings:

*King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV), Ch. 5.

10. Thursday (19/7): Increasing the Number of Observations

    a. Single-Observation Designs for Causal Inference

    b. *"Crucial" Case Studies*

    c. How Many Observations Are Enough?

    d. Making Many Observations from Few

Readings:

*King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV), Ch. 6.

11. Tuesday (7/8): Case Studies and Comparative Cases

Readings:

* George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences. Cambridge: The MIT Press. Chapters 3-4.

*King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV), Ch. 4.

Pepinsky, Thomas B. 2015. "Trade Competition and American Decolonization." World Politics 67(3): 387-422.

12. Thursday (9/8): "Path Dependence" and "Process Tracing"

*Benett, Andrew (2010). "*Process Tracing and Causal Inference*", Chapter 10 in Brady, Henry and David Collier (2010), Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards.

*Mahoney, James. 2000. "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis." *Sociological Methods and Research*. 28(4): 387-424.

Sydow, Jörg, Georg Schreyögg and Jochen Koch (2009), "Organizational Path Dependence: Opening the Black Box," *The Academy of Management Review*, 34: 689-709.

Vergne, J. and Durand, R. (2010). "The Missing Link Between the Theory and Empirics of Path Dependence: Conceptual Clarification, Testability Issue, and Methodological Implications," *Journal of Management Studies*, 47: 736–59.

Part III: Methods for Policy Analysis

13. Tuesday (14/8): Introduction

 a. What is policy analysis?

 b. Process of analysis

 c. Policy analysis vs. policy research

 d. Discussion and explanation of the "Thesis Guide"

Readings:

*Dunn, Ch. 1

*Weimer and Vining, Ch. 2

* FETP, "Thesis Guide"

14. Thursday (16/8): Defining Public Policy Issue

 a. Identification

 b. Forming

 c. Statement

 d. Strategic design for solution

Readings:

*Dunn, Ch. 3

*Bardach, Part 1

15. Tuesday (21/8): Research Framework: Approaches and Designs

 a. Framework

 b. Approaches:

- Qualitative

- Quantitative

- Mixed

c. Design

Readings:

*Creswell, Ch.1

*Creswell, Ch. 9

*Creswell, Ch. 10

*Creswell, Ch. 11

Berg, Ch. 2

16. Thursday (23/8): Qualitative Approach in Policy Analysis

a. Determine "policy situation"

b. Define policy issue

c. Raise policy question

d. Determine research methods and analytical frameworks

e. Develop and test hypothesis

f. Conclude [and make policy recommendations]

17. Tuesday (28/8): Using Models in Policy Analysis

a. Types of models

b. Identify appropriate model

c. Pros and cons of a model

Readings:

*Stokey and Zeckhauser, Ch. 2

Stokey and Zeckhauser, Ch. 3

*Creswell, Ch. 7

18. Thursday (30/8): Data Collection for Policy Analysis

    a. Information collection

- Secondary sources

- Primary sources

    b. Policy analysis

- Devise options

- Evaluate options

- Make recommendations

    c. Policy research

- Construct qualitative hypothesis

- Test qualitative hypothesis

- Conclude

Readings:

*Weimer and Vining, Ch. 13

*Kraft and Furlong, Ch. 5

*Kraft and Furlong, Ch. 6

19. Tuesday (4/9): Writing a Policy Paper (Phạm Duy Nghĩa)

*Harvard Kennedy School, Policy paper guide

*Dunn, Ch. 9

- Organization

- Styles

- First draft

- Summary

- Final draft

- Editing, fixing and formatting

20. Thursday (6/9): Moral Issues in Policy Analysis (Phạm Duy Nghĩa)

- Integrity

- Respect, public value and justice

- Conflict of interests and values: voice, exit, and loyalty

Readings:

*Weimer and Vining, Ch. 3

Hoyle, Harris, and Judd, Ch.3