PA 673 Public Policy Analysis
Jan. 12, 2006
Dr. Chris Cooper

Grades

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What the course will cover

- People Skills
- Policy Tools
- Substantive Policy Areas
- Using Excel to analyze policy

People Skills

- Managing Resources
- Building expert knowledge
- Interviewing Informants
- Giving Presentations
- Working in teams
- Facilitating Meetings
- Writing for multiple audiences
- Conflict Management

Policy Tools

- Problem definition
- Understanding the policy process
- Ethics
- Understanding the role of the market
- Research Design
- Presenting data
- Forecasting
- Regression
- CBA
- DELPHI, Focus Groups

Substantive Policy Areas

- Legalized Gambling
- Improving Government Performance
- Criminal Justice Policy
- Education Policy
- Public Safety
- Transportation Policy
- Welfare Reform
- Health Policy
- Management and Organizational Performance
- Substance Abuse
- Environmental Policy
Using Excel
- Excel is a basic data management tool
- Purposes:
  - A way to hold a bunch of numbers
  - A fancy calculator
  - A tool to make pretty pictures

What is Policy?
- Common components of definitions:
  - Involves government authority
  - Developed through action or inaction
  - Carries purposes and intentions
  - Has outcomes or effects
  - Is problem oriented

What is Public Policy?
- Distinguishing policy, plan, program

What is Public Policy?
- Policy: A general statement of aims and goals
  - Western Carolina University seeks to create diversity among its students and faculty

What is Public Policy?
- Plan: a set of measurable objectives to attain goals
  - Increase minority student enrollment to 15% of all students by 2007

What is Public Policy?
- Program/Project: a set of specific actions to attain an objective
  - Create a student mentoring program to develop support for minority students
  - Establish a minority student scholarship
What is Public Policy?
- Why is it difficult to identify “the” policy?
  - Vague legislation
  - Contradiction between stated goals and actions
  - Multiple perspectives among policy makers regarding intentions and desires
  - Goal evolution
  - Problem evolution
  - Unstated goals

What is Policy Analysis?
- “Application of analytical techniques to social issues for the purpose of both enhanced understanding of and improved input into the policy process” (Heineman et al 2000: 6).

What is Policy Analysis?
- Policy analysis tries to answer two questions:
  - What would be the best thing to do?
  - What is the best result that can actually be achieved?

What is Policy Analysis?
- What are the functions of policy analysis for policy makers?
  - Improve policy formation
  - Legitimate policy decisions
  - Help control the bureaucracy
  - Improve policy discourse

What Can We Learn From Policy Analysis?
- Description
- Causes
- Consequences

What is Policy Analysis?
- Bottom line: The product of policy analysis is advice
What is Policy Analysis?

- There are eight stages to analyzing policy:
  - Define the problem
  - Assemble some evidence
  - Construct the alternatives
  - Select the criteria
  - Project the outcomes
  - Confront the trade-offs
  - Decide!
  - Tell your story

Assignments

- Type a few sentences about a paper idea.
- For the following week read:
  - Bardach, Section 1
  - Mintrom, Chapter 1