

**BPOLST 592: Topics in Policy Research**  
**State Level Policy: Policy Analysis and Performance Measures**  
**5 credits**

**Instructors:**

Nives Dolšak, Associate Professor, *MAPS/IAS, University of Washington Bothell*

Kristin Hallgren, Research Analyst, *Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.*

Karen Sampson, GMAP Analyst, *Office of the Governor, WA*

Andi Smith, Lead Staff, *Higher Education Committee, House of Representatives, WA*

**Meeting Times:**

This class will appear on the UW schedule for the fall 2008, but the majority of the work will be completed before the fall quarter starts. The class is scheduled to meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays in September, starting with a Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> and ending with the Tuesday class on September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5:45 – 10:00PM. We may need to have a weekend session on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Room:** UW2 105

**Office Hours:**

Professor Nives Dolšak will be holding regular office hours in her UWB office at the below times.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30 – 5:30 PM and by appointment

Office: UWB2-332;

Voice: 425-352-3492;

E-mail: [ndolsak@uwb.edu](mailto:ndolsak@uwb.edu)

If you wish to contact/consult with other instructors, please use e-mail.

Kristin Hallgren: [KHallgren@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:KHallgren@mathematica-mpr.com)

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**Course Description**

In this course, students learn and apply tools of policy analysis and performance measures that are required for policy analysis, implementation, and evaluation at a state level. The instructors will identify appropriate cases for this course in the areas of education policy, environmental policy, and others. In addition to these cases, students also have the opportunity to select agencies/policy issues of their interest that they study in the individual modules in this course. We begin with an overview of state-level policy making and its relationship with federal and local policies. The remainder of the course is organized in four modules on data and analytical tools required in the following four domains: (1) legislature, (2) state executive branch, (3) independent research firms, and (4) comparative state analysis. Each module builds on one or two cases from this domain with a hands-on analytical component. It is organized and taught by one of the instructors. Assignments for this course and grading are developed by all instructors and coordinated across modules.

### Course Prerequisites

This course builds on tools learned in BPOLST502 and augments tools learned in BPOLST503. While there are no formal pre-requisites for this course, students who have completed BPOLST502 will be better prepared for this course.

### Learning Objectives

This course has three broad objectives. The first objective is to understand policy making (policy enactment, implementation, and performance measurement) at the state level. Working in a policy area of their choice, students will examine policy actors, policy priorities, factors impacting types of policies selected, and resources available to policy makers. The second objective is to strengthen and build on policy analysis tools learned in BPOLST502. Students will critically examine data available for policy analysis and performance measure at state level and make recommendations for data collection. Further, students will learn and apply regression models appropriate for panel data analysis. The course does not include cost-benefit analysis or program evaluation as those are covered in BPOLST 503. The third objective is to strengthen reporting of quantitative and qualitative data for policy analysis.

### Evaluation and Grading

Each module in this course has an assignment applying concepts and skills acquired in this module. Though assignments for this course and grading are developed by all instructors and coordinated across modules, they require students to apply different policy research and analysis methods, including planning a policy research project and data collection, quantitative data analysis, as well as using policy analysis results to evaluate government performance or argue for policy change. Detailed descriptions of the assignments will be posted on the class Blackboard site.

Module	Assignment	Points
1. Policy Making	Review of the WA state initiatives in the last 5 years	20
2. State Legislature	Case 1: Written Bill Analysis and oral report	10
	Case 2: Speech arguing for passing a bill and one against it	15
3. Executive Branch	Case 3: Agency performance report and review	20
	Case 4: Agency performance web-site	10
4. Independent Research	Case 5: RFP	15
	Case 6: Database with policy initiatives across states	20
5. Comparative Analysis	Case 7: Event-history model and analysis	20
All modules	Participation	15
TOTAL		145

The final grade will be computed by dividing the total number of points by 36.

#### Participation in class discussions and lab sessions

We expect students to actively participate in this class. You will have the opportunity to participate in discussions of the assigned readings and lectures as well as to initiate discussions on related issues addressed in our case studies. We will grade participation based on the following criteria:

- 12-15 points: the student makes important contributions to class discussion, provides correct and concise explanations, asks penetrating questions, and provides clear evidence of having read and thought through and beyond the material. The variation between 12 to 15 points will reflect how regularly a student makes such contributions;
- 8-11 points: the student contributes to class discussion, provides correct explanations, and asks questions beyond clarifying the readings; The variation between 8 to 11 points will reflect how regularly a student makes such contributions;
- 5-7 points: the student contributes sporadically to discussion, provides explanations that are more or less correct, and asks questions. The variation between 5 to 7 points will reflect how regularly a student makes such contributions;
- 1-4 points: the student rarely contributes, or rarely contributes helpfully, to the discussion. The variation between 1 and 4 points will reflect how regularly a student makes such contributions.

### **Required Readings**

Students are expected to read the assigned readings prior to coming to the class. All required readings will be available electronically through the Electronic Reserve Readings at the University of Washington, Bothell and Cascadia Community College library, through their electronic journal access or on the Internet. Please note that access to the electronic information at the library now requires your UW NetID. If you do not yet have a UW NetID, please follow the instructions at the below web site to obtain one:

<http://www.washington.edu/computing/uwnetid/>

### **Electronic Exchange of Documents on Blackboard**

You will be submitting your assignments on the Blackboard BPOLST 592class site (<http://www.bb.bothell.washington.edu>). To be able to access the BPOLST 592 Blackboard site, you will first have to enroll in this class on the Blackboard class site. See the guidelines on how to enroll at [http://www.bothell.washington.edu/edtech/resources/blackboard\\_student\\_enroll.html](http://www.bothell.washington.edu/edtech/resources/blackboard_student_enroll.html). If you have any problems accessing black board site, contact the UWB Information Systems at 425-352-5275 or [helpdesk@bothell.washington.edu](mailto:helpdesk@bothell.washington.edu).

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact Professor Nives Dolšak as soon as possible. You also need to contact the Disabled Student Services at the University of Washington, Bothell: 425.325.5307, TDD 425.352.3132, [dssuwb@u.washington.edu](mailto:dssuwb@u.washington.edu), located in LBA-106.

### **Late Submission Policy**

Late assignments will not be accepted. If you are not able to meet the deadline for medical reasons, please provide documentation from your physician indicating the duration of the incapacitation. Without this document, we will not be able to accept any late assignments. We will expect your late assignment within 3 days of the last date indicating your incapacitation. Past that date, we will not accept a late assignment.

## **Module 1: Stave-level policy making**

September 2nd, 2008

This module introduces students to the study of state policy. Students learn about the role various branches of state government perform and about current state priorities. Further, this module examines intergovernmental relationships and the role of Supreme Court in determining those relationships.

### Required Readings:

(1) Gray, Virginia. 2008. "The Socioeconomic and Political Context of States." In *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, Virginia Gray and Russell L. Hanson, eds. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Pp. 1-29.

(2) Russell, L. Hanson. 2008. "Intergovernmental Relations." In *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, Virginia Gray and Russell L. Hanson, eds. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Pp. 30-60.

(3) Savage, David. 2005. Supreme Decisions.  
[http://www.ncsl.org/programs/pubs/slmag/2005/05SLSept\\_SupremeDecisions.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/pubs/slmag/2005/05SLSept_SupremeDecisions.pdf)

(4) Clark, David. 2008. Testimony Before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, United States House of Representatives. May 14, 2008.  
[http://www.ncsl.org/print//statefed/Clark\\_PreemptionTestimony.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/print//statefed/Clark_PreemptionTestimony.pdf)

(5) Hamm, Keith E. and Gary F. Moncrief. 2008. "Legislative Politics in the States." In *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, Virginia Gray and Russell L. Hanson, eds. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Pp. 154-191.

(6) Beyle, Thad and Margaret Ferguson. 2008. "Governors and the Executive Branch." In *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, Virginia Gray and Russell L. Hanson, eds. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Pp. 192-228.

(7) "Governor Gregoire's 2008 Washington State of the State Address."  
<http://www.governor.wa.gov/speeches/speech-view.asp?SpeechSeq=85>

(8) Hall, Melinda Bann. 2008. State Courts: Politics and the Judicial Process." In *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, Virginia Gray and Russell L. Hanson, eds. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Pp. 229-255.

### **Assignment:**

Students select a policy area of their interest they will study in this course. Students prepare a 4-5 page (double spaced) review of the role various branches of government and governmental agencies play in this area, including major policy initiatives in the last 5 years. This review includes appropriate legislative committees, governor's offices, Departments/Agencies, courts, and Attorney General.

**Due:** Posted on blackboard digital drop box by 10:00 PM , September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **MODULE 2: State Legislature—from Policy Proposals to Bills**

Cases in this module build students' skills in working with broad policy concepts and developing and arguing for/against specific implementable initiatives/bills proposals. In this process, students are expected to act in a nonpartisan manner.

### Case 1

September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Students learn about how to turn a policy concept into a law that can be implemented. Students examine current RCW and case law on a specific issue. This case provides the basic introduction to legislative committees, laws, and rules. Students examine the existing statute and propose how it should be re-written. In rewriting the law, students can direct the state to implement the law differently; each option would have its own set of consequences and benefits.

### Required Readings:

(1) Case Law: Storms v. Fred Meyer

<http://www.mrsc.org/mc/appellate/current/129wnapp/129WnApp0820.htm>

(2) Case Law: Timberlane Mobile Home Park v. Human Rights Commission

<http://www.mrsc.org/mc/appellate/recent/122wnapp/122WnApp0896.htm>

(3) Statute Regarding HRC Definitions (this will be the statute to be amended)

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=49.60.040>

(4) Statute Regarding Unfair Practice – Human Rights Commission

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=49.60.215>

(5) Rules Regarding Removal of a Dog Guide or Service Animal

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=162-26-135>

### **Assignment:**

Students analyze an existing bill. For this assignment, the students write a 2 -3 page double spaced analysis of the bill. This analysis will cover the following issues: (1) background information (what is the current law, has any other work been done on this subject in Washington previously? Are their terms that need to be defined?); (2) summary of the bill's effect, which agencies are in charge of the implementation? (3) if other laws (RCW) are referenced in the bill, what do they do? Students also prepare an oral presentation (2-3 minutes) summarizing the bill, including the information that would be required by representatives to vote on the bill. Students present this summary in the class on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Due:**

*Written analysis:* Posted on blackboard digital drop box by 10:00 PM , September 5<sup>th</sup>.

*Oral presentation:* September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### Case 2

September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008

In this case, students are acting as members of staff to a particular committee. The chair of the committee calls them and asks for a floor speech, urging passage of the bill (students work with a concrete example). Moments later, the Ranking Minority Member calls and asks for a floor speech, this time, urging a “do not pass”. Students must review the bill, understand the pros and cons, prepare and ultimately deliver both floor speeches in front of the class.

#### Required Readings:

No readings are assigned for this case.

#### **Assignment:**

Students prepare two speeches (one urging the passage of the bill and the other urging against the passage). Students also prepare a one-page document with speaking points for each speech.

#### **Due:**

*Speeches:* during the class session.

*Speaking points:* Posted on blackboard digital drop box by 10:00 PM , September 9<sup>th</sup>.

*Oral presentation:* during class on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### **MODULE 3: State Executive Branch**

Cases in this module introduce students to performance measurement in general as well as to how it is implemented in Washington State. Students examine the data available to agencies for their performance measure and develop a performance report to citizens.

### Case 3

September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008

This case first introduces students to performance measurement in general and to specific systems in place, including the Priorities of Government (POG) budgeting process, Performance Audits by the State Auditor’s Office and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, and the Governor’s GMAP (Government Management Accountability and Performance) program. Following this introduction, students select a program/function of a state agency, find out about what they do – read the Strategic Plan, look at performance measures they currently use, find out their budget and FTE count, etc. Subsequently, students build a logic model linking their activities to a POG outcome, including writing a report for each step along with available data.

#### Required Readings:

(1) Osborne, D., & Hutchinson, P. (2004). *The price of government: Getting the results we need in an age of permanent fiscal crisis*. New York: Basic Books. Pgs. 1-20.

(2) Miller, K. (2006). *We don't make widgets: Overcoming the myths that keep government from radically improving*. Washington, DC: Governing Books. Pages 1-11 and 26-52.

(3) A GMAP Report ([www.accountability.wa.gov/reports](http://www.accountability.wa.gov/reports)). Select a report on a topic that interests you. Available on the Internet.

**Assignment:**

Students pick a program/function of a state agency. You first build a logic model linking activities undertaken in your agency to the Priorities of the Government outcome, including a recommended measure for each step and data, if they exist. Then, pretending to be the agency director (or more likely as someone on the director's staff), create a report containing the information you think the Governor and senior leadership need to know to understand how your agency has performed in a particular quarter. The second part of this assignment is to review a report another student in this class wrote. In this role, you pretend to be an analyst analyzing the information and writing a brief for the Governor. What should you highlight? What questions should she ask the agency's director? You've only got two pages, and it needs to be easily understood by someone not familiar with the topic.

**Due:** Agency performance report posted on Blackboard digital drop box by 10:00 PM , September 13<sup>th</sup> and at the same time e-mailed to your partner who will review your report. The brief for the governor posted on Blackboard digital drop box by 10:00 PM on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Case 4

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008

This case focuses on the needs of communicating government performance to citizens. Citizens first provide funding for government services through taxation. Second, citizens benefit from provision of services from government agencies. However, they have no direct ability to express their preferences for service provision through price mechanism. As a matter of fact, they have very little knowledge about government performance. Therefore, government needs to devise ways to communicate with the citizens about its performance. Students examine questions such as: What do citizens need to know to judge how well the government is performing? How can government agencies best provide that information? What roles do media and non-governmental organizations and non-profit organization have?

Required Readings (available at the below URLs):

- (1) Virginia Performs (<http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/>)
- (2) Maryland's StateStat (<http://www.statestat.maryland.gov/>)
- (3) Oregon Benchmarks (<http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/OPB/obm.shtml>)
- (4) Florida Performs (<http://www.floridaperforms.com/>)
- (5) Plain Talk Guidelines (<http://www.accountability.wa.gov/plaintalk/default.asp>)

**Assignment:**

Students work in pairs on this assignment. Based on guidelines and examples adopted across states (e.g., Plain Talk guidelines, Citizen-oriented performance websites in VA, MD, OR, FL, and WA), each pair designs a website geared toward average citizens to display performance information for the agency they studied in case 3. This does not need to be a real website – just the basic design. Students can use PowerPoint or even just draw it. Consider what elements

should be included on the site and how it should be organized. Write a 1-2 page (double space) description of your design that highlights key features and explains your choices.

**Due:** Design and description posted on Blackboard by 10:00 PM on September 16<sup>th</sup> (the end of the lab session).

#### **MODULE 4: Applying Policy Research-Which comes first, the research or the policy?**

This module focuses on the challenges of using independent, external research and evaluation to inform state policy. How do states incorporate research and evaluation into the policy-making process? How does the political process influence research and evaluation? This module focuses on creation of policy research outside the state governments and application of such research for policy making and performance management in state governments.

##### Case 5

September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Government agencies are both informed by and set the agenda for external research and evaluation. In the first case of this module, students discuss political setting in which RFPs are released, thereby setting the research agenda. The class examines the different roles independent researchers play in conducting research and performing evaluations in response to government requests and the policy agenda. This case also includes an examination of 4 RFPs to become familiar with the components of an RFP and to consider how the RFPs might reflect the political setting in which they were written and released.

##### Required Readings:

Each student is expected to read 2 RFPs from the list below.

1. RFP for Evaluation of Washington State's Approach to Information Technology
2. RFP for Evaluation of the District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) Program
3. RFP for New York Teaching Fellows Evaluation
4. RFP for State Evaluation Partner for Michigan's Build Initiative Grant

Note: students who wish to more evenly distribute readings between case 5 and 6 may wish to selected an evaluation from the case 6 reading list to read prior to case 5. However, evaluations will not be discussed until case 6.

##### **Assignment:**

Students select a topic area (ideally building on the same area that has been previously used for other modules). Students draw from their knowledge of the topic area to design a 2-4 pages (double-spaced) RFP that includes the following components: (1) background description of the topic; (2) statement of the problem/ rationale for request for work; (3) Scope of work, to include 4 components:

- a. Data to be collected
- b. Analysis of a secondary database (requires students to locate a database to be analyzed)
- c. Qualitative component
- d. Requirements for dissemination.

**Due:** Posted on Blackboard Digital Drop box by 10:00 PM on September 19<sup>th</sup>.



Case 6:

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008

The focus of case 6 is to examine different types of external research and evaluation that informs state policy and performance measurement. Students consider the strengths and limitations of using external research, and are asked to think critically about the merits of different types of evaluations to inform state policy. Students also examine how research is disseminated to stakeholders, including legislators, staff, advocacy groups, and other researchers.

Required Readings:

Each student is expected to read 1 evaluation and 1 issue brief from the list below.

*Evaluations*

(1) Paths to Work in Rural Places: Key Findings and Lessons from the Impact Evaluation of the Future Steps Rural Welfare-to-Work Program [Note: this evaluation is lengthier, but provides an excellent model for a random assignment study]

(2) California Continuation High Schools: A Descriptive Study

(3) Examining district guidance to schools on teacher evaluation policies in the Midwest Region

(4) Revisiting What States are Doing to Improve the Quality of Teaching: An Update on Patterns and Trends

*Issue Briefs*

(1) Starting Early: How the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative Helps Schools Prepare Young People for Healthy Marriages.

(2) Alternative Education Options: A Descriptive Study of California Continuation High Schools

(3) State policies on teacher evaluation practices in the Midwest Region.

(4) State Action to Improve Teaching.

**Assignment:**

Using secondary and primary data, students prepare a database of policies adopted by states' legislatures in the U.S. in the area of their interest. Ideally, this database would cover all states for a period of 1990 through 2005. Students create an Excel or an SPSS database in which rows represent each individual state in each year and in the first column, they indicate 1 if legislature adopted a policy in this year and 0 if it did not.

**Due:** File posted on the Blackboard Digital drop box by 10:00 PM on September 24<sup>th</sup>.

**MODULE 5: Comparative Policy Analysis**

September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008

This module focuses on factors that impact the ability of state policy makers in any given state to implement policies that were successful in other states. Policy adoption and implementation depends on institutional constraints and on political and administrative culture that differ across states.

Required Readings:

- (1) Karch, Andrew. 2007. "Introduction: The Politics of Policy Diffusion." In *Democratic Laboratories: Policy Diffusion among the American States*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007, pp. 1-38.
- (2) Karch, Andrew. 2007. "Enactment as a Political Process." In *Democratic Laboratories: Policy Diffusion among the American States*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007, pp. 39-66.
- (3) Erikson, Robert S., Gerald C. Wright, Jr. and John P. McIver. 1989. "Political Parties, Public Opinion, and State Policy in the United States". *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 83, No. 3 (Sep., 1989), pp.729-750.
- (4) Berry, William D., Evan J. Ringquist, Richard C. Fording, and Russell L. Hanson. 2007. "The Measurement and Stability of State Citizen Ideology." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp.111-132.
- (5) Mintrom, Michael and Sandra Vergari. 1998. "Policy Networks and Innovation Diffusion: The Case of State Education Reforms." *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Feb., 1990), pp. 126-148.
- (6) Clucas, Richard A. 2007. "Legislative Professionalism and the Power of State House Leaders." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring 2007), pp. 1-19.
- (7) Erikson, Robert S., Gerald C. Wright, Jr. and John P. McIver. 2007. "Measuring the Public's Ideological Preferences in the 50 States: Survey Response Versus Roll Call Data." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 141-151.

**Assignment:**

Students create a database of political, sociological, and economic factors impacting legislative policy enactment from 1990 until 2005. During the lab session, students identify and collect data on different factors to be combined in a database used by all students in this class. Ultimately, perform event-history analysis for adoption of policies they recorded in Case 6 and report results of this analysis in a 1 page document.

**Due:** ONE Word document containing a 1 page analysis of results and a print out from the SPSS analysis to be posted on Blackboard Digital Drop box by 10:00 PM on September 28<sup>th</sup>.