

Grinnell College
PST/POL 320
F2 2020

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Office Hours: Wed: 9-11; Th 1:30 – 2:30; other times by arrangement

Syllabus: Applied Policy Analysis

This course will apply theories and methods of policy analysis to the COVID-19 pandemic, with attention to global and domestic US developments. It will offer an interdisciplinary and evidence-based approach to evaluating disease transmission, economic and political consequences, related policy problems, and potential policy remedies. Each student will engage in a major case study and employ methods of policy analysis for a specific type of policy in a specific area or region. This analysis will identify a specific problem that is related to Covid-19 in the relevant area, propose several alternative policy solutions, systematically evaluate each alternative, and recommend a policy approach that has the potential to address certain negative consequences of the pandemic in the chosen area.

READINGS/DATA

To Purchase (required; ordered at bookstore and available from Amazon and other online sources):

- Bardach, Eugene, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, Fourth Edition, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2012.

A Few Data Sources:

- [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center](#)
- [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center Tracking](#)
- [Our World in Data Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- [World Health Organization Covid-19 Dashboard](#)
- [World Health Organization Data Platform](#)
- [Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker](#)
- [OECD Country Policy Tracker](#)
- [London School of Economics COVID-19 Resource Centre](#)
- [London School of Economics Research COVID-19](#)

Other Readings:

- Covid-19 is a moving target and readings will adjust as we go along. Most readings and other data sources will be posted on PWeb or available on line. For details, you will need to look at the posted discussion questions for each class session (in advance, of course).

Course Policies

Class Meetings:

This class will be synchronous. We have scheduled time M-F 8 to 9:50. I plan to conduct synchronous classes in three 110-minute, segments Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 8:00-9:50. Classes will occur on WebEx. I will send a link to the class in advance (and everyone will receive reminders in email 15 minutes in advance). I will record all classes and post the recordings on PWeb for those who, due to unavoidable circumstances, cannot make it. We can discuss absences individually.

Attendance: I want to achieve maximum online attendance. If at all possible, I want videos turned on (that way we can see each other, as in a normal class).

I realize that internet issues may sometimes interfere for some students. Those who miss class or a portion of it will need to watch the recording, preferably on the same day, and answer and email some discussion questions for that day (in lieu of class participation). We may also need to have a few private or small group meetings.

Inclusivity and Accommodations:

At Grinnell, we strive to create fully inclusive classes. The college offers reasonable accommodations for students who observe religious holy days. Please contact me in advance to discuss a specific instances that apply to you. I welcome individual students to contact me about distinctive learning needs. Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. I encourage students with documented disabilities (including chronic illness, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities) to discuss appropriate accommodations with me **early** in the term. I recommend seeing me during my online office hours or by appointment. You may also have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Disability Resources (x3089).

Grading:

This is a research class. There will be no exams. Your main written assignment will be a 20 + page policy paper that will unfold in several steps, each of which will be graded. There will also be several short writing assignments, such as policy memos, which may count for 10% of the grade or a bit less. Overall, written assignments will constitute about 70% of the grade. In addition, students will give periodic oral presentations, individually or in groups, and everyone will present their research project orally. Oral presentations, class participation, *including attendance*, will jointly count for approximately 30% of the grade.

Late work: Work turned in late usually receives some grade deduction.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted for a grade must be your own unless otherwise stated (group work for group projects is fine; proper citation is fine). Feel free to ask me questions. Suspected acts of dishonesty will be brought before the Committee on Academic Standing. If an act is reported to CAS, the instructor has no participation from that point onward and is prohibited from discussing the case with anyone.

Course Schedule

(Preliminary; many readings not listed. See posted discussion questions for details on the readings)

I. Covid-19: The disease and its transmission

- Oct. 29: Intro to Course and a few basics on Covid-19, policies, and impacts
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-basics>
- Nov. 2: Data on Covid-19 Cases, Recoveries, Fatalities Data for US, Asia, Europe, Africa, S. America
- Nov 3: Policy responses in different countries

II. Relevant Theory and Policy Analysis Basics (Nov. 5-17)

- Covid-19, market failure, and collective-action problems
- Basic epidemiology, the SIR model, simulations of Covid-19
- Review of basic policy theory and applications to Covid-19
- Bardach: Problem definition, evidence, policy alternatives, evaluation criteria
- Statement of research topic, due Nov. 9
- Initial outline/summary of research project, due Nov. 17

III. Inequality, Policy Dimensions, Cases, and More Policy Analysis (Nov. 17-Dec. 1)

- Covid-19 and racial inequality
- Covid-19 and gender inequality
- Covid-19 and inequality by income and wealth
- Economic consequences of Covid-19 and policy responses
- Political consequences of Covid-19
- Covid-19 transmission in India, Europe and North America
- State comparisons in the US
- Policy proposals

IV. Research Project Presentations (Dec. 3 – 16)

V. Dec. 17: final class

Policy Projects due Dec. 18, 11:59 p.m.