



UST/ENV/PDD 652/752: ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

You have to hold your audience in writing to the very end --
much more than in talking, when people have to be polite and listen to you.

Brenda Ueland, writer (1891-1985)

PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS – FINAL PAPER

This assignment (in lieu of a final exam) is intended to help you integrate materials covered in the course to carry out an examination of a specific environmental policy or administrative issue of your interest, developing your research and written communication skills in the process.

TASK:

- Conduct and write a mini-case study of an environmental policy and/or administrative issue. You may choose an historical or current policy issue and critique an existing policy that addresses it, or you may emphasize policy development, where you would make proposals for a NEW policy or program to address a problem you identify.

Following are content indicators (not all may apply to the case of your choice, but many do). Give enough information about each item so that an educated but uninformed reader can understand your analysis and conclusions:

- describe the problem you are taking on, and why it is or should be addressed through policy (in terms of the problem's consequences, importance, etc.)
- identify and characterize the existing policy, or propose one (include goals, content, level, implementation)
- describe direct stakeholders involved, including their major concerns about the issue, the values you can attribute to them (with respect to the problem at hand) based on your research, and their roles in the process, including how these parties pushed the issue onto the policy agenda; also explore whether there are indirect stakeholders (not involved in the policy process but possibly affecting, or affected by, the policy)
- describe the policy (and legislation or regulations) developed as a result (or that should be developed to respond to challenges)
- describe the role of technology or scientific research as it influenced the development of policy, or as it was used for implementation and regulation (or as it should be incorporated in the new policy)
- evaluate the consequences (or possible consequences) of the policy, and make any suggestions for alternative policies or programs that you feel would be appropriate because they might better achieve goals, be more cost-effective, etc. (specify your criteria)

You may take an advocacy stance in your conclusions (if you wish to do so), after you have presented an analysis of the kind that you might hand to a decision maker as a staffer providing input. Staffers may highlight certain angles they think should be promoted, but if they fail to provide a balanced analysis the decision makers will be open to arguments that will surprise them and they will not be able to respond to them effectively.

STRUCTURE:

- **front page** – paper title, student ID number (no name!!!)
- **introductory section** (concise and clear – up to 1 page):
 - state the environmental policy problem or issue of your choice (enough to give a good idea of its dimension and scope and create reader interest);
 - give a *road map* for the paper: describe the paper topic, layout, and your main arguments/conclusions.
- **background section**
 - ☑ **background/history – how the issue came to be on the public agenda, or why it should be**
 - state your initial understanding of the issues addressed by the policy of your choice;
 - expand the initial description, adding the chronology of the issue, major actions (any legislation that has responded to the problem, legislative hearings held, major media events, etc. – whatever applies) and the parties that carried them out; the purpose of the section is to give the reader a good understanding of how the issue came to be on the public agenda or why it should be.
 - ☑ **previous policy actions and outcomes – summary of previous studies**
 - legislation and administrative implementation rules or standards that have been developed in the past to respond to the policy issue, and the outcomes of these previous actions.
 - ☑ **stakeholder analysis**
 - identify stakeholders, the nature of their stakes, and their capabilities (in terms of civic capacity, representation, resources, etc.); attempt to see the problem from their angle, and describe it, rather than give an opinion on what that angle "should" be.
 - think of the deliberations/negotiations required to design the policy, analyze interests, goals, alternatives, subjective likelihoods of events, power, strategy for the stakeholders you identified.

Note: a stakeholder is any group or organization that can affect, or is affected by, the outcome of a public policy issue. You might construct an *issue set* showing how various stakeholders became involved in the public issue as it is related to the issues the group considers important.

If you choose to present graphically the stakeholders as they relate to each other and to the issue, include stakeholders' preferences for various policy approaches.
 - ☑ **process analysis section**
 - identify the objectives for the policy recommendations that you will develop and the criteria that you will use to select among alternatives (if developing a new policy); or, analyze in the same terms the existing policy you selected, proposing criteria by which it should be evaluated.
 - for a new policy, presents at least two alternative policy actions (making clear the differences and their rationales); describe for each its expected future consequences, including the distribution of the benefits and costs of the action, any unintended consequences that might be generated, and the practical or political constraints that affect its feasibility; for an existing policy, describe its consequences, including the distribution of the benefits and costs of the action, any unintended consequences, and the practical or political constraints that affected it; propose two alternative fixes.
 - feasibility: assess the role of the major stakeholders in the implementation process; the major stakeholders are the agencies or organizations that likely to have the greatest role in

the success or failure of the implementation process (or had it, for an existing policy).

Your description of their role should include an assessment of their support/opposition to the recommendations, the changes in resources they would expect as a result, and the most likely strategies/actions they would take, based on their previous role in the policy issue.

- **outcome analysis section:**

- evaluate the outcome for each stakeholder group; if pending or proposed, speculate on what it is likely to be.
- evaluate the outcome from the environmental point of view (how did/will the environmental issue you addressed fare with the policy in place, compared to its absence?)

- **conclusions section:** recommendations based on your analysis

- for a new policy, select one of the alternatives discussed, present an outline of an implementation strategy, and provisions for monitoring and evaluating the consequences;
- for an existing policy, discuss the same aspects as they actually happened.

- **bibliography:** full references (including web sources) used in preparing the paper (please consult a citation guide, or ask a university librarian for assistance.)

- **appendices (as needed):** place any tables or other graphics you need to illustrate the policy background, the policy alternatives, and your recommendations in an appendix.

FORMAT & TIMETABLE - the paper is due on november 30 (class time; also email a copy) and should be 12 - 15 pages long, double-spaced and TYPED.

- it should pass a web-based inspection (it should be original text, not “borrowed” from the web, which amounts to plagiarism.)
- a one-paragraph abstract, an outline of the entire paper and a preliminary bibliography or works cited list is due November 10. Although all parts of your outline may not be fully developed, many of them can be.
- use september 28 to research and choose a paper topic and identify related materials.

EXAMPLES OF PAPER TOPICS (choose a specific instance of the general topics listed)

1. POLLUTION : AIR, WATER AND LAND - pollution regulation/prevention, hazardous waste management and cleanup, human health
2. ENERGY POLICY - nuclear, alternatives (solar, wind, geothermal), oil, electricity
3. NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUES - public lands, wetlands, forests, wildlife management, minerals, surface/ground water resources
4. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - solid waste, land use, watersheds and bioregions, great lakes basin, sprawl
5. URBAN ENVIRONMENT - sustainability, brownfields, green spaces/parks, gardening, green building, toxics removal
6. INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - global warming, oceans, transnational pollution, management regimes
7. CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES - natural resources management, conservation approaches, industrial approaches to waste reduction and energy efficiency
8. ENVIRONMENTALLY-RELATED policies whose consequences might include environmental effects (e.g., food production)