Fulbright Economics Teaching Program

Academic year 2011-2012

MPP4

RESEARCH METHODS FOR PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

Teaching Team

- General Introduction and Micro: Nguyen Xuan Thanh, thanhx@fetp.vnn.vn; Vu Thanh Tu Anh, anhvt@fetp.vnn.vn
- Macro and Development: Jonathan Pincus, jonathan.pincus@fetp.vnn.vn; Dinh Vu Trang Ngan, ndinh@fetp.vnn.vn
- Finance and Project Appraisal: Nguyen Xuan Thanh, thanhx@fetp.vnn.vn; Tran Thi Que Giang, gianqtq@fetp.vnn.vn
- Trade: Dinh Cong Khai
- Law, Governance, Public Management & Leadership: Pham Duy Nghia, nghiapd@fetp.vnn.vn

Class Meetings

Lectures: Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 8:30 – 10:00

Office Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vu Thanh Tu Anh</td>
<td>17:00–18:00</td>
<td>17:00–18:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>17:00–18:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tran Thi Que Giang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinh Vu Trang Ngan</td>
<td></td>
<td>15:30–17:30</td>
<td>15:30–17:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pham Duy Nghia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Pincus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen Xuan Thanh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinh Cong Khai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Course 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.

Course Description
The first half of the course is devoted to a general introduction of the analytical framework for and the process of doing public policy analysis. This part starts from the principle that the government has rationale to intervene when markets fail to achieve efficient and equitable outcomes, and the intervention decision should be based on the government’s capability in improving economic efficiency and social welfare. Perspectives from microeconomics, macroeconomics & development, and finance & project appraisal (i.e., the three thesis policy areas) with respect to important conceptual foundations and policy issues will be introduced to help students in choosing their thesis topics.

The course then introduces the process of undertaking a policy analysis exercise, from identifying and structuring a public policy problem to designing a strategy to address that policy problem. This strategy should specify the approach (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods), sources of data/information, models and tools that will be used to formulate and evaluate policy options and finally make policy recommendations.

The first half of the course ends with general guidelines on how to write and present a policy analysis paper effectively. This section also raises the issue of research ethics and discusses situations in which there exist conflicts of values and/or interests.

In the second half of the course, students will be divided into three groups according to their thesis areas. Students are then introduced to methods, models, and tools that are more specific to their policy analysis areas. They also have opportunities to present their policy research ideas and methodology and receive feedback from their classmates and lecturers.

Text Books and 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 text books


**Other readings**


**Requirements**

Students are required to attend class regularly, read the assigned readings before class, actively participate in class discussions and complete all course requirements.
COURSE OUTLINE

Part I: Introduction to and Conceptual Foundation of Policy Analysis

1. [Tue, April 10] Introduction to Policy Analysis (Xuan Thanh)
   a. What is policy analysis?
   b. Process of doing policy analysis
   c. Thesis guide discussion and clarification

   Readings:
   * Dunn, Chapter 1: The Process of Policy Analysis
   * Weimer and Vining, Chapter 2: What is Policy Analysis?
   * FETP, “Thesis Guide”

2. [Thu, April 12] Conceptual Foundations for Policy Problem Analysis: Macroeconomic Perspective (Jonathan Pincus)
   a. How economists think about methodology
   b. Macroeconomic policy research
   c. Development policy research

   Readings:

3. [Tue, April 17] Conceptual Foundations for Policy Problem Analysis: Development Perspective (Trang Ngan)
   a. Field research in development
   b. Policy evaluation in development

   Readings:
   a. Idealized competitive benchmark
   b. Rationales for government intervention
   c. Limits to government intervention
   d. Weighting market vs. government failures
   e. Correction of market and government failures

   Readings:
   * Weimer and Vining, Chapter 4: Efficiency and the Idealized Competitive Model
   * Weimer and Vining, Chapter 8: Limits to Public Intervention: Government Failures
   * Weimer and Vining, Chapter 10: Correcting Market and Government Failures

5. [Tue, April 24] Conceptual Foundation for Policy Problem Analysis: Finance and Project Appraisal Perspective (Que Giang)
   a. Corporate finance
   b. Development finance
   c. Benefit and cost analysis of public investment

   Readings:

   a. The role of law in economic development
   b. The role of law in public policy
   c. Challenges in establishing accountability
   d. Social participation in public governance

   Readings:
   * Vietnam Development Report 2010: Modern Institutions

Part II. Doing Policy Analysis

7. [Tue, May 08] Defining the Public Policy Problem (Xuan Thanh)
   a. Identifying public policy problem
   b. Structuring public policy problem
   c. Looking ahead: Designing a strategy to address the policy problem

   Readings:
   * Dunn, Chapter 3: Structuring Policy Problems
Bardach, Part 1: *The Eightfold Path*

8. **[Thu, May 10] Approaches to and Models in Policy Analysis (Xuan Thanh)**
   a. *Methodology of and approaches to policy analysis*
      - Qualitative approach
      - Quantitative approach
      - Mixed approach

   **Readings:**
   * Creswell, Chapter 1: *A Framework for Design*
   * Creswell, Chapter 9: *Quantitative Methods*
   * Creswell, Chapter 10: *Qualitative Procedures*
   * Creswell, Chapter 11: *Mixed Method Procedures*
   * Berg, Chapter 2: *Designing Qualitative Research*

   b. *The Role of Models in Policy Analysis*
      - Types of models
      - Deciding the “right” model for a given policy analysis exercise
      - The pros and cons of models

   **Readings:**
   * Stokey and Zeckhauser, Chapter 2: *Models: A General Discussion*
   * Stokey and Zeckhauser, Chapter 3: *The Model of Choice*
   * Creswell, Chapter 7: *The Use of Theory*

   a. Gathering information
      - Secondary source of data/information
      - Primary source of data/information
   b. Analyzing Public Policy Problem
      - Formulating policy options
      - Evaluating policy options
      - Making policy recommendations

   **Readings:**
   * Weimer and Vining, Chapter 13: *Gathering Information for Policy Analysis*
   * Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 5: *Public Problems and Policy Alternatives*
   * Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 6: *Assessing Policy Alternatives*

    a. Trade policy research
    b. Foreign Direct Investment research

   **Readings:**
Part III. Writing and Presenting Policy Analysis Paper

   a. Writing Policy Analysis Paper
      • Organizing your policy analysis paper
      • Choosing your writing style
      • Writing a first draft
      • Writing the executive summary
      • Writing the final draft
      • Revising, editing, and formatting
   b. Presenting Policy Analysis Paper
   c. General guideline for thesis presentation
   d. Preparing for thesis presentation
   e. Preparing and answering the questions during presentation

Readings:
* Dunn, Chapter 9: *Communicating Policy Analysis*

12. [Thu, May 24] Ethical Considerations in Doing Policy Analysis (Duy Nghia)
   a. Analytical integrity
   b. Respect for persons, beneficence, and justice
   c. Value and interest conflicts: Voice, exit, and loyalty

Readings:
* Weimer and Vining, Chapter 3: *Toward Professional Ethics*
* Hoyle, Harris, and Judd, Chapter 3: *Ethical Principles*