School of Public Policy Courses – Fall 2020

**ECON 600 Policy Consequences of Economic Analysis**  
Jane Lincoe  
Mondays, 4:30-7:00pm

In many if not most policy, management, or business settings, economics is the primary language in which debates are conducted and projects understood and evaluated. To take some of many examples currently facing policy makers, understanding the need for and design of policies regarding public support or provision of health insurance, regulation of electricity, “network neutrality” rules for telecommunications providers, “cap-and-trade” systems for global warming, all require that one have a strong sense of when markets work, when they don’t, and what we mean by “work”.

For that reason, our primary goal is to learn what some call “economic literacy” or “how to think like an economist.” In the first half of the semester, we’ll go over the fundamentals of the “language”—optimization, consumer choice, supply decisions, and the workings of competitive markets. The analyses lead up to the conclusion that competitive markets produce efficient outcomes; we’ll go over exactly what that means and its relevance—sometimes more, sometimes less—for policy evaluation.

To propose sensible policies designed to modify economic behavior, we need to know how markets can fail to achieve desirable results, as well as why they succeed. The second half of ECON 600 is devoted to breakdowns in the competitive ideal—monopoly power, strategic behavior, settings in which markets do not reflect all relevant costs and benefits, and asymmetric information. These considerations are crucial for understanding when intervention in market activity is justifiable or probable—including those occasions when likely policies are not justifiable economically and *vice versa*.

**PUBL 600 Research Methodology**  
Zoe McLaren  
Tuesdays, 4:30-7:00pm

Research provides the foundation for informed public policy making. This class is designed to provide you with an introduction to research methodology, from the basics of research design to advanced methods for causal inference. This course provides a foundation for further study of research methodology. It prepares students for future courses including PUBL 604, 607, 608, and 611. By design, many topics will be covered at a foundational level; however, by the end of the course you will be prepared to evaluate the quality of existing research and propose studies of your own to address questions of interest. This course is designed to allow you to both understand and perform important research techniques. For instance, we will not only study sampling and understand the value of different types of sampling, but we will also learn how to implement sampling techniques through statistical software.
PUBL 601 Political and Social Context of the Policy Process  
Roy Meyers  
Thursdays, 4:30-7:00pm

The graduate catalog describes this MPP/PhD course as: “designed to introduce students to the processes by which policy is made in the United States. It introduces students to the policy-making system, including the institutional, structural and political contexts, as well as the policy-making environment. The various stages of the policy-making process from problem definition and agenda-setting to implementation are examined and discussed, and important theories and models of policy-making are presented. Significant concepts relating to the political analysis of public policy are discussed, such as the social construction of problems, group demands, political influence and resources, motivations and incentives for political behavior, and political feasibility”

To make this task manageable, we will focus on American domestic policy and national government and politics, though a few readings address state and local government and politics. The reading load is necessarily heavy in terms of page length, but most readings are very accessible. The Blackboard site for the class identifies many optional readings should you want to continue your exploration of the topics for any week. PhD students who are considering writing a dissertation related to topics covered in this course should ask me for advice about additional relevant academic readings.

PUBL 603 Theory and Practice of Policymaking  
Nancy Miller  
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:00 pm

This course focuses on the basic principles and techniques of policy analysis. Most of the course attends to activities involved in policy analysis. In addition, the relationship between policy analysis and policy making, along with emerging professional and ethical issues, will be addressed.

PUBL 604 Statistical Analysis  
Wednesdays, 7:10-9:40pm

An introduction to the concepts and methods of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques are discussed.

PUBL 606 - The Politics and Administration of Program Evaluation  
Lauren Hamilton Edwards  
Tuesdays, 7:10-9:40pm

An examination of the political and organizational processes affecting the conduct of program evaluation and the impact of evaluation on decision-making. Means of increasing the use of evaluation in decision-making are analyzed.

PUBL 610-01 Urban Sociology  
Pamela Bennett  
Thursdays, 4:30-7:00pm

This course considers the ways in which sociology (and other disciplines) study the social and economic organization of cities, the ways in which that organization affects urban life, and how cities, in turn, are
shaped by the social and economic dynamics that take place within them. The course begins with an examination of the major theoretical perspectives (and debates) used to examine these themes (e.g., the Chicago School and its ecological approach, new urban sociology and its political economy approach). We then explore social processes and institutions that generate and reflect inequalities in cities (e.g., segregation, suburbanization, ghettos), and consider how lifestyle and consumption patterns create urban change. Attention is given to policy issues throughout.

**PUBL 610-004 Health Metrics and Measures**  
Zoe McLaren  
Mondays. 7:10-9:40 pm

Despite significant improvements in health status worldwide, large disparities in morbidity and mortality remain between vulnerable sub-populations and the population as a whole. This course will examine conceptual, technical and methodological issues related to detecting and measuring disparities in health status, health care access and health care quality. Lectures will focus on identifying key disparity measures that are used to inform public policy and mastering the analytical methods required to calculate them. Students will learn how to assess the appropriateness of various measures of disparity in life expectancy, maternal mortality, uninsured rate, health-related quality of life, environmental toxin exposure and quality of care among others. Class discussions will examine the challenges faced in measuring health disparities, the strengths and limitations of different health disparity measures, and the effectiveness of strategies to communicate findings relevant for public policy. Student competency will be assessed through a combination of class discussion, presentations, problem sets and short papers.

**PUBL 610-05 Special Topics: Demographic Issues and Public Policies**  
John Rennie Short  
Wednesdays, 4:30-7:00 pm

This course looks at how demographic trend influence and shape public debates and policies. It examines policies across the demographic transition, from rapidly growing to maturing and ageing societies. Specific issues covered include youth unemployment, harvesting the demographic dividend and coping with a greying society. This cross cultural course, looking at countries as diverse as Japan, USA, Vietnam and Russia will appeal to students with a variety of interests.

**PUBL 610-06 Special Topics: Race, Segregation and Inequality**  
Pamela Bennett  
Mondays, 7:10-9:40 pm

This course provides an in-depth study of racial and ethnic residential segregation and its relationship to social inequality. Through various theoretical perspectives, students will explore the historical and contemporary patterns of residential segregation in the United States and Baltimore. In doing so, students will become familiar with the entities and social forces that contribute to neighborhood segregation (such as federal and state policy, homeowner associations, public housing, financial institutions, group inequalities, group preferences, and racial and ethnic discrimination). The course includes an analysis of the social, economic, and demographic consequences of segregation.
**PUBL 610-007 Special Topics: Mixed Methods**  
Fernando Tormos-Aponte  
Mondays, 4:30-7:00p

This course seeks to prepare students to develop and critique research designs that combine multiple research methods. Students will learn how to develop research designs that researchers employ to identify and assess causal mechanisms, forward causal arguments, and develop interpretations of social and political phenomena, including case studies, process-tracing, ethnographies, and interpretive work. The course covers the strengths and weaknesses of these methods, their epistemological foundations, and the ways in which social scientists combine them. The course prepares students and provides opportunities to use multiple data collection and analysis techniques, including grounded theory, inductive and deductive coding, and participant-observation. Further, students will become familiarized with research ethics norms and issues.

**PUBL 610-008 Special Topics: Workforce Development and Management**  
Lauren Hamilton Edwards  
Thursdays, 7:10-9:40pm

The main emphasis for this course is for you to grapple with the current problems and issues with workforce development and management in the public and nonprofit sectors. Topics include such things as generational issues in the workplace, planning for a diverse workforce, and analyzing workforce needs for the future. You will apply problem-solving skills to these issues through research, analysis, and evaluation. In addition, you will gain an understanding of the historical context of human resources, the impact of that history on the traditional forms of management, and how workforce development and management are progressing.

**PUBL 611 Causal Inference in Program Evaluation**  
Jane Lincove  
Tuesdays, 4:30-7:00 pm

Surveys methods for identifying causal relationships in evaluation and policy research. The course considers the use of randomized experiments as well as a number of quasi-experimental research designs. Topics include matching techniques, panel data estimation, instrumental variables, discontinuity designs, and selection correction. Consent of instructor.

**PUBL 613 Managing Public Organizations**  
Thursdays, 7:10-9:40 pm

This course examines current management theories and techniques with a specific focus on organizations in the public and nonprofit sectors. The course prepares students to evaluate current management approaches in the public and nonprofit sectors, as well as preparing the student for the
application of those approaches in the field. Topics will include New Public Management, New Public Service, the political context of public management, contracting out, networking, strategic management and planning, performance management, and public participation.

**PUBL 648 Cities and Environmental Issues**  
John Rennie Short  
Wednesdays, 7:10-9:40 pm  
Instructor: Dr. John Rennie Short, Public Policy, jrs@umbc.edu; Wednesdays, 7:10-9:40 p.m.  
This course is built around the assertion that the city is part of the environment, subject to environmental constraints and opportunities. The city has been treated in most social science writings as a purely social phenomenon, and at the same time, many environmental scientists have tended to ignore the urban. This course aims to reconnect natural science and social science through the examination of the urban environment.

**PUBL 652 Politics of Health**  
Nancy Miller  
Tuesdays 7:10-9:40 pm  
This course is designed to help students understand how and why health policies reflect the political system in which they are enacted and implemented. After exploring the role of federal political institutions, we will apply these institutions and their roles to specific health policies.

**PUBL 700 Doctoral Research Seminar: Advancing Dissertation Writing**  
Susan Sterett  
Tuesdays 7:10-9:40p  
Want to make more progress on your dissertation, and you're not always sure how? Do you read through your paragraphs and don't understand why an advisor can't see the connections you see? In this course we will work together to move toward completing. Students will bring drafts of chapters (very rough, incomplete drafts welcome). Students from all specializations welcome. Each week, we will work on refining theoretical arguments, clearly stating data and methods, and improving how paragraphs and sentences track. We'll rely on proven practices to clarify your arguments, improve the structure of your writing, and ensure that sentences go where we mean them to. We will primarily work with two books: Wendy Belcher, *How to Write your Journal Article in 12 Weeks*, and Joseph Williams and Joseph Bizup, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 