

**PLCY 730 Ethics and Public Policy – 3 Credits**  
**Spring Semester 2023**  
**Instructor: Douglas MacKay**  
**Email: dmackay@email.unc.edu**  
**Lectures: TuTh 12:30-13:45pm Hanes Art Center 0218**  
**Office: Abernethy Hall #217**  
**Office Hours: Wednesday 2-5pm (or by appt)**

**Course Overview**

This course offers students an advanced, practice-oriented overview of the ethical dimensions of public policy. Students will learn to recognize the ethical questions raised by public policy problems, develop and defend solutions to these questions, and complete professional policy analyses concerning ethically contentious policy problems. The course will also reflect on the appropriate role of ethical thinking in policy analysis and the professional obligations of analysts.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize ethical questions raised by public policy problems.
2. Develop and defend solutions to ethical questions raised by policy problems.
3. Prepare professional policy analyses addressing ethically contentious policy problems.
4. Understand the professional obligations of policy analysts.

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Percentage of Grade</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Attendance and Participation	10%	NA
Policy Analysis Meeting	2%	Friday, Jan. 27
Policy Analysis Outline and Bibliography	3%	Monday, Feb. 6
Policy Analysis Sections 1-3	10%	Monday, Feb. 20
Policy Analysis Full Draft	15%	Monday, Mar. 6
Policy Analysis Final	35%	Monday, April 3
Case Consultation Report (Group)	15%	Friday, April 28
Case Consultation Presentation (Group)	10%	April 20-27

Students will receive the assignment prompts, detailed instructions regarding the writing and submission of assignments, and a statement of evaluation guidelines well in advance of the due dates.

**Grading System**

Grade	GPA	Percentile (absolute grades)*
H	4.0	94-100%
H-	3.7	90-93%
P+	3.3	87-89%
P	3.0	84-86%
P-	2.7	80-83%
L+	2.3	77-79%
L	2.0	74-76%
L-	1.7	70-73%
F	0.0	0-70%

“H” indicates *mastery of course content*

“P” indicates *strong performance*

“L” indicates an *acceptable performance*

“F” indicates *unacceptable performance*

### Course Management System

The course website is Canvas. Course documents will be posted on the website. As well, I will use the website to make announcements regarding changes in the reading schedule or other aspects of the course. Required readings will be available under the ‘Course Reserves’ and ‘Files’ tabs of the class page. There are no texts you need to purchase.

### Weekly Calendar with Assignment and Assessment Due Dates

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due Dates
Tues. Jan. 10	Introduction Ethics and Public Policy	Douglas MacKay, “The Ethical Dimensions of Policy Analysis,” unpublished draft.  Ezekiel J. Emanuel, Ross E.G. Upshur, and Maxwell J. Smith, “What Covid Has Taught the World about Ethics,” <i>The New England Journal of Medicine</i> October 27, 2022.	
Thur. Jan. 12	Part 1 Methods of Ethics	Jonathan Wolff, “Method in Philosophy and Public Policy: Applied Philosophy Versus Engaged Philosophy,” in <i>The Routledge Handbook of Ethics and Public Policy</i> , edited by Annabelle Lever and Andrei Poama (New York: Routledge, 2019), 13-24.  Rachel Baker, Helen Mason, Neil McHugh, Cam Donaldson, “Public Values and Plurality in Health Priority Setting: What To Do When People Disagree and Why We Should Care about Reasons as Well as Choices,” <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i> 277 (2021): 113892 [Read entire article].	
Tues. Jan. 17	Part 2 Professional Ethics 2.1 Ethics of the Civil Service	Joseph Heath, <i>The Machinery of Government: Public Administration and the Liberal State</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 46-93 (Chapter 2 “A General Framework for the Ethics of Public Administration”).	
Thur. Jan. 19	2.2 Role of the Policy Analyst	David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining, <i>Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice</i> , Sixth Edition (New York: Routledge, 2017), 42-55.  Douglas J. Amy, “Why Policy Analysis and Ethics Are Incompatible,” <i>Journal of Policy</i>	

		<i>Analysis and Management</i> 3 (1984): 573-591.	
Tues. Jan. 24	Part 3 Wellbeing 3.1 Efficiency and Markets	Daniel Hausman, Michael McPherson, and Debra Satz, <i>Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy</i> , Third Edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 19-38.  Weimer and Vining, <i>Policy Analysis</i> , 3-29.	
Thurs. Jan. 26	3.2 Social Welfare Function Framework and Cost-Benefit Analysis	Matthew D. Adler, <i>Measuring Social Welfare: An Introduction</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1-20, 30-37.  Heath, <i>The Machinery of Government</i> , 187-196.	
Fri. Jan. 27			<b>Policy Analysis Meeting</b>
Tues. Jan. 31	3.3 Wellbeing	Paul Frijters, Andrew E. Clark, Christian Krekel, and Richard Layard, "A Happy Choice: Wellbeing as the Goal of Government." <i>Behavioral Public Policy</i> 4 (2020): 1-40.  Anna Alexandrova, "Why Public Policy Shouldn't be Guided by Master Numbers," <i>New Statesman</i> , May 27, 2022.	
Thurs. Feb. 2	3.4 Case Discussion	TBA	
Mon. Feb. 6			<b>Policy Analysis Outline and Bibliography</b>
Tues. Feb. 7	4 Equity 4.1 Prioritarianism	Derek Parfit, "Equality and Priority," <i>Ratio X</i> (1997): 202-221.  Christopher Flavelle, "A Climate Plan in Texas Focuses on Minorities. Not Everyone Likes It," <i>The New York Times</i> , July 24, 2020.	
Thurs. Feb. 9	4.2 Education Equity	Meira Levinson, Tatiana Geron, and Harry Brighouse, "Conceptions of Educational Equity," <i>AERA Open</i> 8 (2022): 1-12.  Katherine E. Joyce, "Prioritizing Improvement Among Disadvantaged Students in Principle and in Practice," <i>Philosophical Inquiry in Education</i> (Forthcoming)	
Tues. Feb. 14	Wellbeing Day – No Classes		
Thurs. Feb. 16	4.3 Health Equity	Margaret Whitehead, "The Concepts and Principles of Equity and Health,"	

		International Journal of Social Determinants of Health and Health Services 22 (1992): 429-445.  Douglas MacKay and Gopal Sreenivasan, "Justice, Inequality, and Health," <i>The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , edited by Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2021 Edition)	
Mon. Feb. 20			<b>Policy Analysis Sections 1-3</b>
Tues. Feb. 21	4.4 Justice Across Ages	Juliana Bidadanure, "Justice Between Coexisting Generations," in <i>The Oxford Handbook of Intergenerational Ethics</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming), 1-16.	
Thurs. Feb. 23	4.5 Structural Injustice	Iris Marion Young, <i>Responsibility for Justice</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 43-65.  Jerusalem Demsas, "American's Racist Housing Laws Really Can be Fixed," <i>Vox</i> , Feb 17, 2021.	
Tues. Feb. 28	4.6 Case Discussion	TBA	
Thurs. Mar. 2	In-Class Workshop		
Mon. Mar. 6			<b>Policy Analysis Full Draft</b>
Tues. Mar. 7	5 Freedom  5.1 Conceptions of Freedom	Ian Carter, "Positive and Negative Liberty," <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , edited by Edward N. Zalta (Spring 2022 Edition), sections 1-3.  Susan Pennings and Xavier Symons, "First Among Equals? Adaptive Preferences and the Limits of Autonomy in Medical Ethics," <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i> Forthcoming.	
Thurs. Mar. 9	5.2 Freedom and Markets	Debra Satz, <i>Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15-36, 135-154.	
Tues. Mar. 14	Spring Break – No Classes		
Thurs. Mar. 16	Spring Break – No Classes		
Tues. Mar. 21	5.3 Freedom and the Welfare State	Douglas MacKay, "Basic Income, Cash Transfers, and Welfare State Paternalism," <i>The Journal of Political Philosophy</i> 27 (2019): 422-447.	
Thurs. Mar. 23	Case Discussion	TBA	
Tues. Mar. 28	6 Ethics and Evidence Based Policy	Kathryn E. Joyce and Nancy Cartwright, "How Should Evidence Inform Education Policy?" in	

		<i>Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Education</i> , edited by Randall Curran (New York: Routledge, 2022).  Donal Khosrowi, “Trade-offs Between Epistemic and Moral Values in Evidence-Based Policy,” <i>Economics and Philosophy</i> 1 (2016): 49-78.	
Thurs. Mar. 30	Case Discussion	TBA	
Mon. April 3			<b>Policy Analysis Final</b>
Tues. April 4	Case Discussion	TBA	
Thurs. April 6	Wellbeing Day – No Classes		
Tues. April 11	Case Discussion	TBA	
Thurs. April 13	In-Class Workshop		
Tues. April 18	Case Discussion	TBA	
Thurs. April 20	Student Presentations		
Tues. April 25	Student Presentations		
Thurs. April 27	Student Presentations		
Fri. April 28			<b>Case Consultation Report</b>

### Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

### Attendance Policy

As stated in the University’s [Class Attendance Policy](#), no right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

I will work with students to meet attendance needs that do not fall within University approved absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity),

The [University Approved Absence Office](#) (UAAO) website provides information and FAQs for students related to University Approved Absences.

### Late Submissions

1. Late assignments will be penalized 3% per day, including weekends. Extensions will only be permitted on the grounds of illness (including mental illness) or bereavement. Documentation is required.
2. All students are entitled to eight, no penalty ‘late days.’ Students may use these days as they wish for any of the individual (not group) assignments. The instructor will keep track of students’ use of these dates. Note: the eight late days are for the whole semester, not for each assignment.

## **Honor Code**

All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC Honor Code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from “lying, cheating, or stealing” in the academic context. If you are unsure about which actions violate the Honor Code, please see me or consult [studentconduct.unc.edu](https://studentconduct.unc.edu).

## **Mask Use**

UNC-Chapel Hill is committed to the well-being of our community – not just physically, but emotionally. The indoor mask requirement was lifted for most of campus on March 7, 2022. If you feel more comfortable wearing a mask, you are free to do so. There are many reasons why a person may decide to continue to wear a mask, and we respect that choice.

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

By attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets the expectation that you will use the University’s technology resources responsibly, consistent with the University’s mission. In the context of a class, it’s quite likely you will participate in online activities that could include personal information about you or your peers, and the AUP addresses your obligations to protect the privacy of class participants. In addition, the AUP addresses matters of others’ intellectual property, including copyright. These are only a couple of typical examples, so you should consult the full [Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#), which covers topics related to using digital resources, such as privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property. Additionally, consult the University website “[Safe Computing at UNC](#)” for information about the data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

## **Accessibility Resources and Service**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, including mental health disorders, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

## **Counseling and Psychological Services**

UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The [Heels Care Network](#) website is a place to access the many mental resources at Carolina. CAPS is the primary mental health provider for students, offering timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to their website <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health building for an initial evaluation to learn more. Students can also call CAPS 24/7 at 919-966-3658 for immediate assistance.

## **Title IX Resources**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvscc@unc.edu](mailto:gvscc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu).

## **Policy on Non-Discrimination**

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

## **Diversity Statement**

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political views, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve. I appreciate suggestions.

## **Learning and Writing Resources**

The Writing Center is in the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources. You can chat with someone in the Writing Center or make an appointment on their website: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu>.

The UNC Learning Center is a great resource both for students who are struggling in their courses and for those who want to be proactive and develop sound study practices to prevent falling behind. If you think you might benefit from their services, please visit them in SASB North or visit their website to set up an appointment: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu>.

## **Grade Appeal Policy**

I take the evaluation and grading of your papers and exams very seriously because I know that most of you take the preparation and writing of your exams very seriously. If you think you deserve a higher grade on a paper or exam, you may write a letter and explain why you would like to appeal the grade. Before making an appeal, you should review your work and the grading criteria I have provided. After I receive your letter, I will re-read your paper or exam within 1-2 class periods. Depending on my re-reading, your grade may stay the same, be raised, or be lowered. This system is designed to minimize frivolous grade appeals and to ensure that you have carefully examined and reflected on the quality of your work before deciding to initiate a grade appeal.

## **Email Policy**

I will respond to legitimate email inquiries within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Illegitimate email inquiries include: administrative or scheduling questions whose answers are readily available online (i.e. course website); questions concerning the content of missed (without reason) lectures; and substantive philosophical questions better addressed in class or in office hours. Email is not an alternative to communication in lectures or office hours. All emails must include the course code PLCY 730 in the subject line.