PADM 4450 Public Policy Analysis, Fall 2025

Instructor Information

Faculty: Linlang He
Office: 204M Chilton Hall
Office Hours: Wed 11:20 am -1:20 pm Or by appointment
Class Type: Online
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Please note: This Syllabus can change in response to UNT Policies. If this were to occur, students will be given advanced notice and a copy of the changes.

Course Structure and Communication Expectations

This course takes place 100% online. The primary tool of communication for this course is the Canvas course portal. Please make sure that you have access to Canvas and Please visit this site for online communication tips https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips.

Office hours are held on Wednesdays between 11:20 am and1:20 pm. Office hours are scheduled in 20-minute intervals. Please email linlang.he@unt.edu directly to sign up for office hours.
(For security reasons, **Zoom link for office hours is only posted on Canvas under "Home"**).
Throughout the semester, please feel free to send me your questions and concerns via e-mail as well.

Other than that, your interaction with me and with your fellow students will take place on Canvas. I will open up a new module each week as we move along. Happy Learning!

Course Description

Public policy is often described as what governments choose to do or not to do. Policy analysis is the process of making projections about the prospects of government actions and inactions. Policy analysis is requisite in all government policy domains. Further, urban planners and non-profit leaders may be required to use some established set of quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques to make judgments on public policies.

The toolkit of policy analysis is comprised of elements borrowed from diverse disciplines. This is likely the case due to the interdisciplinary nature of policymaking. While policy analysts can and do specialize in certain policy areas and/or techniques, they must be conversant in a wide variety of disciplinary approaches.

For better or for worse, economics has become the lingua franca for describing and quantifying the impacts of proposed policies. Thus, a basic understanding of economics is necessary. While this is not an economics course, the tools and terms used by economists will be the principal lens through which we will evaluate policy impacts. The nature of these impacts and the nature of benefits and costs vary substantially by policy area. For this reason, after the economic concepts have been reviewed we will apply these tools to different topical areas. Becoming an effective policy analyst requires knowing the basic tools and applying them appropriately to the right disciplinary context.

Special attention will be paid to improving students' ability to analyze issues involving multiple actors with diverse interests, where information is either uncertain or incomplete. Upon finishing the class, students should be able to apply the skills developed over the semester to a variety of policy areas.

The tools and concepts acquired throughout the course are intended to build toward a final project that involves a comprehensive benefit-cost analysis. This project will constitute the largest share of the grade and will be split into several cumulative components.

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:
1. Apply economic concepts to analyze public analysis;
2. Describe the limitations of economics in policymaking and identify common flaws that undermine the effectiveness of public policy;
3. Conduct a basic policy analysis including a Benefit-Cost Analysis (CBA) based on a selected case study and write a succinct and well-argued policy memo;
4. Conduct a clear and concise oral policy briefing.

Required/Recommended Materials

I will refer to the following books throughout the semester.
• Weimer, D. L., & Vining, A. R. (2017). Policy analysis: Concepts and practice. Routledge.
  (This book is freely accessible for all UNT students as an eBook using this link
  https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b7980642)

• Clemons, R. S., & McBeth, M. K. (2020). Public policy praxis: A case approach for understanding policy and analysis. Routledge. (this book is freely accessible for all UNT students as an eBook using this link https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b7854406)
  *** **Other Materials (e.g., slides and instructor videos) will be posted on Canvas.**

Technology requirements for courses with digital materials:

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need a computer with reliable internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System, to communicate with instructors using emails, to submit completed work online, etc. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at Learn Anywhere, https://online.unt.edu/learn.

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT, we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

• **UNT Help Desk**
Website: http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm
Email: helpdesk@unt.edu
Phone: 940-565-2324
In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130
Walk-In Availability: Monday-Friday: 8 am-5 pm
Telephone Availability / Support Hours
-Monday-Thursday: 8 am-9 pm;
-Friday: 8 am-5 pm;
- Saturday-Sunday: 11 am-3 pm

For additional support, visit Canvas Technical Help,
https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328.

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

• While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.

• Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.

• Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.

• Speak from personal experiences. Use "I" statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individuals' experiences.

• Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people's ideas, instead of attacking individuals.

• Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as "YELLING!"

• Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.

- Avoid using "text-talk" unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.

- Proofread and fact-check your sources.

- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

- **Notice: Class recordings are reserved for use only by students in this class for educational purposes. The recordings should not be shared outside the course in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.** See these Engagement Guidelines (https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) for more information.

Course Requirements/Schedule

Details on modules, assignments, and exams.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

Week	Date	Modules	Assignment	Points Possible	% of Final Grade
Week 1	08/18-08/23	**Introduction to Public Policy**	Course Syllabus Dye, T. R. (2017) Chapter 1 Policy Analysis; Chapter 2 – Models of Politics: Some Help in Thinking about Public Policy		
Assessment	08/23 (Due)		Syllabus/Module 1 Quiz	40 pts.	4%

SECTION 2: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS FOR PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Week 2	08/25-08/30	**Idealized Competitive Model**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 4		
Assessment	08/30 (Due)		Quiz 2	40 pts.	4%
Week 3 Sept 1: Labor Day)	09/01-09/06	**Market Failures 1: Public Goods and Externalities**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 5		
Assessment	09/06 (Due)		Quiz 3	40 pts	4%
Week 4	09/08-09/13	**Market Failures 2: Natural Monopoly and Information Asymmetry**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 5		
Assessment	09/13 (Due)		Discussion 1	50 pts.	5%
Week 5	09/15-09/20	**Rationales for Public Policy-Distributional and Other Goals**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 7		
Assessment	09/20 (Due)		Quiz 4	40 pts.	4%
Week 6	09/22-09/27	**Are there Limitations to Public Intervention? Government Failures**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 8		
Assessment	09/27 (Due)		Discussion 2	50 pts.	5%
Week 7	09/29-10/04	**Mid-term Exam**		200 pts.	20%

SECTION 3: LIMITATIONS TO PUBLIC INTERVENTIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Week 8	10/06-10/11	**What are the Mechanisms to Correct for Market and Government Failures?**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 10		
Assessment	10/11 (Due)		Quiz 5	40 pts.	4%
Week 9	10/13-10/18	**How to Tackle Policy Problems?**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 14 and Chapter 15; Clemons and McBeth (2020) Chapter 6;		
Assessment	10/18 (Due)		Discussion 3	50 pts.	5%
Week 10	10/20-10/25	**Cost-Benefit Analysis: Assessing Efficiency**	Weimer and Vining (2017) Chapter 16 Clemons and McBeth (2020) Chapter 3		
Assessment	10/25 (Due)		Discussion 4	50 pts.	5%

SECTION 4: COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

| Week 11 | 10/27-11/01 | Case Study One The 'Gig Economy' Case: Uber (and Lyft) from Boise to Burlington | Clemons and McBeth (2020) pp. 39-48 | | |

Week 12	11/03-11/08	Case Study Two Vaping Politics and Policy: Up in Smoke	Clemons and McBeth (2020) pp.107-138		
Assessment	11/08 (Due)		Identify Case for Policy Analysis Memo *(instructions to be posted later in the semester)*	50 pts.	5%
Week 13	11/10-11/15	Case Study Three Big- Mart: Cheap Goods at What Price? Stakeholders and Storytellers: Playing Politics and the Policy Process"	Clemons and McBeth (2020) Chapter 8		
Week 14	11/17-11/22	Policy Analysis – Workshop on Memo Writing			
Thanksgiving Break	**11/24-11-30**	**No Class**			
Week 15	12/01-12/06	Exam review			
Assessment	12/08 (Due)		Complete the Memo – Final Project Writeup *AND* Memo Presentation	100 pts 50 pts	10% 5%
Week 16	12/08-12/12	**Final Exam**		200 pts.	20%

Assessing Your Work

The course shall prioritize discussions on canvas as tools for accomplishing study objectives. Students are required to read the course materials and participate actively in class through debates and via the discussion feature on Canvas. Students' evaluation would be ascertained through scores on quizzes, canvas discussions, exams, and the course project. I reserve the right to make any adjustments to course assignments, as necessary.

Please know that, when assessing all of your work, plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Per UNT policy, "Plagiarism means use of another's thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student's intent" (You could also find information from the following website that defines academic dishonesty and available penalties: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003 under the Student Academic Integrity document).

Please note that the use of GenAI tools should only be used to improve readability and language of your work. It should NOT be used to answer your quiz/exam questions, to brainstorm your answers for open-ended discussion board, or to replace your critical thinking process throughout your coursework. In other words, using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment, exam, or coursework (apart from improving readability and language of your work) will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will be addressed according to the Student Academic Integrity policy as outlined on this site https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003. We will also be using Turnitin tools to detect AI-generated writing.

1. Discussions and Short Response (200 points):
There will be short responses throughout the semester over discussions and reading materials. There will be four (for 50 points each) focused discussions and short response assignments for questions related to that week's module. We will utilize the "Discussion" option in Canvas, which provides an integrated system for class discussions. All short responses should be completed via Canvas for the date indicated in the syllabus. **Your short response to a topic should be between 200 – 300 words. You are also expected to reply to two posts made by other members of the class.**

2. Quizzes (200 points):
There will be five graded quizzes (40 points each) based on class modules and assigned readings. The quizzes are intended to test your mastery of the material covered. They will also help you to prepare for the examinations. A quiz would comprise 10 objective-type questions based on the readings for a week. Quizzes will be administered through Canvas. Students would have **ONE attempt but no time limit to answer the questions before the deadline of the quiz.** This means that students will have the flexibility to work on their quiz at their own pace, save their progress, and return to it as needed until they submit it.

3. Policy Analysis Memo (200 points):
You are required to write an evaluation of a case study that employed a policy analysis involving cost-benefit analysis. The benchmarks for this analysis would be broken down into three:
• Identify Case for Policy Analysis Memo (50 points);
• Complete the Memo – Final Project (100 points);
• Policy briefing video based on the Memo - posted in Canvas (50 points)
The final product will be a five-minute video posted on canvas. I will provide additional instructions.

4. Exams (400 points):
There will be two exams, the midterm worth 200 points and the final worth 200 points. The final exam will not be comprehensive. Exams will cover material from the assigned readings, quizzes, PowerPoint slides/lectures, and posted supplemental material including posted videos and posted articles,

and will consist of 15 multiple-choice, true or false, matching questions and two short-answer questions. No make-up exams will be given unless a university-approved excuse has been provided.

Note that exams are to be taken without assistance from anyone else and without GenAI assistance. Exams will be made available on Canvas during the exam weeks. You can pick a time that works for you the best to work on it. However, you have to finish answering all questions within ONE attempt (without logging off), and you have 3 hours to complete the exam from the time you open the online link.

Details on modules, assignments, and exams

Assessments	Details	Points Each Possible	Points Total Possible
Activities	Quizzes	5@40	200
	Canvas Discussions /Short Responses	4@50	200
Exams	Exam I	200	200
	Exam II	200	200
Memo	Identify Case for Cost-Benefit Analysis Memo	50	50
	Complete the Memo – Final Project	100	100
	Policy briefing video based on the Memo - posted in Canvas	50	50
	Total Points Possible	**1000 (100%)**	**1000**

Grading Policy

The standard scale below will be used for grading:

A = 900-1000

B = 800-899

C = 700-799

D = 600-699

F = 500-599

In most cases, I do not allow students to do extra work (i.e., an additional paper) to improve their grades in the course. This is not fair to other students who are not given the same opportunity. Late homework will be penalized unless the student has a legitimate excuse or crisis causing the delay in completing work (i.e., illness, family death, etc.). Also, I will only grant incompletes or extensions to students who have legitimate excuses or crises and who make requests before the end of the course.

Late Submission: You will lose 5% of your total score if you submit within 48 hours after the deadline. You will lose 10% of your total score if you submit beyond 48 hours after the deadline. Your assignment will not be accepted beyond 7 days of the deadline with no legitimate reasons or no communications with the instructor. Please email the instructor BEFORE the deadline to request an accommodation to waive the late policy.

Special Accommodations: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to the faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member before implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect their privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access, https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office- disability-access or contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Cheating or Plagiarism: In accordance with UNT policy (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003), cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of F for the course. Any work submitted for a grade should be the original work of the student. Remember, plagiarism is a violation of acceptable student conduct. Long quotations should be avoided. Text or unique ideas taken directly from an author (quoted or paraphrased) should be cited and that citation should include a page number for the text. Violations will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see the professor if you have any questions about academic integrity in general or as it relates to particular requirements for this course.

The Use of GenAI: Please note that the use of GenAI tools should only be used to improve readability and language of your work. Using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment, exam, or coursework (apart from improving readability and language of your work) will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will be treated as cheating or plagiarism.

Participation: while there is no compulsory face-to-face meeting times for an online course, active participation is demonstrated by following the syllabus carefully and finishing up the assigned study materials and assignments on time. Meaningful participation will provide the margin of difference for those on the borderline between grades.

Other UNT Policies and Resources

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect (https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. **Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification"** (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the

email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students.

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- Student Health and Wellness Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- UNT Care Team (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- UNT Psychiatric Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
- Individual Counseling (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Academic Support Services

- Academic Resource Center (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- Academic Success Center (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- UNT Libraries (https://library.unt.edu/)
- Writing Lab (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)