



Fall Semester 2022
PPA 220A – APPLIED ECONOMIC ANALYSIS I
Master's Program in Public Policy and Administration

| Faculty Core Elements | |
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| Last Revised | 8/25/2022 |
| Contact Information | <p>Instructor: Professor Rob Wassmer, Ph.D.</p> <p>Email: rwassme@csus.edu</p> <p>Phone: (916) 752-2910 [cell]; (916) 278-4556 [office]</p> <p>Primary Office: Room 226 Sac State Downtown Bldg (3rd and S Street) Hours: Monday 4 – 5:45 pm and by appointment (in-person or Zoom)</p> <p>Secondary Office: Room 3038 Tahoe Hall, Sac State Main Campus Hours: Tuesday 4 – 5:45 pm</p> <p>Monday Classroom: Room 104 Sac State Downtown Tuesday Classroom: Room 1011 ARC Main Campus Hours: 6 – 8:50 pm</p> |
| Prerequisites | Intro Microeconomics and American Govt with a B grade or better |
| Catalog Course Description | PPA 220A presents the basic concepts, tools, and microeconomics models in the context of public sector choices. The standard market demand and supply model is developed and used to analyze the effect of public policies (particularly those of California state and local governments) on consumers and businesses. The principles of welfare economics are presented and used to evaluate economic performance. |
| Required Materials | <p>(1) <i>Rebooting Policy Analysis: Strengthening the Foundation, Expanding the Scope</i> (2023), Peter Linquiti, Sage/CQ Press; purchase at Sac State bookstore, Amazon, or your favorite internet bookseller; Kindle Version ~ \$45, Paperback Version ~ \$89 (used again in PPA 220B).</p> <p>(2) <i>Nudge: The Final Edition</i> (2021), Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, Penguin Press; purchase at Sac State bookstore, Amazon, or your favorite internet bookseller; Kindle Version ~ \$12, Used Paperback Version ~ \$9.</p> |

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| | <p>(3) Weekly CalMatters, free subscription, use for HW and class discussion.</p> |
| <p>Overview</p> | <p>PPA 220A expands upon your prerequisite knowledge of microeconomic concepts and tools as they apply to public policy analysis. We will study how economists think about consumers, businesses, and government decisions and, importantly, the relevance of this to making public policy. We devote much of our time to understanding the role that government could/should play in altering these economic decisions to better society. I will also allocate considerable course time to extending your policy-relevant knowledge of microeconomics to the new thinking offered through behavioral and equity-focused economics. If your microeconomics is a bit rusty, watch the appropriate Khan Academy microeconomics videos. I am pleased to offer further explanations on introductory microeconomics during office hours.</p> <p>In addition, I have adopted a new textbook this year that offers an essential critical appraisal of using only an "economic" or "classical" approach to policy analysis. I am excited to utilize the new text that provides a review of policy analysis through the economic lens and the equity, political, institutional, legal, sustainable, and science/tech lenses. You will learn and apply these lenses and logic, evidence collection, and the mindset of policy analysis to contemporary California policy issues that interest you and the whole class.</p> <p>I encourage you to share your opinion on any of my pedagogical methods and offer constructive suggestions to improve them. I appreciate such input and continually use it to improve how I teach this course. To help achieve this goal, I ask in week six (October 10 and 11) that you anonymously complete the teaching evaluation instrument that you will again fill out at the end of the course. Using the responses, I will try to adapt my pedagogy to address your concerns in the remaining portion of the course.</p> <p>PPA 220A consists of one 170-minute meeting a week for 15 weeks. Each week you should also plan to devote about four to five hours of study outside of the classroom to this course. A 15-minute break occurs in the middle of each class. If I go past 7:30 pm, please remind me that the break time is due.</p> <p>If you did not understand concepts or ideas that I covered in a Monday or Tuesday night class, it is vital to your overall success that you resolve these misunderstandings before the next meeting. You can do this by: (1) talking to your classmates (I encourage you to form</p> |

| | <p>an electronic study network with some of your classmates), (2) visiting me on Monday or Tuesday during office hours before class, (3) sending an email question to me at rwassme@csus.edu, and/or (4) setting up a Zoom meeting between us at a time that is convenient to both of us.</p> <p>I am pleased to discuss a suggestion on pedagogy, policy in general, the MPPA Program, and/or your career plans during office hours. Also, I will serve as the academic advisor for all first-year MPPA students. To ensure a strong participation grade, please visit office hours regularly, or make a point to chat with me during break or after class.</p> <p>As a well-prepared student, you must complete all readings before attending class. Also, look over the PowerPoint notes, formulate answers to the discussion questions poised each week (you should think about all the questions asked and not just the one assigned to you that week), sign up and read the Weekly CalMatters email content regularly, and actively participate in the small-group and full-class discussions. I will call upon those who do not voluntarily participate. The appropriate pedagogy is not as displayed here.</p> <p>I will do my best to conduct this class in the format of active learning, discussion, and participation. I will not run through the PowerPoint slides word-for-word. Instead, we will rely upon discussions of your prepared answers to the weekly questions, additional discussion questions I pose in class and various class discussion strategies. Before class, I suggest you download the PP notes, study them, print them out, if possible, in note form, and take your notes directly on the PP notes. My reasoning has scientific support.</p> | | | | |
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| <p>Course Learning Objectives</p> | <p>This course has five learning objectives that are part of a broader set of learning objectives for the MPPA degree. The PPA Department will gather your opinion on how well this course has satisfied the learning goals in column two through a survey at the end of the semester.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>PPA LEARNING OBJECTIVE</th> <th>HOW APPLIED IN PPA 220A</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 c. Construct clear problem definitions with attention to client interests and varied stakeholder perspectives.</td> <td>Using the method described in Linquiti, construct a clear definition of an appropriate policy problem that warrants public intervention.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | PPA LEARNING OBJECTIVE | HOW APPLIED IN PPA 220A | 1 c. Construct clear problem definitions with attention to client interests and varied stakeholder perspectives. | Using the method described in Linquiti, construct a clear definition of an appropriate policy problem that warrants public intervention. |
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| | | 1 d. Identify reasonable alternatives to address problems. | Using the method described in Linquiti, identify reasonable alternatives to address a clearly defined policy problem. |
| | | 1 e. Apply context-appropriate criteria to analyze and evaluate alternatives and offer solutions with attention to implementation strategies. | Based on the method described in Linquiti, use appropriate criteria to evaluate the desirability of alternatives offered to solve a policy problem. |
| | | 1 g. Draw upon multiple disciplines to understand and address policy and administration problems. | Understand and apply the roles and interactions of markets, politics, and experts in offering wisdom and accountability in public policy formulation as conveyed through Munger's Triangle. |
| | | 1 e. Apply context-appropriate criteria to analyze and evaluate alternatives and offer solutions with attention to implementation strategies. | In conjunction with other MPPA students and stakeholders, understand how to recommend the "best" alternative to deal with a public policy problem based upon rational policy analysis. |
| | | 2 e. Write clearly and succinctly as appropriate to various audiences. | Practice writing clearly and succinctly on public policy concepts and using rational policy analysis in short summaries and a medium-length policy brief to an audience of policymakers and practitioners. |
| | | 3. c. Consider the ethical dimensions of choices in public policy and administration. | Comprehend, practice, and realize the challenges when using the appropriately defined ethical code for policy analysts described in Linquiti. |
| | | Writing-intensive: Understand the significant research and/or professional conventions, | Understand the basic professional conventions, practices, and research-based |

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| | | practices, and methods of inquiry of the discipline. | methods of rational policy analysis. | |
| | | Writing-intensive: Understand some formats, genres, and styles of writing used in the discipline. | Practice explaining concepts from microeconomics as applied to rational policy analysis through short summaries and a medium-length briefing paper. | |
| | | Writing-intensive: Practice reading and writing within the discipline. | Read the various formats available to conduct policy analysis and summarize/interpret a policy-analysis-appropriate written form. | |
| | | Writing-intensive: Practice reading and writing as a learning process that involves peer and instructor feedback, revision, critical reflection, and self-editing. | Improve your writing of public policy analyses through peer and instructor feedback, revision, critical reflection, and self-editing. | |
| Graduate Writing Intensive Course | Receiving a B or better in this course satisfies your graduate writing intensive (GWI) requirement at Sacramento State. Writing induces anxiety. At CANVAS, I have included a PowerPoint presentation on this topic and a collection of readings that it references. Please take a moment to look this over before class starts. Though we will not cover it during class, I will chat with you about it outside of class during office hours. PPA 200 will also cover this topic. Complete all writing during the MPPA Program in APA style. I have included a PDF copy of an APA style guide at CANVAS. | | | |
| Course Delivery & Attendance | Before 5 pm, on a Friday before the class meets, I will post at CANVAS the PowerPoint slides covering the material discussed in the following week's class. At that time, I will also post the HW assignment due the following week. Information on CANVAS is here . Please visit the site after you have secured a Sac Link account number and password from Sacramento State. I will also correspond with you by email through CANVAS (delivered to your "*@csus.edu" email account, so make sure you check it). I also reserve the right to ask you to read additional material (not on the syllabus) from the Internet. | | | |
| Course Grading Scale | | Percent Correct 100-94 | Letter Grade A | Number Grade 4.3 |

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| | 93-89 | A- | 3.7 |
| | 88-85 | B+ | 3.3 |
| | 84-81 | B | 3.0 |
| | 80-77 | B- | 2.7 |
| | 76-73 | C+ | 2.3 |
| | 72-69 | C | 2.0 |
| | 68-65 | C- | 1.7 |
| | 64-61 | D | 1.0 |
| | <61 | F | 0.0 |
| Final Grade Calculation | Class participation and visits during office hours (15%) Average of highest ten weekly HW Grades (60%) Final Policy Program Evaluation Assignment (25%) | | |
| Student Core Elements | | | |
| Student Services Information & Links | <p>Services to Students with Disability (SSWD) <i>"Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where the course or instructional content is usable by all students and faculty. If you believe you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided."</i></p> <p>Student Health and Counseling Services <i>"Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education, and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost."</i></p> <p>Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES) <i>"If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial, or</i></p> | | |

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| | <p><i>other unique circumstances impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student.</i></p> <p>Drop and Withdrawal Policy</p> <p>University Grading Policy</p> <p>University Academic Advising</p> <p>Information Resources and Technology</p> <p>Support Centers and Programs</p> <p>Reading & Writing Center</p> <p>Student Rights and Responsibilities</p> |
| Academic Honesty | <p>When you do any writing for this course or any course at Sacramento State, you must be aware of plagiarism and how its practice can become grounds for dismissal from the university. Details are here. The following is also helpful:</p> <p><i>Plagiarism is a form of cheating. At Sacramento State, plagiarism uses distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without adequately acknowledging that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporating another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgment. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of proper credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgment is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>Plagiarism at Sacramento State includes but is not limited to the following. The act of incorporating into one's work the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work without giving appropriate credit, thereby representing the product as one's own. Examples include not only word-for-word copying but also the "mosaic" (i.e., interspersing a few of one's own words while copying another's work), the paraphrase (i.e., rewriting another's work while still using the other's fundamental idea or theory); fabrication (i.e., inventing or counterfeiting sources), ghost-writing (i.e., submitting another's work as one's own) and failure to include quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged.</i></p> |

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| | <p>I will use the <i>Turn-It-In</i> plagiarism check on Canvas for your HW and final paper. So please run your papers through it before submitting the final draft. Many times, plagiarism is unintentional. This check flags potential sentences you may not have considered potential plagiarism when written. Remember, the job of an analyst is often to read the findings of others and put them in their own, more simplified words for a client or the public. I desire you to practice that through your HW assignments and final paper.</p> |
| <p>Schedule (material under each meeting subject to slight change and additions)</p> | |
| <p>Meeting One August 29 or 30</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Review • Linquiti, Ch. 1, Prospective Policy Analysis • Wassmer, What to Do About Scrap Tires? @CANVAS |
| <p>September 5 or 6</p> | <p>No meetings: Labor Day Holiday Observed</p> |
| <p>Meeting Two September 12 or 13</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 2, Retrospective Program and Impact Evaluation • California State Auditor, Program Evaluations |
| <p>Meeting Three September 19 or 20</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 3, Obstacles to Using Classical Policy Analysis |
| <p>Meeting Four September 26 or 27</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 9, Economic Lens, pp. 317-330 • Khan Academy, Basic Econ Concepts; Supply, Demand, & Market Equilibrium; Elasticity; Consumer/Producer Surplus; Production Decisions & Econ Profit |
| <p>Meeting Five October 3 or 4</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 9, Economic Lens, pp. 331-339 • Khan Academy, Forms of Competition, Market Failure • Think Like an Economist Podcast, Externalities – The Full Cost of Choices We make |
| <p>Meeting Six October 10 or 11</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 9, Economic Lens, pp. 340-352 • Freakonomics Podcast, Why Rent Control Does Not Work • <i>Preliminary Teaching Evals Given Out</i> |
| <p>Meeting Seven October 17 or 18</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 8, Equity Lens • Freakonomics Podcast, The Pros and Cons of Reparations |
| <p>Meeting Eight October 24 or 26</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 10, Political and Institutional Lenses |
| <p>Meeting Nine Oct 31 or Nov 1</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 11; Legal, Sustainable, and Science/Tech Lenses |
| <p>Meeting Ten November 7 or 8</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 4, Metacognition of Your Own and Others' Biases • The Decision Lab, The Most Relevant Biases in Behavioral Econ • No Stupid Questions Podcast, Which Incentives Boost Vaccines |
| <p>Meeting Eleven November 14 or 15</p> | <p>Nudge: The Final Edition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part I: Humans and Econs • Part II: Tools of the Choice Architect |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part IV: Society • Part V: Complaints | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting Twelve November 21 or 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 5, Using Logic to Identify Tentative Truths | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting Thirteen November 28 or 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 6, Collecting and Evaluating Evidence | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting Fourteen December 5 or 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linquiti, Ch. 7, Mindset of Effective Policy Analyst | | | | | | | | | |
| Final December 12 or 13 | Last Day to Turn in Final Paper into Zoom by 6 pm | | | | | | | | | |
| Grading Rubric for Weekly HW Essays "A" Grade (20 to 18 points), "B" Grade (18 to 16 points), "C" Grade (16 to 14 points), "D" Grade (Less than 14 points), Absent (0 points) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Required Content/Points | 20 | 19 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| Submit through CANVAS, in Microsoft Word form with: (1) cover page containing only your name, date due, and full HW assignment/question reproduced, (2) two-page full-length body of the essay, (3) separate page with the reference list in APA style, and (4) final page with this rubric reproduced. Use Times New Roman 11 Font only with one-inch margins all around. No footnotes or endnotes. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Use the Editor function in Word with passive voice detection to eliminate all forms of passive voice in your writing. The best way to do this is to write in the first person. Also, correct any other grammatical errors flagged by the Word Editor. I will run your essay through the Editor and deduct points for flagged items not corrected. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Begin your essay with an introductory paragraph that offers a brief background on the issue and concludes with a sentence like "[i]n this essay I will ..." that summarizes the content of the essay's body paragraphs. Finish your essay with a final paragraph that states the conclusion drawn from the essay. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cite at least one reference in your essay from the syllabus and at least one other reference drawn from a Google search. Use the APA citation method, which is standard for all writing in PPA courses. | | | | | | | | | | |
| The content of the essay answers the question/issue posed in the HW assignment clearly and concisely. The style and content are appropriate for a college-educated reader with no expertise in microeconomics. It is practitioner-friendly to read. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Points (100 possible) | | | | | | | | | | |