
Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: None
Instructor: Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, MA, MSSW, PhD
Office: 3847 School of Social Work
Phone: 615-3369
Email: agrogan@umich.edu (best way to get in touch with me)

Course Web site at http://ctools.umich.edu/

Course Description:

Understanding the major analytic and quantitative tools used by practitioners engaged in assessing or evaluating human service systems is an essential component of social policy practice. Multiple program analysis is emphasized and students are asked to analyze an area which consists mainly of programs serving special populations. Students acquire beginning level skills in the use of a wide variety of analytical and quantitative tools, while gaining in-depth skill in a more limited number of tools and techniques. Competence in these skill areas is gained by completing a major analysis of a human service system.

The underlying theme of the course is how to increase the rationality of the choice process when applied to complex and rapidly changing human service systems. In short, scientific analysis opposed to political analysis or advocacy is emphasized.

Course Content:

Students will learn the major analytic and quantitative tools used by practitioners in assessing or evaluating human service programs or systems which include a range of specific programs. The theme of the course is how one can increase the rationality of the planning, analysis, and evaluation process, particularly of programs intended to serve the underprivileged or overdeprived populations. Human services organizations include a wide variety of programs of diverse size and complexity, both with respect to their activities and with respect to the goals they pursue. The course intends to impart skills which can be applied at various levels of analysis in different contexts.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate beginning level skills in the use of the major analytical tools that are most commonly used to assess and evaluate complex systems of services.
2. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of two analytical tools and their application in the human service field.

3. Design a procedure for reviewing and assessing a major service system that encompasses a wide variety of separately mandated programs.

4. Identify the limitations of rational analysis and be able to determine when rational choice processes are desirable and feasible to use.

Course Design:

The course will include lecture and discussion with students working in teams on contemporary issues. In addition, it will include participatory discussions, written assignments and experiential exercises related to course materials.

Course session topics could include the following areas: problem specification across systems of service, using social experiments, social indicators, program data, etc., to identify problems; using secondary sources (census, annual reports, surveys, evaluations and audits) to quantify problems; using primary sources (interviews, surveys, quasi experimental designs) to quantify problems; using qualitative indicators of problems; developing options and solutions to service problems; costing out options; utilizing other criteria (administrative ease, feasibility, stigma, etc.) to evaluate options; preparing analysis documents; diagnosing decision making situations; enhancing utilization of results.

Relationship To Four Curricular Themes:

1. **Multicultural Issues**: Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement influence and are impacted by the social policy process.

2. **Social Change and Social Justice**: The ability to approach policy analytically is necessary if the social work profession is to play an important role in shaping the outcome of ongoing policy debates so that social change enhances social justice. This course provides students with the capacity to participate in the social policy process.

3. **Promotion and Prevention**: Very often, policies in human service are implemented in reaction to an issue, not proactively, due to changing social, economic and political circumstances and influences. Prevention and promotion activities are difficult to evaluate and therefore raise special challenges in social policy practice. Students will be exposed to innovative evaluation techniques that they can use to analyze and evaluate promotion and prevention activities prior to the development, implementation, and analysis of any relevant policy issue or initiative encountered in the course of their professional activities.

4. **Social Science**: Policies in human service are in a constant state of flux owing to changing social, economic and political circumstances. Thus, any review of existing policy may be quickly outdated and has limited use as part of the training social work students carry into their careers. Therefore, students are provided with social science models and theories they can use as tools to analyze and evaluate any policy issue encountered in the course of their professional activities. Examples of the use of social science in social policy practice are presented.

Relationship Of This Course To Social Work Ethics And Values:
Ethical standards of social work practice (NASW Code of Ethics) and evaluation practice (Program Evaluation Standards) will be used to review issues commonly confronted in social policy practice. The ethical themes of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, fidelity and justice will be particularly emphasized and discussed.

**Required Readings:**

Since the focus of this course is on the practical doing of policy analysis, there may be fewer readings than you are accustomed to. There is no textbook for the course. All readings are available online through [http://ctools.umich.edu](http://ctools.umich.edu)

**Course Requirements**

1) **Four page policy analysis, posted to the web, which includes an analysis of a policy question of interest, a graph, and a map.** Sections of this paper will be due at different points over the term. Consultation with the professor and other students will be available. Quality of writing, and clarity of presentation, will be one of the criteria used in grading. Refer to the Student Handbook to make sure that you cite other’s work properly and avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism\(^1\)—when discovered—will be dealt with severely. Further details of this assignment will be forthcoming and will also appear on the class Web site.

   a. **Map [10% of grade]**

   b. **Graph [10% of grade]**

   c. **Final policy analysis, incorporating graph and map [60% of grade]**

2) **Class participation:** You will probably learn more the more you participate, but you will NOT be evaluated on your participation. There are too many variations that affect the rate of participation in this course.

3) **Attendance.** You are expected to attend each class and lab session. If you miss a class session for any reason, please see me to make sure that you are grasping the material. In particular, you will be expected to complete all lab assignments, unless we make other arrangements.

4) **Lab Work.** [20% of grade; Pass/Fail: Satisfactory completion of all assignments=A] We will spend some time every week in the computer lab. The purpose of the lab is to give you hands on experience with the building blocks of policy analysis: data handling, data analysis, GIS, and posting documents to the world wide web. You'll use the lab to learn how to do important steps in policy analysis rather than simply reading policy analyses or reading about policy analysis. Most of the learning in lab occurs in the doing of lab. Although, I will frequently collect your work in lab, I will not grade your lab work, or be able to provide

---

\(^1\) Please note that for purposes of this course, plagiarism consists of six or more consecutive words, taken from another source without proper attribution. Failure upon my part to detect plagiarism does not imply approval of plagiarism.
written feedback on your lab work. I am always happy to discuss lab work during lab, during office hours, or over e-mail.

Data Sets

- As the semester progresses, I will make an extract of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth available on the coursetools web site. It is my hope that many of you will make use of the NLSY, a database that I use in my current research. Since I am familiar with this database I am more likely to be able to help you answer questions about its use.

- Other data sets are available through the SDA Online Data Analysis System (http://www.icpsr.org/ACCESS/sda.html) available through the Inter University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Housed at the University of Michigan. The Social Science Data Analysis Network (http://www.sdan.net/) is a resource on campus of which I have only recently become aware, but may also be a source for Census related data sets.

- I do have some other specialized and general data sets (including the Women’s Health Study) that I can make available on CTools if there is need and interest.

Suggested Software

- SPSS (available in most campus computer labs) (in class exercises will focus on the use of SPSS although the statistical concepts covered transcend any one statistical software package)

- ArcGIS (available in campus computer labs) (in class GIS exercises will focus on the use of ArcGIS although the concepts are also applicable to ArcView)

- Microsoft Word, Microsoft, Front Page and Adobe Acrobat (available in campus computer labs) (this software will be used to develop your policy analysis and post it to the web in appropriate formats).

- Some data sets may also be analyzable through the SDA Online Data Analysis System (http://www.icpsr.org/ACCESS/sda.html).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/11/2006</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>Introduction to the course and to each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/18/2006</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Causal theory and counterfactual thinking. The resurgence in social science in thinking about causation and how it can serve as a set of guiding principles for policy analysis.</td>
<td>Short story, &quot;There Came a Sound of Thunder&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2/1/2006   | 4    | Data and Statistics | Review of statistics covered in SW522  -distinguishing between estimation and statistical significance  -statistical significance does not mean substantive significance  -statistical significance does not mean you have found the "cause" of an effect or that you understand the process generating an effect  -as time permits, focus on special topics including missing data, standardized variables, understanding OLS well enough to read and interpret policy relevant articles | excerpts from Chapter 5 of *Freakonomics*  
The Median Isn't the Message, by Stephen J. Gould |                 |
<p>| 2/8/2006   | 5    |          | Review of statistics 2                     |                                                                           |                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/15/2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Understanding longitudinal data through the use of appropriate basic descriptive statistics and suitable graphs.-panel data-censored data-time series</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/1/2006</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignments Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15/2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 Maps, Neighborhoods and Communities</td>
<td>People inside communities, understanding nested data, and it's importance for policy inference. - the importance of context; the idea of moderation-correlated data; intraclass correlation coefficients; ecological fallacy; Simpson's paradox</td>
<td>Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2005). Relationship of corporal punishment and antisocial behavior by neighborhood. <em>Archives of Pediatrics &amp; Adolescent Medicine, 159</em>(10), 938-942. Neighborhood Research from a Spatially Oriented Strengths Perspective, Carol Mowbray et al.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/22/2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Using GIS to map and visualize data for policy purposes. An introduction to the basics</td>
<td>selected readings from ESRI's virtual campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/29/2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Using GIS 2 - preparing maps for presentation and publication; using tabular data &amp; geocoding</td>
<td>selected readings from ESRI's virtual campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5/2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Using GIS 3 - as time permits, analyzing and querying spatial data</td>
<td>selected readings from ESRI's virtual campus</td>
<td>A well-documented map that illustrates some aspect of the policy question of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/12/2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14 Posting to the Web</td>
<td>Working with the web: The basics of HTML, PDFs, and servers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Your final policy analysis, including a map and a graph, posted to the web as HTML and PDF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>