

Spring Policy Exercise (API-500MD) Spring Module 2, 2019

***Please note that there will be a reading assignment to be completed before the module begins, with an associated set of responses due on or before Monday, March 25, at noon. Student experience from prior years highlights the advantages of completing this task prior to Spring Break. ***

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:45 to 4:00 pm, Wexner 332

Optional Skills Sessions: Fridays, 2:45 to 4:00pm, Wexner 436

Personnel:

- Matthew Bunn, instructor
- Margot van Loon and Arthur Abal, course assistants
- *Professor Bunn is going through a transition of faculty assistants. For the moment, the coordinator for his research group, Jacob Carozza, is helping out (jacob_carozza@hks.harvard.edu)*

OVERVIEW

Students (and faculty) choose the Harvard Kennedy School MPP program because they want to make the world a better place. We are collectively committed to:

- Democratic accountability and public institutions that embody human rights and respect for all as well as technical competence.
- Reason, intellectual honesty, and empirical grounding as the foundations of public policy.
- Idealism fortified by pragmatism.
- Agnosticism as to the best means (including markets, government, or civil society) for serving public missions.

The MPP core is structured around these commitments. In API-500M we seek to consolidate and reinforce students' abilities to work effectively in their service. **The goal of the course is to give you training and practice in policy analysis. It will equip you to define problems rigorously, to frame choices realistically, and to select and apply analytical tools in order to develop solutions that create public value.** Put differently and more briefly, it aims to inculcate the characteristic MPP ethos and habit of mind. The API-500MD section focuses in particular on policy analysis in the global arena, including relations among both states and all the other increasingly important actors, from corporations to NGOs to international organizations.

The module consists of four weeks of policy analysis training and a two-week exercise to deepen your learning of the skills. The basic concepts and goals for the module are the same across sections, although some of the materials, cases, and class activities will vary somewhat. Common concepts and competencies across all sections include: problem definition; strategic alignment; structured policy design and decision processes; stakeholder analysis; dealing systematically with multiple options and criteria. **For Section D, the exercise topic—the**

details of which you will not encounter until the final two weeks—involves exploring potential national and global responses to cyber-enabled interference in countries’ domestic affairs.

GOALS

By the end of the course we expect that students will have developed or deepened:

- The ability to frame a concrete, action-oriented problem statement.
- An instinct to seek out and exploit relevant evidence.
- Good judgment about choosing and using a range of analytic tools and concepts, some introduced in this module and others drawn from the rest of the MPP core.
- A disciplined, thoughtful, and realistic approach to projecting the plausible outcomes of different policy choices, understanding the uncertainties associated with them, and making tradeoffs across different criteria and dimensions of value.
- Habits of caution, humility, and flexibility with respect to public policy.
- An ability to assess and critique policy analyses, to be informed consumers of them.

In the API-500MD section, focusing on transnational policy analysis, we are also hoping that you will come away with humility about the limited ability of analysis to influence outcomes in the often anarchic global arena, and the importance of careful, deliberative approaches to building trust in the results of analysis across the affected stakeholders.

As a result of this course, you will also gain skills and experience in:

- Working effectively in teams under pressure.
- Giving and receiving peer critiques and coaching.
- Presenting the results of analysis – in memos, oral briefings, and visual aids.

Appropriately and thoughtfully combined, these skills should improve your ability to conduct high-quality policy analysis for your exercise challenge, your Policy Analysis Exercise, and your post-HKS career, and to be a critical consumer of policy analyses by others.

MODULE SCHEDULE

API-500M follows a distinctive schedule - a conventional course for four weeks, then an intense two-week exercise:

- The analytic training component of Spring Policy Exercise meets twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday from 2:45 to 4:00 for four weeks commencing March 26.
- The exercise component takes place from April 22 to May 3. During this period, all other MPP core classes are cancelled and first-year MPPs are expected to devote most of their time and energy to the presentations, team working sessions, and briefings involved in Spring Policy Exercise.

Students should carefully consider the heavy workload and mandatory sessions between April 22 and May 3 when selecting electives that meet during that period—especially those that have any significant deliverables overlapping with the exercise.

- Dry run oral briefings for the exercise will occur on Wednesday May 1.
 - Final oral briefings for the exercise will occur on Friday May 3.
- Students must be present on these dates.

GRADING

The class grade will be based on your performance in both the training component and the exercise.

(1) Training component (65%)

Written assignments: Over the course of weeks 1-4, students will be responsible for submitting, via Canvas, two written assignments of approximately 750 words each. The two written assignments will jointly account for 25% of the course grade, with the better of the two weighted more heavily. (If of roughly equal quality, the second will be weighted more heavily.) **Assignments not received by the deadline will be considered late. There will be no credit for late assignments.** Students are expected to comply fully with the instructions given in each assignment regarding the degree of collaboration allowed. It is the obligation of any student perceiving any ambiguity in assignment instructions to reach out to faculty or CAs for clarification. Failure to comply with instructions will be considered violations of the HKS Academic Code. Such violations can lead to sanctions ranging from failure of the assignment at issue to expulsion from the University. The full Code is available [here](#).

Class participation and engagement: Engagement during class is a critical component of the learning experience. We will be tracking class participation using Teachly. Effective class participation requires that you read the assigned readings, do the assigned pre-work and come to class, on time, prepared to engage in discussion and teamwork with your classmates. Students can also bolster their participation grade through contributions to the class discussion board.

We have very few sessions, a lot to cover, and frequent in-class teamwork. Hence, we are serious about attendance policy. Attendance is required at all eight sessions of the training component. Any unexcused absences or lateness will have consequences for your grade. Specifically:

- You will lose 10% of the total grade for the training component—or 6.5% of the total grade for the class as a whole—for each unexcused absence, and
- You will lose 5% of the total grade for the training component—or 3.25% of the total grade for the class as a whole—for each unexcused late arrival or early departure from class.

Excused absences are defined in the [HKS absence policy](#).

Your reasons for late arrival to or early departure from one of the eight class sessions must be communicated—in advance, unless the reasons could not have been anticipated—if you would like us to consider an episode of lateness to be wholly or partly excused.

Canvas participation: Prior to some class sessions you will be asked to post on Canvas responses to specific questions or tasks related to the session. Posting assignments may be added or subtracted up to a few days before each class. The grade implications for failing to submit a required posting by the deadline are the same as for missing part of a class session (i.e. 5% of the total grade for the training component).

The class participation and engagement, and canvas participation grade will depend on:

- Your contributions to class discussions (quality and relevance are more important than quantity).
- Your pre-class work posted on the course website (quality and relevance are more important than quantity).
- Diligent completion, by noon on Monday, March 25, of assigned reflections on a segment of the Bardach text, which you are strongly urged to read well prior to spring break.
- Your peer reviews of other students' draft assignments.

(2) Exercise (35%)

This component of the grade will be assessed on the basis of:

- The briefing materials and memo you will submit in both draft and final form over the course of the exercise.
- An oral briefing delivered as a dry run on Wednesday, May 1 at a time to be assigned and in its final form on Friday, May 3 at a time to be assigned.
- Your teammates' assessment of your contributions to the shared work.

Unexcused absence from the dry run or final briefing will lead to a loss of 20% of the grade for the exercise component, or 7% of the total grade for the class as a whole.

Strongly negative assessments from multiple teammates about your contributions may result in an equal and additional penalty. Your absence from campus for any significant time during the exercise, including the weekend of April 27-28, will make it difficult or impossible to meet your duties to your team and may reasonably be perceived by your teammates as a failure of responsibility.

COURSE MATERIALS

- *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, by Eugene Bardach. Parts of this book, which will be available on Canvas, must be read prior to the start of class and will be the subject of a pre-module assignment that you must submit by noon March 25. You are encouraged, but not obliged, to acquire and read the whole book. If you would like to purchase the book, you may do so through the COOP at <https://tinyurl.com/300-W19-HKS-API-500M-B> (This latest (5th) edition, with Eric Patashnik as a co-author, includes more practical tips and guidance than the earlier ones. You should, however, feel free to use any edition of the book.)

- Additional readings, including case studies, will be listed on and available through Canvas. Readings may differ from those in the summary schedule below, so please check the class Canvas page for specifics.

ADDITIONAL GOALS AND STRATEGY FOR THE D SECTION OF API-500M

Focus: Section D will focus on policy analysis to advance global (transnational) governance and affairs. In such contexts, no single actor has unquestioned authority to govern the actions of others, and various actors can be expected to think quite differently about what questions to ask and what evidence about them is convincing. Policy analysts must therefore focus on how to convince relevant stakeholders that their analyses are relevant and legitimate, so that stakeholders should allow them to influence their behavior and beliefs. The course builds directly on IGA-100 (Professor Walt’s “International and Global Affairs: Concepts and Applications”) and should be especially valuable for students who are taking that course or have comparable training. More generally, students pursuing careers in international and global affairs should find the course particularly relevant.

Strategy: The course will work to teach policy analysis in three ways.

- First, we will discuss how to carry out individual pieces of policy analysis – defining problems, designing and comparing options, and more – often using real-world examples.
- Second, we will engage with some “great books” – real-world policy analyses nominated by HKS faculty or practitioners as particularly important or influential – to see how professionals carry out policy analysis on transnational issues. We will consider cases addressing a mix of global governance issues, including international security, human rights, and the environment; some of the cases, like many issues at the center of today’s global affairs, have a significant science and technology component. We will use multiple conceptual frameworks to critique the strengths and weaknesses of these cases, and imagine how they might have been made even better.
- Third, in the exercise that ends the course, you will put these policy analysis skills to use in grappling with an important real-world problem.

Engagement with scholars and practitioners: In assessing and critiquing these “great books,” we will not only draw from what you have learned in the MPP core and from your own experiences, but also from the perspectives of professionals. For each major case of transnational policy analysis we examine in class, we will have a scholar or practitioner involved in that analysis join us in class for discussion, either in person or by video. Our time with them will be limited – so we will ask you to post questions to the class Canvas page the night before, and vote on which questions you think are most important to pose for that case.

Exercise: As noted earlier, this year’s exercise in this section will seek to devise potential national and global responses to cyber-enabled interference in countries’ domestic affairs. This is not just a matter of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, but is a global phenomenon that, if left unchecked, could pose a major challenge for the functioning of democratic societies worldwide. Students will examine several dimensions of the problem,

from the use of different forms of power to achieve national and transnational objectives to the construction and implementation of norms and agreements. More specifics on the client and the task will be provided as the exercise begins.

DETAILED SCHEDULE

PRELIMINARY: Specific topics and materials may change, and additional readings are likely to be added; always check Canvas for updates.

<p>At any convenient time for you prior to March 25: Read and reflect upon Bardach, <i>A Practical Guide to Policy Analysis</i>, Part I <i>(Previous students' experience informs our strong recommendation that you do this well prior to Spring Break.)</i></p>			
<p>Once the Canvas site for API-500MD goes up and at the latest by noon on March 25: Complete and submit the assignment based on the Bardach reading.</p>			
Class	Date	Topics/Tools	Class Preparation
Analytic Training			
1: T/3/26	Course intro; policy analysis in the transnational space; defining problems; decision analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Management and Disposition of Excess Weapons Plutonium</i>, Executive Summary (27 pp.) • Context memo for plutonium study (5 pp.) • Memo on decision analysis without numbers (7 pp.) • Memo on defining problems, diagnosing before prescribing (4 p.) • Digital module on decision analysis (optional but recommended) 	
2: Th/3/28	Criteria; making and presenting tradeoffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case: Standards for Corporate Disclosure of Climate Related Risks (excerpts – see Canvas page) • Slide deck: Final TCFD Recommendations Summary Presentation • Video: “TCFD & Bank of England Conference on Climate Scenarios— Welcoming Remarks.” October 31, 2017. Watch to minute 5.30.) • Context memo on climate disclosure study • Memo on options, criteria, using plutonium study example 	TBD
Th 3/28	Assignment 1 released		
F 3/29	Optional skills session: Writing policy memos		
3: T 4/2	Stakeholder analysis; projecting outcomes; acknowledging uncertainty; adjusting policy to experience and change over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case: Excerpts from Gary Samore, ed., “The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Definitive Guide” [Executive Summary and Introduction (1-17), Enrichment Restraints (23-29), Verification (31-41) (35pp total)]. • Context memo on Iran study (~ 5 pp.) • Slides on decision analysis of the Iran nuclear deal • <i>Humble Analysis</i>, 3-8, 17-25 (14 pp.) 	Samore
4: Th 4/4	Iraq case; logic models; strategic alignment;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case: Richard N. Haass, “Reconstruction in Iraq – Lessons of the Past” (15 pp.) 	O’Sullivan

	research methods; ethics of policy analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context memo (5 pp.) PAE: Excerpts from Ahn, Campbell, and Knoetgen, “The Politics of Security in Ninewa: Preventing an ISIS Resurgence in Northern Iraq” [Executive Summary (pp. i-iii); Introduction: The Resilience of ISIS (pp. 1-5); Ninewa's Security Sector (p.17, 19-21); The Battle for Local Control (pp. 30-38); Recommendations (pp. 83-87)] Memo on strategic alignment (~5 pp.) Taubman, “Did He Bang It? Nikita Khrushchev and the Shoe,” <i>New York Times</i>, July 26, 2003 (~3 pp.) Digital module on logic models (Optional but recommended) 	
F 4/5	Assignment 1 due Assignment 2 released		
F 4/5	Skills session: Case Briefing with Dr. Drew Shindell (prep for 4/9)		
5: T 4/9	Policy problems as complex systems: feedback, lags, policy resistance, impact of technological and other system changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: Achieving Climate/Health Co-Benefits through Control of Black Carbon and Tropospheric Ozone (report summary, pp. i-24) Briefing: “The Benefits of Reducing Short-Lived Climate Pollutants” (up to minute 3:20) Slide deck: “Measures to Limit Near-Term Climate Change and Improve Air Quality” (skim - developed by Dr. Shindell for his 2011 briefing to the UNFCC). Sterman, “System Dynamics: Systems Thinking and Modeling for a Complex World” Meadows, “Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System” Excerpts, memo on uses and abuses of models in policy. 	Shindell
6: Th 4/11	Influencing policy; building trust among stakeholders; building coalitions; working with clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case: Protecting Human Rights from Abuse through Global Sports Business [FIFA] HKS Press release Church, “Mind the Gap: Policy Development and Research on Conflict Issues” Excerpts from Mitchell, Clark, and Cash, “Information and Influence” (Suggested) 	Ruggie
F 4/12	Draft assignment 2 due		
F 4/12	Optional skills session: Briefings		

Synthesis			
M 4/15	Peer feedback due on assignment 2 drafts; Patriots Day		
7: T 4/16	Problems defined from different perspectives; power, fairness, and norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mansted PAE, “The Public Square in the Digital Age: Protecting Australia’s Democracy from Cyber-Enabled Foreign Interference” Finnemore and Hollis, “Constructing Norms for Global Cybersecurity” 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sclove, “Better Approaches to Science Policy”
8: Th 4/18	MPP competencies; module wrap-up; exercise prep.	Exercise readings to be assigned
F 4/19	Final assignment 2 due	
Exercise		
		Schedule notes
M 4/22	Monday, 4/22 8:45-10:00 am - Breakfast and SLATE Survey on the MPP Core 10:15-11:30 am – Exercise Kickoff Further updates to be provided closer to the start of the exercise. Exercise-specific skill sessions and content presentations will be scheduled during some core class periods this week. Most time will be spent in team work on the exercise topic	Core courses (API-102, API-202, DPI-101) end April 14 so that students can concentrate on their Spring Policy Exercise.
Tu 4/23		
W 4/24		
Th 4/25		
F 4/26	Exercise draft deliverables due	
M 4/29		
Tu 4/30		
W 5/1	Dry Run Oral Briefings	
Th 5/2	Final deliverables due	
F 5/3	Final Oral Briefings	