

Assignment 1. Policy issue and theory

Introduction

For the individual mid-term paper (due 30 April) students are to select a policy issue close to their heart. They are to write an academic-level, fully referenced and well structured (headings, paragraphs, figure and table captions where necessary) report on the policy issue determining existing problems, current policies, prevalent politics and governance determinants, and reflect on political theory that would enhance the possibility of new policy being formed for this particular issue. Students who do not immediately find a policy issue close to their heart may be inspired by using the 'issue selector' as outlined in the introductory lecture (watch the first lecture video):

	vaccination against...		
	waterborne diseases in...	measles among...	measles a
	domestic violence between...	rural China.	rural Chin
Prevention of...	obesity among...	boys in...	boys in...
Stimulation of...	primary education for...	Italy.	Italy.
Occurrence of...	Chikungunya in...	Healthy Urban Planning.	Healthy U
Incidence of...	Healthy Cities for...	migrant girls in...	migrant gi
Control of...	health literacy among...	ageing men in...	ageing me
Lack of...	cost-effectiveness measures for...	dairy farmers in...	dairy farm
Burden of...	metabolic syndrome in...	Otago.	Otago.
Insufficient...	sterile environments for...	liver transplants for...	liver trans
Too much...	health-enhancing physical activity with...	student health in...	student he
Unavailability of...	safe injection spaces for...	road traffic in...	road traffi
No access to...	birth control among...	La Trobe University.	La Trobe U
Absence of...	MERS in...	cardiovascular disease in...	cardiovasc
Need for...	Health-in-All-Policies for...	diplomats from...	diplomats
Reduction of...	Giardia control in...	homeless people in...	homeless
Promotion of...	poverty of...	women 50-65 in...	women 50
Management of...	social justice around...	commercial bankers in...	commerci
	health equity in...	illegal immigrants from...	illegal inm
	workplace incidents in...	Geelong.	Geelong.
	Mediterranean diet for...		

The description of the policy issue will be followed by a discussion of a particular theory of the policy process that the student feels could be applied to policy development for resolution of the issue.

A very short description of the policy issue (<200 words), substantiated by three media expressions (e.g., newspaper article, tweet, blog, etc.) will have to be submitted to the subject coordinator by e-mail by 21 March 17:00. The submission will have to be in pdf format. Students who do not meet this deadline will be assigned a policy issue.

What is a policy issue?

A policy issue is a problematic area of contestation that could be resolved through public policy decision-making.

A policy issue is therefore *not the same as a topic*. An issue frames a problem and allows for an analysis of its components, see the box below:

Three Examples

1. Topic: Shortage of primary care physicians

Issue: Lack of *access* to care to primary care physicians drives up health care costs and compromises *quality* of care.

Framed Issue

“This brief will analyze the factors responsible for the PCP shortage, the impact of the shortage on access to affordable, quality care, and the extent to which PAs and NPs could fill the gap.”

2. Topic: Suicide rate among veterans

Issue: Inadequate *access* to mental health care has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the rates of suicide among servicemen and veterans.

Framed Issue

“This brief will examine the use of pre- and post-deployment mental health screenings as proposed by *Veterans Mental Health Screenings and Assessment Act/H.R. 1308* to increase access to mental health care for veterans in order to decrease the suicide rate.”

3. Topic: Pain is a public health problem.

Issue: Lack of *access* to adequate diagnosis and treatment of pain compromises *quality* of care in the US.

Framed Issue

“This brief will analyze the extent to which the *National Pain Act* will reduce the barriers to effective pain control and increase access to affordable pain assessment and treatment. “

Figure 1. From

<http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/hpf/pdf/Writing%20a%20Health%20Policy%20Brief%20with%20outline.pdf>

The task, and its assessment

Apart from the academic writing style that is expected for your assignment, there are some other parameters that you will consider, as per the below table:

Aspect	Marks
Does the issue cover a contested problem that may be resolved through public policy?	5
What evidence is there that this is a contested problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From scholarly sources (mention and discuss at least three)• From 'those affected' (communities, professionals, individuals, agencies – mention at least three)• From media coverage (mention and discuss at least three)	15
Mention at least two policy options that would resolve the issue (think about <i>distributive</i> , <i>redistributive</i> , and <i>regulatory</i> approaches, or <i>regulatory</i> , <i>communicative</i> and <i>facilitative</i> policy interventions)	15
Mention at least three possible policy actors that would be in favour of each option - substantiate	10
Mention at least three possible policy actors that would be opposed to each option - substantiate	10
Describe a possible process that would lead to the adoption of a policy that aims to resolve the issue (e.g., council resolutions at the local level, parliamentary bills, institutional change)	5
Briefly describe three theories of the policy process that you could use to explain what is going to happen in this process. Illustrate.	30
Choose one of these theories and describe how the actors you mentioned above would play a role in the policy process according to this theory.	10