**Public Policy 001**

**Policy Brief Assignment**

**13% of Final Grade**

The third writing assignment is an ~2000 “Policy Brief”. The aim of this exercise is to make a specific proposal of a public policy solution to address an important problem. Like the previous writing assignments, you need to stake a clear position in a contemporary public policy debate and give compelling reasons and/or evidence for the audience to agree with you. Also, this writing assignment should build upon and expand the prior two writing assignments (i.e. use the same topic). Just like the prior two writing assignments, you must: clearly identify a problem; demonstrate the problem is significant; and explain why current policy is insufficient. However, this writing assignment requires much greater depth on the solution. Therefore, you should spend approximately 40% of your text on those prior issues. But, roughly 60% of your text should concentrate on the specific policy solution you are proposing. You must clearly articulate in specific detail exactly what your policy solution is. You also must convincingly and persuasively provide reasoning and explanation for why/how your policy solution will be effective. You also must thoroughly and extensively use evidence to prove and demonstrate your policy solution is highly likely to be effective at addressing the problem. Throughout, you must explain and demonstrate with evidence why your policy solution will improve upon existing policy.

SPECIFICALLY, YOUR BRIEF SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

* Describe the nature and significance of the problem
* Explain what current policy is to address problem and why it is insufficient (even if there is zero present policy to address problem)
* Explain your policy solution in specific detail
* Provide reasoning and explanation for why/how your policy solution will be effective and will improve on existing policy

Like stated above, the last two sections should be approximately 60% of your text. Like stated above, provide as much evidence as possible to substantiate and prove your arguments. As with all three writing assignments, have a clear and articulate argument that is stated earlier in the piece, coherently holds together the entire piece, and summarized at the end.

For EVIDENCE, you are welcome to use resources you find in your research. However, the internet has a lot of low quality information alongside some good information. In general, prioritize social science evidence based on research that meets the standards you learned about in the modules “The Role of Social Science” and “Policy Evaluation.” Arguably, the best evidence is peer-reviewed social science journal articles (e.g. The *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*). Also, useful are government and research institute reports and evaluation studies. Sometimes useful are well-respected news media and magazines. There is a clear hierarchy in the quality of evidence, and your grade depends partly on the quantity and quality of evidence you use. That is, you will be rewarded for finding high quality scientific evidence and penalized for relying on low-quality non-scientific evidence.

* **For citation style**: in parentheses, include the first author’s last name, the year of publication, and (if relevant) specific page numbers. For example: (Brady 2019: 29). Also, include a list of references at the end of your document. Any specific reference style should be fine – just include all relevant information. The references do NOT count against the word count of 2000 words.

There are some useful resources for writing your policy brief. For example, you might find the following helpful: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/policy-briefs/> ; <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/idrcpolicybrieftoolkit.pdf> ; and <https://sites.duke.edu/policybridge/files/2017/04/Policy-Brief-One-pager.pdf>. You are welcome to review resources like these. However, use these for additional guidance and follow this assignment sheet first and above and beyond anything else (e.g. you do NOT need an executive summary or title page).

Please feel encouraged to discuss your piece in office hours with your TA or the professor. The third writing assignment is worth 13% of the total grade and is due on Sunday at the end of the week by 11:59 pm. The pieces will be graded for the rigor of your argument, the use of evidence and reasoning, the effectiveness of the writing, and the persuasiveness of the piece.