

**Teaching Policy Analysis through Case Method and Client-based Projects
at the Milano School of International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy**

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Policy analysis, as a skill and tool, is present in every stage of the curriculum for students pursuing their masters in Urban Policy Analysis and Management at Milano. We require the students to take a sequence of courses (described below) that together teach them the formal foundations of performing timely and robust policy analysis and provide them with the opportunity to apply and develop their new skills in actual client-based scenarios. In its entirety, the policy analysis curriculum at Milano is an extended exercise in systematic and transparent decision-making. We rely heavily on the traditional five-step model, but the students learn to adapt this relatively rigid framework into a malleable touchstone that is adjusted based on the realities of case-specific time- and resource-constrained circumstances.

The policy analysis curriculum relies on a combination of case-based instruction, critical and foundational theory, and both team and individual client-based work. Together, the courses provide the students with a rigorous analytical framework for tackling timely and complex policy and management issues pertaining to public and non-profit sectors. Further, students learn how to communicate their analysis and recommendations clearly, succinctly and persuasively in written and verbal form. Students have found internships and full-time positions thanks to their contacts from the client-based work and to the quality memos and reports they produce for their job market portfolios. The Milano policy analysis curriculum has been developed over the past decade, and is one of the defining features of the Urban Policy degree.

The coursework begins in the first semester with an introductory Policy Analysis course, which is a mix of case-based class discussion, foundational theoretical readings and applied issue analysis. The first part of the course is lecture-based with regular analytical assignments, all of which involve writing concise policy memos and conducting quantitative cost-benefit analysis. During the second part of the course, the students break out into teams and conduct policy analysis on issues that have been prepared for actual public and non-profit organizations in New York City in the previous year. This part of the course provides the students with a “trial round” analysis project, which is repeated with a set of real clients in the “Lab.”

The following semester, students are required to enroll in the Laboratory in Issue Analysis (“Lab”). Students work in teams of five or six with actual clients on timely policy questions. The clients come from all three sectors, are located within the New York City metro area, and

present a wide range of issues (i.e., housing and community development, criminal justice, environmental sustainability). In the course of 16 weeks, the students work with two different teams/clients, and receive guidance from a faculty instructor and student teaching assistant. For each client and issue, the students produce a comprehensive report documenting their analysis and recommendation, write up a two-page memo, and conduct a formal briefing in which the entire team presents their analysis process and findings. The students present in front of a panel comprised of the client and Milano faculty. While they do not participate in the briefing, everyone in the class is required to attend their peers' briefings.

Finally, the students complete their culminating "Professional Development Report". This typically occurs in the student's final semester, and the students now conduct the issue analysis solo with clients of their choosing. The students are responsible for securing their own clients, establishing the core policy issue for analysis, and sustaining a working relationship with the clients throughout the project. The students meet with faculty advisors weekly to review key concepts (such as literature reviews or interviewing protocol) and receive guidance on their specific projects.

In this presentation, I will walk through the Milano policy analysis curriculum, discuss the teaching and learning philosophy behind it and highlight some of the positive outcomes for students, clients and the school overall.