



**DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT

School of Information Management

INFO 6100 - Information in Public Policy and Decision Making (Winter 2021)
(Cross listed with ENVI 6100 and PUAD 6150)

Wednesdays, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm (Atlantic), Online Synchronous Classes

Instructor: Dr. Bertrum H. MacDonald | *E-mail:* bertrum.macdonald@dal.ca

Office Hours: by appointment with meetings via MS Teams

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Note: This syllabus may be subject to minor alteration prior to or during the term.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INFO 6100 (ENVI 6100 & PUAD 6150) addresses the question of how information is used in policy making at local, national, and international levels. While modern policy making prescribes the use of the best available information, evidence-based policy making is relatively new and challenging due in part to the large quantities and types of information that could inform decisions. This course will examine the role of information, arising primarily from various research domains, in policy decisions, and will give particular attention to the interface between research and policy decisions. The course will draw on research-based case studies to illustrate enablers and barriers affecting the use and influence of information.

PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this graduate course. This elective course is open to all graduate students in the Faculty of Management and related programs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are to:

1. Introduce the concept and practices of evidence-based policy and decision-making;
2. Identify current-day practices in the production (types and format) and communication of research-based information;
3. Outline and describe activities at the science-policy interface, particularly regarding information pathways;
4. Introduce and describe methods of assessing the complex phenomenon of the use and influence of research-based information and publications;

5. Identify and assess knowledge management practices applicable to policy and decision-making contexts; and
6. Identify and assess best practices for promoting use of research-based evidence in policy and decision-making processes.

COURSE/LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to have gained basic knowledge or proficiency in the following areas:

1. The types of research-based information created for and/or used in policy and decision-making;
2. The contexts (e.g., governmental and intergovernmental) in which research may be used in policy and decision making and a variety of perspectives about evidence-based policy and decision-making;
3. The role(s) of research-based information in policy and decision-making contexts;
4. The challenges (enablers and barriers) in facilitating use of research-based information in policy and decision-making;
5. The complexity of measuring use and influence of information; and
6. Application of best practices in promoting wider awareness and use of research-based information in policy and decision-making.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

A Brightspace course site will serve as the main location for this course where copies of course materials will be posted, discussion boards will be available, and assignment files will be submitted. The synchronous classes, beginning in Week Two and continuing throughout the course, will be held in MS Teams.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Instruction in this course will include lectures, cases, and class discussion. Throughout the course, guest speakers will be featured to offer expert insights on various aspects of the complex research-policy interface phenomenon. Members of the Environmental Information: Use and Influence research team will contribute to the course (www.eiui.ca). Students will prepare for, and engage in discussion of, concepts and ideas presented in class through readings and cases.

TEXT

A specific text has not been assigned in this course. Nonetheless, selections from the following books will be included in the weekly readings and students may wish to consult the full volumes as resources for the course themes and assignments.

Boaz, A., Davies, H., Fraser, A., & Nutley, S. (Eds.) (2019). *What works now? Evidence-informed policy and practice*. Bristol: The Policy Press. ISBN 978-1-4473-4548-0 (paperback).

Šucha, V., & Sienkiewicz, M. (Eds.). (2020). *Science for policy handbook*. Amsterdam: Elsevier. https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/sites/jrccties/files/science_for_policy_handbook_fin.pdf [Available open access]

Sutherland, W. J., Brotherton, P. N. M., Davies, Z. G., Ockendon, N., Pettorelli, N., & Vickery, J. A. (Eds.). (2020). *Conservation research, policy and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108638210> [Available open access]

GENERAL RESOURCES

The literature on evidence-based decision-making and the use of information and knowledge in public policy is large and growing. The following resources may prove helpful during the course:

Alliance for Useful Evidence - www.nesta.org.uk/project/alliance-useful-evidence

International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA) - www.ingsa.org

NESTA (formerly National Endowment for Science, Technology and Arts), a UK-based independent charity) – www.nesta.org.uk

Science Advice for Policy by European Academics - www.sapea.inf

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated in this course as noted below. Detailed instructions regarding each assignment will be provided. Assessment of all assignments is directly related to attention to the instructions, clarity of expression and presentation, and evidence of significant analysis and reflection.

See also the [Grading Policy](#) of the School of Information Management.

Paper # 1 — Seminar — 15%

Students will be assigned to a group, who will work individually, to prepare and then lead the discussion for one of the weekly themes of the course. Further guidelines are provided separately.

Due date: varies (beginning date depends on class registration)

Paper # 2 — Review of a Policy Document — 15%

Students will select a policy document (from an assigned list) and provide a five-page assessment of the policy noting particularly how research-based information informed the preparation of the document. Further details are provided separately.

Due date: Wednesday, 27 January 2021

Paper # 3 — Briefing Memo or Letter to the News Media (e.g., Newspaper) — 20%

Students will prepare either a two-page briefing memo for a policy context or a letter to the news media (a newspaper or other media). The objective of either submission will be to

explain a scientific issue at a level that non-experts can understand. Further guidelines will be provided separately.

Due date: Wednesday, 3 March 2021

Paper # 4 — Essay — 35%

Students will write a 4,500-word essay on a topic selected in consultation with the instructor. Further guidelines will be provided separately.

Due date: Wednesday, 7 April 2021 [one week after the last class for the course]

Participation — 15%

This course involves considerable reading and consideration of topics about information and evidence as they relate to research-based (research-informed) policy and decision-making. Students are encouraged and expected to actively participate in the discussion of each of the themes of the course, both during the synchronous classes and in the discussion boards set up for each theme. In general, students' participation will be assessed on the following criteria: class attendance, completion of assigned readings, extent of participation in discussions, and adherence to course deadlines. *Attendance at the synchronous classes alone is not sufficient for satisfactory participation in this course.*

PARTICIPATION EVALUATION RUBRIC

Criteria	Weighting	Indicators
Preparation	40%	The student demonstrates consistent preparation for class; readings are always completed and the student is able to relate readings to each other and to other course material (discussions, presentations, guest speakers, etc.)
Quality of contributions	40%	The student's comments are relevant and reflect understanding of readings and other course material. The student's contributions move the discussion forward.
Frequency of participation	10%	The student is actively engaged in the class and/or discussions at all times.
Attendance / Punctuality	10%	The student is always punctual with no unexcused absences

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance in the synchronous classes is required and is included in the participation mark. Attendance records will be kept by the instructor. Students are expected to contact the instructor (by e-mail) if they cannot attend a class, must arrive late, or leave early.

Citation Style

This course uses APA style for bibliographic citations and references as well as rules governing the presentation of the text. Unless the instructor provides alternative written instructions, please use the APA citation style in your assignments to briefly identify (cite) other people’s ideas and information and to indicate the sources of these citations in the References list at the end of an assignment. For more information on APA style, consult the Dalhousie Libraries [website](#) or the APA’s Frequently Asked Questions about APA. See further details below.

Late penalties for assignments

A penalty for late assignments will be assessed, unless prior permission has been given by the instructor to submit an assignment late, which normally will be for extended illness, medical, or family emergencies only (see below). Late submissions will be assessed a penalty of five percent per day, including weekends. Assignments will not normally be accepted seven days or more after the due date; in such cases, the student will receive a grade of zero.

Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence

Dalhousie University recognizes that students may experience short-term physical or mental health conditions, or other extenuating circumstances that may affect their ability to attend required classes, tests, exams or submit other coursework.

Dalhousie students are asked to take responsibility for their own short-term absences (3 days or less) by contacting their instructor by phone or email prior to the academic requirement deadline or scheduled time **AND** by submitting a completed [Student Declaration of Absence form](#) to their instructor in case of missed or late academic requirements. Only two separate Student Declaration of Absence forms may be submitted per course during a term.

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT GRADING POLICY

A+	90-100	Demonstrates original work of distinction.
A	85-89	Demonstrates high-level command of the subject matter and an ability for critical analysis.
A-	80-84	Demonstrates above-average command of the subject matter.
B+	77-79	Demonstrates average command of the subject matter.
B	73-76	Demonstrates acceptable command of the subject matter.
B-	70-72	Demonstrates minimally acceptable command of the subject matter.
F	<70	Unacceptable for credit towards a Master's degree.

INTEGRATION OF MASTER OF INFORMATION COMPETENCIES

Program Competency	Course Learning Outcome	Course Assessment
Information Management Leadership	Outcome #s 2, 3, 4 & 6	Assignment #s 2 & 4 (depending on topics selected)
User-Centred Information Services	Outcome #s 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6	Assignment #s 1, 2, 3, & 4 (depending on topics selected)
Management of Information Technology	Outcome #s 5 & 6	Assignment #s 2, 3, & 4 (depending on topics selected)
Research and Evaluation	Outcome #s 2, 3, 4, & 5	Assignment #s 1, 2, 3, & 4 (depending on topics selected)
Risk Management	Outcome #s 3, 4 & 6	Assignment #s 1, 2, 3, & 4 (depending on topics selected)
Change Management	Outcome #s 2, 4, 5 & 6	Assignment #s 1, 2, 3, & 4 (depending on topics selected)
Workplace Skills & Attributes		
(a) Collaborate and Communicate	Outcome #s 1, 2, 3, & 4	Assignment #s 1, 2, 3, & 4, and participation (depending on topics selected)
(b) Organize, Plan, and Manage	Outcome #s 2, 3, 5 & 6	Assignment #s 1, 2, 3, & 4
(c) Develop Personally and Professionally	Outcome #s 2, 3, & 6	Assignment #s 1, 2, 3, & 4 and participation

ACCOMMODATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students on the Halifax campus who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD).

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact the Student Accessibility Centre. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student’s accommodation. Visit this [site](#) for more details.

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides [policies and procedures](#) that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

The commitment of the Faculty of Management is to graduate future leaders of business, government, and civil society who manage with integrity and get things done. This is non-negotiable in our community and it starts with your first class at Dalhousie University. So when you submit any work for evaluation in this course or any other, please ensure that you are familiar with your obligations under the Faculty of Management's Academic Integrity Policies and that you understand where to go for help and advice in living up to our standards. You should be familiar with the [Faculty of Management Professor and Student Contract on Academic Integrity](#), and it is your responsibility to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Dalhousie offers many ways to learn about academic writing and presentations so that all members of the University community may acknowledge the intellectual property of others. Knowing how to find, evaluate, select, synthesize, and cite information for use in assignments is called being "information literate." Information literacy is taught by Dalhousie University Librarians in classes and through Dalhousie Libraries' online [Citing & Writing](#) tutorials.

Do not plagiarize any materials for this course. For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and proper methods for attributing sources, please consult the University Secretariat's [Academic Integrity](#) page.

Please note that Dalhousie now subscribes to plagiarism detection software that checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offence that may lead to loss of credit, suspension, or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie, there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on [Academic Dishonesty](#) contained in the Calendar.

Furthermore, the University's Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student assignments be submitted in both written and computer readable format, e.g., a text file or as an email attachment, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by the plagiarism detection software. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. Use of third-party originality checking software does not preclude instructor use of alternate means to identify lapses in originality and attribution. The result of such assessment may be used as evidence in any disciplinary action taken by the Senate.

Finally: If you suspect cheating by colleagues or lapses in standards by a professor, you may use the confidential email: ManagementIntegrity@dal.ca which is read only by the Assistant Academic Integrity Officer.

Faculty of Management clarification on plagiarism versus collaboration

There are many forms of plagiarism, for instance, copying on exams and assignments. There is a clear line between group work on assignments when explicitly authorised by the professor and copying solutions from others. It is permissible to work on assignments with your friends but only when the professor gives you permission in the specific context of the assignment. University rules clearly stipulate that all assignments should be undertaken individually unless specifically authorised.

Specific examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying a computer file from another student, and using it as a template for your own solution
- Copying text written by another student
- Submitting the work of someone else, including that of a tutor as your own.

An example of acceptable collaboration includes the following:

- When authorized by the professor, discussing the issues and underlying factors of a case with fellow students, and then each of the students writing up their submissions individually, from start to finish.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [University Calendar](#) and the Senate.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Advising and Access Centre serves as Dalhousie's Centre for expertise on student accessibility and accommodation. Our work is governed by Dalhousie's Student

Accommodation Policy, to best support the needs of Dalhousie students. Our teams work with students who request accommodation as a result of: disability, religious obligation, an experienced barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Canadian Human Rights legislation.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity and dedicated to achieving equity. We are committed to being a respectful and inclusive community where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our university prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness.

RECOGNITION OF MI'KMAQ TERRITORY

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people. For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, or information about alternative territorial acknowledgements if your class is offered outside of Nova Scotia, please visit <https://native-land.ca/>.

The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

FAIR DEALING POLICY

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due by 11:59 pm (Atlantic) on the dates indicated, and are to be submitted via the relevant assignment drop box in the Brightspace site for the course.

For all assignments, *pay very close attention to the instructions provided*. Assessment will be based on adherence to the instructions and on the quality of the submissions (including logical

flow, critical analysis, and clear, unambiguous presentation of ideas). In addition, follow the general guidelines outlined below:

- All assignment documents are to be **submitted in Word format**. Do **not** submit documents in pdf format.
- Use the following file name convention in all assignment submissions:
[Course#]-Assignment-[#]-[Surname]-[Given Name]
e.g., INFO6100-Assignment-1-MacDonald-Bertrum
- *Always* include a title page, with an appropriate title. “Briefing memo” is not an appropriate title, for example. Do *not* place a running header and page number on the title page even though the style rules (noted below) may state this practice should be followed.
- All pages in documents (except the title page, which is *not* included in the numbering) *must* be numbered.
- As noted above, all documents submitted in this course *must* follow the style rules (text and bibliographic styles) as outlined in *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2019. **NOTE: Failure to adhere to the rules of the selected bibliographic style will lead to a grade category deduction assigned to a submission.**

A Quick Guide for APA styles has been prepared by the Dalhousie University Libraries, which is available at the Libraries website as well as in the Brightspace site for this course. In addition, a document, titled “Writing Tips,” is available in the course site to provide guidance on some common APA style matters.

- Any text or paraphrase taken from a published work must be attributed using the correct citation rules. Keep in mind that acknowledgement of another writer's ideas or arguments is needed even if you do not use the exact same words in expressing those ideas or arguments.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Copies of readings may be accessed as follows: 1) copies of some readings are posted in the course Brightspace site. For example, some book chapters or reports, not readily accessible in the open web, are posted in the course site; 2) journal articles are available online. Many readings are found in journals available via the extensive licences arranged by the Dalhousie University Libraries at <http://libraries.dal.ca> [search for the title of the journal in “e-journals” at the search interface on the Libraries’ main page, and then proceed to select the designated paper], and 3) some readings are available at designated websites, e.g., blog posts and audio / video recorded interviews.

Several guest speakers will participate in the course throughout the term to present insights about the weekly themes noted below. These speakers are knowledgeable about the overall

subject of the course, but will address specific themes based on their research and experience. The schedule of the speakers' participation will be announced as the course progresses.

Week 1—6 January 2021—Introduction to the Course

[Asynchronous opening of the course site, which provides an opportunity to become familiar with the site. Read the publications and view the video for this week, and listen to the brief introduction to the course by the instructor.]

Topics

What is the purpose of this course? What characterizes contemporary contexts for policy and decision making?

Readings

Boaz, A., Davies, H., Fraser, A., & Nutley, S. (2019). What works now? An introduction. In A. Boaz, H. Davies, A. Fraser, & S. Nutley (Eds.). *What works now? Evidence-informed policy and practice* (pp. 1-15). Bristol: The Policy Press.

Head, Brian. (2020, July 6). Evidence-informed public policy under fire. *APolitical*.
https://apolitical.co/en/solution_article/evidence-informed-public-policy-under-fire

View the video (17:55) featuring **Sir Peter Gluckman**, President of the International Network for Government Science Advice and former Chief Science Advisor to the New Zealand Prime Minister, in conversation with **Jean-Claude Burgelman**, Professor of Open Science Policy at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) and former Head of Unit for Open Science Policy at the European Commission.

Sir Peter Gluckman. Part I – Science Advice and Policymaking. (2020, November 25). YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpuRofWEHQ>



Week 2—13 January 2021—Decision Making & Policy Development. Evidence-Based Policy: History and Current Day

Topics

What is evidence-based policy and how has it been applied in national and international contexts?

Guest: Dr. Kevin Quigley, Director of the MacEachen Institute of Public Policy and Governance, Dalhousie University

Readings

Cairney, P. (2019). Evidence and policy making. In A. Boaz, H. Davies, A. Fraser, & S. Nutley (Eds.). *What works now? Evidence-informed policy and practice* (pp. 21-40). Bristol: The Policy Press.

Hahn, R. (2019, May 10). Building upon foundations for evidence-based policy. *Science*, 364(6440), 534–535. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaw9446>

Howlett, M., & Wellstead, A. (2017). Policy analysts in the bureaucracy revisited: The nature of professional policy work in contemporary government. In M. Howlett, A. Wellstead, & J. Craft (Eds.). *Policy work in Canada: Professional practices and analytical capacities* (pp. 19-35). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Quigley, K. (2019). Truth and power in the SNC-Lavalin affair. *Policy Options Politiques*. Retrieved from <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2019/truth-and-power-in-the-snc-lavalin-affair/>

Turnbull, L. (2020). The House of Commons and responsible government. In J. Bickerton & A-G. Gagnon (Eds.). *Canadian politics* (7th ed., pp. 65-79). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Week 3—20 January 2021—Information Production for Development of Public Policy - Part 1: Scientific Information / Social Science Information

Topics

What characterizes scientific and social science information? How is scientific and social science information published and what characteristics (e.g., format) factor in its use in policy and decision making?

Guest: Dr. Peter Wells, Marine Scientist, International Ocean Institute – Canada, formerly with Environment Canada

Readings

Editors. (2019, February 21). Embrace all sizes. *Nature*, 566, 295.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-00558-3>

Keele, S. (2019). Consultants and the business of climate services: Implications of shifting from public to private science. *Climatic Change*, 157, 9-26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-019-02385-x>

Marshall, N., Adger, N., Attwood, S., Brown, K., Crissman, C., Cvitanovic, C., De Young, C., Gooch, M., James, C., Jessen, S., Johnson, D., Marshall, P., Park, S., Wachenfeld, D., & Wrigley, D. (2017). Empirically derived guidance for social scientists to influence environmental policy. *PLOS ONE*, 12(3), e0171950.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0171950>

Molino, G. D., Kenney, M. A., & Sutton-Grier, A. E. (2020). Stakeholder-defined scientific needs for coastal resilience decisions in the Northeast U.S. *Marine Policy*, 118, 103987.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.103987>

Olson, J., & Pinto da Silva, P. (2020). Knowledge production at the science-policy interface: Lessons from fisheries scientists. *Science and Public Policy*, 47(1), 47–55.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scz045>

Shah, H. (2020, January 16). Global problems need social science. *Nature*, 577(7790), 295.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-00064-x>

Week 4—27 January 2021—Information Production for Development of Public Policy - Part 2: Health Information / Indigenous and Local Knowledge

Topics

How is health information published and what characteristics (e.g., format) factor in its use in policy and decision making? In addition, how does local knowledge, traditional knowledge, and other experience factor into policy and decision making?

Guest: Dr. Janice Graham, FRSC, FCAHS, University Research Professor, Department of Pediatrics & Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University

Readings

Herder, M., Graham, J. E., & Gold, R. (2020). From discovery to delivery: Public sector development of the rVSV-ZEBOV Ebola vaccine. *Journal of Law and the Biosciences*, 15(2), 1-19.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jlb/lz019>

Kutz, S., & Tomaselli, M. (2019). “Two-eyed seeing” supports wildlife health. *Science*, 364(6446), 1135–1137. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aau6170>

Malmer, P., Vanessa, M., Austin, B., & Tengö, M. (2020). Mobilisation of indigenous and local knowledge as a source of useable evidence for conservation partnerships. In W. J. Sutherland, P. N. M. Brotherton, Z. G. Davies, N. Ockendon, N. Pettorelli, & J. A. Vickery (Eds.), *Conservation Research, Policy and Practice* (pp. 82–113). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108638210.006>

Plamondon, K., Battersby, L., Black, A. T., Creighton, G., Hoens, A. M., & Young, W. (2020). Connecting knowledge and action in complex health systems: Examples from British Columbia, Canada. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, [13 p.]. <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426420X15883549951570>

Wilson P. & Sheldon, T. (2019). Using evidence in health and healthcare. In A. Boaz, H. Davies, A. Fraser, & S. Nutley (Eds.). *What works now? Evidence-informed policy and practice* (pp. 67-87). Bristol: The Policy Press.

Week 5—3 February 2021—The Science-Policy Interface

Topics

As an example of research-policy interfaces, what characterizes the science-policy interface?

Guest: Shelley Denny, Director of Aquatic Research and Stewardship, Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources, and IDPhD student, Dalhousie University

Readings

Girling, K., & Gibbs, K. (2019). *Evidence in action: An analysis of information gathering and use by Canadian parliamentarians* (47 p.). Ottawa: Evidence for Democracy; Canadian Climate Forum. https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/sites/default/files/reports/evidence-in-action-report-final_0.pdf

Kukkonen, A., & Ylä-Anttila, T. (2020). The science–policy interface as a discourse network: Finland’s climate change policy 2002–2015. *Politics and Governance*, 8(2), 200–214. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v8i2.2603>

MacDonald, B. H., Soomai, S. S., De Santo, E. M., & Wells, P. G. (2016). Understanding the science-policy interface in integrated coastal and ocean management. In B. H. MacDonald, S. S. Soomai, E. M. De Santo, & P. G. Wells (Eds.). *Science, information, and policy interface for*

effective coastal and ocean management (pp. 19-43). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Rijken, B., Buitelaar, E., & van Duinen, L. (2020). Exploring the feasibility of future housing development within existing cities: Science-for-policy in the face of complexity and politicisation. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 239980831989968. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399808319899689>

van den Hove, S. (2007). A rationale for science-policy interfaces. *Futures*, 38, 807-826. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2006.12.004

Week 6—10 February 2021—What is Evidence?

Topics

What constitutes evidence? How is evidence defined by creators and users? What are the pathways of research-based information in policy and decision-making contexts?

Guest: Dr. Suzuette Soomai, DFO and Associate Faculty Member, School of Information Management, Dalhousie University

Readings

Ausden, M., & Walsh, J. C. (2020). The use of evidence in decision-making by practitioners. In W. J. Sutherland, P. N. M. Brotherton, Z. G. Davies, N. Ockendon, N. Pettorelli, & J. A. Vickery (Eds.), *Conservation Research, Policy and Practice* (pp. 145–161). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108638210.009>

Farley-Ripple, E. N., Oliver, K., & Boaz, A. (2020). Mapping the community: Use of research evidence in policy and practice. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7(1), 83. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00571-2>

Geddes, M. (2020). The webs of belief around “evidence” in legislatures: The case of select committees in the UK House of Commons. *Public Administration*, [14]. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12687>

Howlett, M., & Craft, J. (2013). Policy advisory systems and evidence-based policy: The location and content of evidentiary policy advice. In S. P. Young (Ed.), *Evidence-based policy-making in Canada* (pp. 27-44). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Soomai, S. S. (2017). The science-policy interface in fisheries management: Insights about the influence of organizational structure and culture on information pathways. *Marine Policy*, 81, 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.03.016>

Winter Term Break - 15-19 February 2021

Week 7—24 February 2021—Communication of Research Information: Enablers and Barriers

Topics

What factors enable or prevent the communication of research-based information in public policy contexts?

Guest: Dr. Alana Westwood, Assistant Professor, School for Resource and Environmental Studies

Readings

View the lecture (“Strong science and the creation of the Impact Assessment Act”) by Dr. Alana Westwood, who will join the class for a Question and Answer session about the lecture. A YouTube link to the lecture will be posted prior to this class.

Listen to the interview or read the transcript: CleanLaw 53: Joe Goffman speaks with Katharine Hayhoe about climate change attribution and communicating the reality of climate change to the public, December 15, 2020.

Podcast available at: <https://eelp.law.harvard.edu/2020/12/cleanlaw-katharine-hayhoe-and-joe-goffman-talk-climate-science-communication-and-hope/>

Transcript available at: <http://eelp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/CleanLaw-53.pdf>

Fischhoff, B. (2019, September). Tough calls. How we make decisions in the face of incomplete knowledge and uncertainty. *Scientific American*, 321(3), 74–79. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/when-assessing-novel-risks-facts-are-not-enough/>

Hajdu, M., & Simoneau, C. (2020). Communicating science in a policy context to a broader audience. In V. Sucha & M. Sienkiewica (Eds.). *Science for policy handbook* (Chapter 15, pp. 167-179). Amsterdam: Elsevier. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-822596-7.00015-2>

Lidskog, R., Berg, M., Gustafsson, K. M., & Löfmarck, E. (2020). Cold science meets hot weather: Environmental threats, emotional messages and scientific storytelling. *Media and Communication*, 8(1), 118–128. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v8i1.2432>

Moon, T., Scambos, T., Abdalati, W., Ahlstrøm, A. P., Bindschadler, R., Gambill, J., Heimbach, P., Hock, R., Langley, K., Miller, I., & Truffer, M. (2020). Ending a sea of confusion: Insights and opportunities in sea-level change communication. *Environment: Science and Policy for*

Sustainable Development, 62(5), 4–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00139157.2020.1791627>

Week 8—3 March 2021—Role of Public Consultations / Advisory Processes

Topics

What is the role of public consultations and other advisory processes in policy and decision making? How does research-based information factor in these activities?

Guest: Dr. Jeff Hutchings, Killam Memorial Chair, Department of Biology, Dalhousie University

Readings

Fraussen, B., Albareda, A., & Braun, C. (2020). Conceptualizing consultation approaches: Identifying combinations of consultation tools and analyzing their implications for stakeholder diversity. *Policy Sciences*, 53(3), 473–493. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-020-09382-3>

Health Canada. (2000). *Health Canada policy toolkit for public involvement in decision making*. Ottawa: Health Policy and Communications Branch. Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/ahc-asc/alt_formats/pacrb-dgapcr/pdf/public-consult/2000decision-eng.pdf

Jollymore, A., McFarlane, K., & Harris, L. M. (2018). Whose input counts? Evaluating the process and outcomes of public consultation through the BC Water Act Modernization. *Critical Policy Studies*, 12(4), 381–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2017.1282377>

O’Grady, C. (2020). Power to the people. *Science*, 370(6516), 518–521. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.370.6516.518>

Rasch, R. (2019). Are public meetings effective platforms for gathering environmental management preferences that most local stakeholders share? *Journal of Environmental Management*, 245, 496-503. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2019.05.060

Week 9—10 March 2021—Role of News Media / Social Media

Topics

What is the role of the news media and contemporary social media in promoting awareness and use of research-based information? What happens when the information is “fake”?

Guest: Daniel Cressey, Deputy Editor, *Research Fortnight*, and formerly, senior science journalist, *Nature*, London

Readings

Chen, S. (2020). Debating resource-driven development: A comparative analysis of media coverage on the Pacific Northwest LNG project in British Columbia. *Frontiers in Communication*, 5, 66. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2020.00066>

Jarreau, P. B., Cancellare, I. A., Carmichael, B. J., Porter, L., Toker, D., & Yammine, S. Z. (2019). Using selfies to challenge public stereotypes of scientists. *PLOS ONE*, 14(5), e0216625. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216625>

Lester, L., & Foxwell-Norton, K. (2020). Citizens and science: Media, communication and conservation. In W. J. Sutherland, P. N. M. Brotherton, Z. G. Davies, N. Ockendon, N. Pettorelli, & J. A. Vickery (Eds.), *Conservation Research, Policy and Practice* (pp. 265–276). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108638210.016>

Mueller-Herbst, J. M., Xenos, M. A., Scheufele, D. A., & Brossard, D. (2020). Saw it on Facebook: The role of social media in facilitating science issue awareness. *Social Media + Society*, 6(2), 205630512093041. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120930412>

Walter, N., Brooks, J. J., Saucier, C. J., & Suresh, S. (2020). Evaluating the impact of attempts to correct health misinformation on social media: A meta-analysis. *Health Communication*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1794553>

Week 10—17 March 2021—Measuring the Use and Influence of Research-Based Information

Topics

What models describe the research-policy relationship? How can we assess research use in policy and decision making contexts?

Readings

Heink, U., Marquard, E., Heubach, K., Jax, K., Kugel, C., Nesshöver, C., ... Vandewall, M. (2015). Conceptualizing credibility, relevance, and legitimacy for evaluating the effectiveness of science-policy interfaces: Challenges and opportunities. *Science and Public Policy*, 42, 676–689. doi:10.1093/scipol/scu082

Lehtonen, M. (2017). Operationalizing information: Measures and indicators in policy formulation. In M. Howlett & I. Mukherjee (Eds.), *Handbook of policy formulation* (pp. 161–179). Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Neicu, D., Cauchi, J., Otto, J., Lehto, S., & Costa Dantas Faria, J. (2020). Monitoring the impact of science and evidence on policy. In V. Sucha & M. Sienkiewica (Eds.). *Science for policy handbook* (Chapter 14, pp. 153-164, 254). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-822596-7.00014-0>

Nutley, S., Davies, H., & Hughes, J. (2019). Assessing and labelling evidence. In A. Boaz, H. Davies, A. Fraser, & S. Nutley (Eds.). *What works now? Evidence-informed policy and practice* (pp. 225-249). Bristol: The Policy Press.

Soomai, S. S., Wells, P. G., MacDonald, B. H., De Santo, E. M., & Gruzd, A. (2016). Measuring awareness, use, and influence of information: Where theory meets practice. In B. H. MacDonald, S. S. Soomai, E. M. De Santo, & P. G. Wells (Eds.), *Science, information, and policy interface for effective coastal and ocean management* (pp. 253–279). CRC Press, Division of Taylor & Francis.

Week 11—24 March 2021—Improving Use of Research-Based Information in Policy Contexts

Topics

Based on the earlier themes of the course, what actions could be taken to improve the use of research-based information in policy contexts? What recommendations can be made for best practices regarding increased awareness and use of research-based information?

Guest: Catherine Blewett, Chief Strategic Engagement Officer, Ocean Frontier Institute, formerly, Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council (Ottawa), and Deputy Minister of the Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Readings

Listen to the interview of Rachel Bailey, Mayor of Lunenburg (retired, November 2020), conducted by Dr. Suzette Soomai, 20 March 2020.

Dicks, L. V., Livoreil, B., Smith, R. K., Wittmer, H., & Young, J. (2020). Aligning evidence for use in decisions: Mechanisms to link collated evidence to the needs of policy-makers and practitioners. In W. J. Sutherland, P. N. M. Brotherton, Z. G. Davies, N. Ockendon, N. Pettorelli, & J. A. Vickery (Eds.), *Conservation Research, Policy and Practice* (pp. 129–142). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108638210.008>

Farley-Ripple, E. N., Oliver, K., & Boaz, A. (2020). Mapping the community: Use of research evidence in policy and practice. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7(1), 83.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00571-2>

MacKillop, E., Quarmby, S., & Downe, J. (2020). Does knowledge brokering facilitate evidence-based policy? A review of existing knowledge and an agenda for future research. *Policy & Politics*, 48(2), 335–353. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557319X15740848311069>

Mols, F., Bell, J., & Head, B. (2020). Bridging the research-policy gap: The importance of effective identity leadership and shared commitment. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, 16(1), 145–163. <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426418X15378681300533>

Week 12—31 March 2021—Course Wrap-Up: What Have We Learned?

Topics

What has this course taught us about the role of information and evidence in public policy and decision making?

Readings

Aronson, J. K., Barends, E., Boruch, R., Brennan, M., Chalmers, I., Chislett, J., Cunliffe-Jones, P., Dahlgren, A., Gaarder, M., Haines, A., Heneghan, C., Matthews, R., Maynard, B., Oxman, A. D., Oxman, M., Pullin, A., Randall, N., Roddam, H., Schoonees, A., ... Vale, L. (2019). Key concepts for making informed choices. *Nature*, 572(7769), 303-306. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-02407-9>

Starritt, A. (2019, May 31). When “what works” doesn’t work: The limits of evidence-based policymaking. *Government Innovators Network*. <https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/blog/when-what-works-doesnt-work-limits-evidence-based-policymaking>