

# Social Equity and Public Policy Analysis

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# Genesis

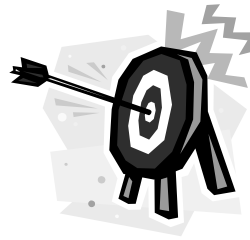


- ♦ Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, VCU
  - Relatively new
  - Graduate programs (Master's level):
    - CJ, MPA, MURP, *SOC*, *HSEP*
  - GVPA prefix: Support for developing interdisciplinary courses

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## GOAL

- ◆ Offer an interdisciplinary, graduate course in social equity
- ◆ Achieve buy-in from all programs
- ◆ Broad instructorship: co-teaching? rotate instructors?



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## Embarking on the Journey

- ◆ Sent e-mail notice to all faculty
- ◆ Wait for reaction. . .
- ◆ Several positive responses!
- ◆ Core workgroup of 8, met every 2-3 weeks
- ◆ Eager, but somewhat territorial

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## Social Equity Defined

- ◆ “Fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, and the fair and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity”

NAPA Standing Panel on Social Equity

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## Tough Decisions



- ◆ What about social equity?
- ◆ Theoretical or applied?
- ◆ Target students?
- ◆ Dimensions of social equity?
- ◆ What to cover?  
Breadth vs. depth?

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## Noticeably Absent

- ◆ Should we have a course on Social Equity?
- ◆ Is equity a real “E”?
- ◆ Should it be a required or an elective course?
- ◆ Will our students be interested in this course?

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## Lots of Discussion of Key Questions

- ◆ At times, wheel spinning within workgroup
- ◆ Discussion was invaluable
- ◆ Richer course than planning course alone



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## Answers to our Questions

- ◆ **What about social equity?**  
Relationship to public policy analysis (reference to NAPA)
- ◆ **Theoretical or applied?**  
Mostly applied
- ◆ **Target students?**  
Master's students especially working professionals
- ◆ **Dimensions of social equity?**  
Race/ethnicity, class, gender (primary);  
sexual orientation, disability, religion (secondary)
- ◆ **What to cover? Breadth vs. depth?**  
Survey course (concept; methods/tools; sample policy areas)

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## Smooth Sailing

- ◆ Topical assignments to workgroup faculty
- ◆ Agreement on 80/20 principle
- ◆ Single instructor w/guest lecturers
- ◆ Course approval process (School, College and University levels)
- ◆ About 6 months
- ◆ Inaugural offering—Spring 2007

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## Overview of Approved Course

- ◆ Conceptual/importance (social justice)
- ◆ Methods/tools (paired testing; GIS; residual difference analysis)
- ◆ Policy examples (education, housing, transportation, welfare, employment, crime, voting)

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## Assessment: Positives

- ◆ Direct focus on equity as a core policy outcome
- ◆ Considered equity factors across a variety of tools, dimensions and context
- ◆ Identified equity conflicts and tradeoffs
- ◆ Generated new scholarship interest the area of equity



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## Assessments: Negatives

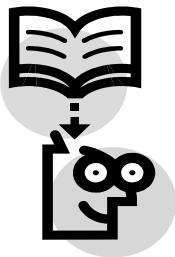
- ◆ Two course sequence needed (foundations and advanced)
- ◆ Equity performance measures and benchmarks needed
- ◆ “Preaching to the choir”



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## Lessons Learned

- ◆ Deliberations solidified buy-in of course
- ◆ Group product stronger than individual effort
- ◆ Strong student interest
- ◆ Time consuming, but worth it!



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## Teaching Resources

- ◆ National Academy of Public Administration  
[http://www.napawash.org/aa\\_social\\_equity/index.html](http://www.napawash.org/aa_social_equity/index.html)
- ◆ The Electronic Hallway  
<https://hallway.org/index.php?PHPSESSID=6b9st09uuvgv06gid3qq92kkp4>