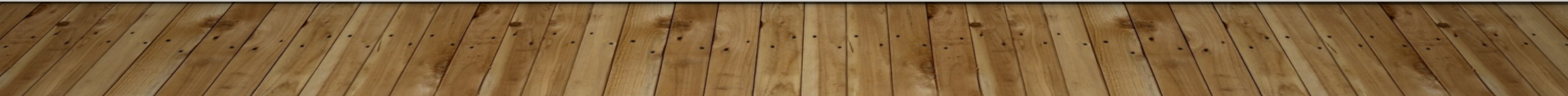# WRITING POLICY FOR SCIENCE

BRANDON RAY

OCTOBER 26, 2016

OVERVIEW

- Policy and Policy Process

- Policy Relevance and Other Relevant Terms

- Case Studies

- Guidelines for Writing Policy Papers

- Sample Policy Paper Design

- Assignment Overview

WHAT IS PUBLIC POLICY?

- "Whatever governments choose to do or not to do." (Dye, 1992)

- "Public policy is the sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the life of citizens." (Peters, 1999)

- "Public policy is the outcome of the struggle in government over who gets what." (Cochran et al., 1999)

- "Public policy consists of political decisions for implementing programs to achieve societal goals." (Cochran and Malone, 1995)

PUBLIC POLICY

- Made in response to some sort of problem that requires attention

- Made on the "public's" behalf

- Oriented toward a goal or desired state, such as the solution of a problem

- Ultimately made by governments, even if the ideas come from outside government or through the interaction of government and non-governmental actors

- Interpreted and implemented by public and private actors who have different interpretations of problems, solutions, and their own motivations

- What the government choose to do or *not* to do

Birkland, 2011

POLICY PROCESS

DEFINITIONS AND HIERARCHY

- **Policy significance** – research that has implications for the policy world
  - Challenges: Inaccessible to most policymakers, lengthy

- **Policy accessibility** – readability of research for the policy world
  - Challenges: Differentiated by level of audience or type of audience

- **Policy actionability** – research that contains implementable recommendations
  - Challenges: Concrete actions, realism

- **Public debate** – writing in the public sphere to influence decisions
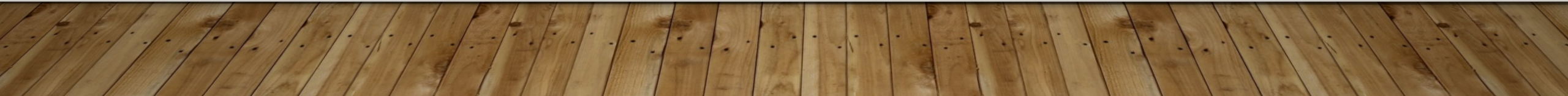 - Challenges: Not always actionable, activism

POLICY PAPER – WHY?

- Policymakers do not have the time required to be well-versed on the issue. The same go for their aides and staffs.

- Not everyone is science-literate. You are the expert on your research

- Knowledge is distilled as it filters up the decision chain

- Policymakers must base decisions on facts, not unsupported opinions

- Brings issues to attention (agenda setting) and shapes debate around issue

CASE STUDIES

ONE-PAGER STRUCTURE

1) **Executive Summary/BLUF** – States policy recommendation at beginning

2) **Introduction** – overview of issue/problem and your argument

3) **Background** – provides history of the issue

4) **Analysis** – why will policy recommendation solve problem, evidence-based

5) **Courses of Action** – provide alternative recommendations

6) **Conclusion** – Summarize argument and provide "ask"

FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

- **PEST Analysis**

- **P**olitical

- **E**conomic

- **S**ocial

- **T**echnological

	Political Feasibility	Administrative Feasibility	Equity	Environmental Impact	Economic Impact/Cost Effectiveness
Do Nothing/Status Quo	-	+	-	-	+/-
Tax Pesticides	+/-	+	+/-	+	+
Increase Number of Pesticides Banned	+/-	-	-	+	-
Discourage Pesticides through Tax Breaks to Ecologically Appropriate Crops	-	-	+/-	+	+/-
Limit the Number of Pesticides Used on Certain Crops	-	+/-	-	+/-	+/-
Criteria	Political Feasibility	Administrative Feasibility	Equity	Environmental Impact	Economic Impact/Cost Effectiveness

DON'T FORGET THE PEOPLE...

	The Public	Traditional Farmers	Chemical Production Companies	Farm Labor	The Environment	Organic Farmers
Do Nothing/Status Quo	-	+	+	-	-	-
Tax Pesticides	+	-	-	+	+	+
Increase Number of Pesticides Banned	+	-	-	+	-	+
Discourage Pesticides through Tax Breaks to Ecologically Appropriate Crops	+	+/-	-	+	+	+
Limit the Number of Pesticides Used on Certain Crops	+	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-
Interest Groups	The Public	Traditional Farmers	Chemical Production Companies	Farm Labor	The Environment	Organic Farmers

https://www-cdn.law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/White-Papers-Guidelines.pdf

WRITING TECHNIQUES

- Know your audience
- Use bullets instead of long paragraphs
- Cover all aspects
- Don't include too many details
- Clear, concise statements
- Use a simple vocabulary or explain any non-standard terms you need to use
- Provide impacts
- Acknowledge other courses of action (COA) and challenges to your argument
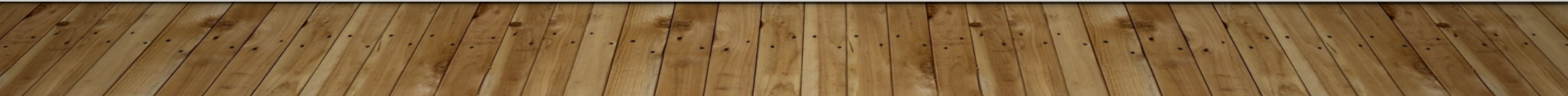- Avoid clichés and bureaucratic jargon

DESIGN TECHNIQUES

- Visually pleasing (include graphics that are easy to interpret)

- Place most important evidence in boxes or sidebars

- Use underline, italics, bold, and headings for highlighting points

- Effective use of white space

- Cite any figures you use, if you did not create them

- Maintain consistent formatting throughout the paper
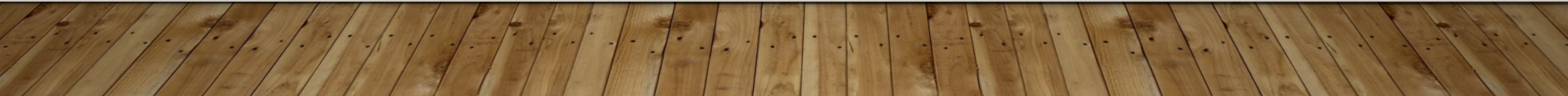
DEVELOP SAMPLE POLICY PAPER

HOMEWORK OVERVIEW

RESOURCES

○ Harvard University (2009). "The Policy Analysis Exercise: The Writing Guide." Available at: http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/PAE-WRITING-GUIDE-2009.pdf. Accessed on October 6, 2016.

○ International Society for Technology in Education (n.d.). "How to Create a One-Pager for Policymakers: Tips and Template." Available at: http://www.iste.org/docs/pdfs/iste-advocacy-toolkit---how-to-create-a-one-pager.pdf. Accessed on September 21, 2016.

○ Scotten, Ali G. (2011). "Writing Effective Policy Papers: Translating Academic Knowledge into Policy Solutions." Available at: https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/Effective Policy Paper Writing.pdf. Accessed on October 26, 2016.

○ Stanford Law School (2013). "Tips for Writing Policy Papers." Available at: https://www-cdn.law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/White-Papers-Guidelines.pdf. Accessed on September 21, 2016.

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- Cochran, Clarke E., Lawrence Mayer, T. R. Carr, and N. Joseph Cayer. *American Public Policy: An Introduction.* 6th ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

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