Policy Analysis Outline
(Popple & Leighninger)

I. **Delineation and Overview of the Policy under Analysis**
   A. What is the policy to be analyzed?
   B. What is the nature of the problem being targeted by the policy?
      1. How is the problem defined?
      2. For whom is it a problem?
   C. What is the context of the policy being analyzed (i.e., how does this specific policy fit with other policies seeking to manage a social problem)?
   D. Choice analysis (i.e., what is the design of programs created by a policy and what are the alternatives to this design)?
      1. What are the bases of social allocation?
      2. What are the types of social provisions?
      3. What are the strategies for delivery of benefits?
      4. What are the methods of financing these provisions?

II. **Historical Analysis**
   A. What policies and programs were developed earlier to deal with the problem? In other words, how has this problem been dealt with in the past?
   B. How has the specific policy/program under analysis developed over time?
      1. What people, or groups of people, initiated and/or promoted the policy?
      2. What people, or groups of people, opposed the policy?
   C. What does history tell us about effective/ineffective approaches to the problem being addressed?
   D. To what extent does the current policy/program incorporate the lessons of history?
   E. Are we repeating mistakes from the past and, if so, why?

III. **Social Analysis**
   A. Problem Description
      1. How complete is our knowledge of the problem?
      2. Are our efforts to deal with the problem in accord with research findings?
      3. What population is affected by the problem?
         a. Size
         b. Defining characteristics
         c. Distribution
   B. What theory or theories of human behavior are explicit or, more likely, implicit in the policy?
   C. What are major social values related to the problem and what value conflicts exist?
   D. What are the goals of the policy under analysis?
      1. Manifest (stated) goals
      2. Latent (unstated) goals
      3. Degree of consensus regarding the goals
   E. What are the hypotheses implicit or explicit in the statement of the problem and goals?

IV. **Economic Analysis**

    A. What are the effects and/or potential effects of the policy on the functioning of the economy as a whole – output, income, inflation, unemployment, etc.? (macroeconomic analysis)

    B. What are the effects and/or potential effects of the policy on the behavior of individuals, companies and markets – motivation to work, cost of rent, supply of commodities, etc.? (microeconomic analysis)

    C. Opportunity cost; cost/benefit analysis

V.   Political Analysis

    A. Who are the major stakeholders regarding this particular policy/program?
1. What is the power base of the policy/program's supporters?
2. What is the power base of the policy/program's opponents?
3. How well are the policy/program's intended beneficiaries represented in the ongoing development and implementation of the policy/program?

    B. How has the policy/program been legitimized? Is this basis for legitimation still current?

    C. To what extent is the policy/program an example of rational decision making, incremental change, or of change brought about by conflict?

    D. What are the political aspects of the implementation of the policy/program?

VI.   Policy/Program Evaluation

    A. What are the outcomes of the policy/program in relation to the stated goals?

    B. What are the unintended consequences of the policy/program?

    C. Is the policy/program cost effective?

VII.   Current Proposals for Policy Reform

Popple, P. & Leighninger, L. (2001). *The policy-based profession: An introduction to social Welfare policy analysis for social workers* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Pearson.