

# P-CUBE: Playing public policy and decision making

**Instructor:** Simone Busetti

**Methodology:** Online lectures, game sessions, collective discussion.

**Duration:** 15 hours (see below for the calendar)

**Link:** [meet.google.com/ays-fpuf-qbx](https://meet.google.com/ays-fpuf-qbx)

**Assignment:** Learning diary (see below).

## SHORT DESCRIPTION

Pollution, economic decline, social exclusion, unemployment, poverty... For some of these problems, solutions are hard to find. But let's say a solution exists; do you think it will be readily approved and implemented? Sadly, it won't.

Changing policy is far from easy. Even when technical solutions are available, the road to the public agenda is full of twists and turns. Many actors oppose innovations, while others stay neutral. Sometimes you do not have funding; other times, you lack knowledge or consensus.

This short course will answer two fundamental questions:

1. How can you overcome the obstacles of decision-making?
2. Which strategies can help you bring about radical innovations?

The course is based on the P-CUBE game, a digital educational game funded by the Erasmus+ program. Each day we will play a game session and discuss the game's results together. In each game mission, you will face a decision-making problem: building new infrastructures, providing new public services, changing the law, supporting a minority group, etc. More info on the P-CUBE game is available here <https://www.p-cube-project.eu/>

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

You will put yourself in the shoes of a policy innovator and try to steer a proposal through the complexities of public policymaking. On this journey, you will meet a large number of actors. Some will fight against the innovation, others will support it, and still, others will not be interested.

You will be confronted with a series of choices between different decision-making strategies. In most cases, the end of your journey will be successful: you will be able to bring about change!

During your journey, you will not be alone:

1. you will discover core lessons drawn from the scientific literature on policy decisions
2. in solving the puzzles of decision-making, you will work in groups and compete with other teams to reach the best solution
3. your teacher will assist you in understanding why some choices are good, and some are bad, and how, when and where they will work

## WHAT ARE THE COURSE OBJECTIVES?

- Providing analytical tools for understanding reality. The course does not propose ready-made recipes or one-size-fits-all solutions. It provides theoretical concepts that can be applied to the diversity of real-life policymaking.
- Providing a first-hand experience. The course will give a realistic description of how public policies and innovative services come about. Fifteen cases of urban innovations will guide participants through the conceptual elements and the many challenges of decision-making.
- Learning how decisions in the public sphere are taken and which decisional strategies policy entrepreneurs can employ

## WHAT MATERIALS DO YOU NEED?

- The P-CUBE GAME is a free web-based educational game. You just need a PC, internet connection and go to <https://pcube.next.gamelab-dev.tbm.tudelft.nl/>
- Bibliography. For further info about policymaking, policy change and strategy, see: Bruno Dente, Understanding Policy Decisions, Springer, 2014 (the Italian version is Bruno Dente, Le decisioni di policy, Bologna, il Mulino, 2011)
- A literature review on decision-making is freely available at the P-CUBE website: <https://www.p-cube-project.eu/literature-reviews/>

## HOW IS IT STRUCTURED?

The course is structured into 5 online meetings of 3 hours each. P-CUBE includes 30 missions on 4 topics: EU decision-making, Science and public policy, Social policy, and Urban innovation. To see all the missions of the P-CUBE game, visit: <https://www.p-cube-project.eu/policy-game/>

Lesson 1. Introduction to the course – 4 May, 16:30-19:30

- Basic theoretical assumptions, conceptual framework, and presentation of the P-CUBE game
- First game session

Lesson 2. Playing the game – 5 May, 16:30-19:30

- 2-3 game sessions and discussion

Lesson 3. Playing the game – 11 May, 14:30-17:30

- 2-3 game sessions and discussion

Lesson 4. Playing the game – 18 May, 16:30-19:30

- 2-3 game sessions and discussion

Lesson 5. Playing the game – 25 May, 16:30-19:30

- 2-3 game sessions and discussion
- Final debriefing

## Assignment

For each session, students will be requested to answer a brief survey and elaborate a diary discussing what they have learnt. Students will email the diary to [sbusetti@unite.it](mailto:sbusetti@unite.it) by the 4<sup>th</sup> of June. A common template for elaborating the diary will be distributed during the first lesson.