Part One: Problem Assessment (Due Week 6) Identify a public policy issue or an action-forcing incident that represents an inadequacy in current government policy. · What is the problem? Identify the underlying problem, providing a context for the current situation. (For example, lack of affordable housing for the working poor is the underlying problem that results in the growing number of people ending up in shelters). · What does it look like? Provide measures of the problem that demonstrate its size, scope and impact on affected parties. Include data or statistics, preferably in the form of a table or other graphic figure. Use the most recent data available, gleaned from a reliable source. (For example, how many people are homeless in New York City? The Coalition for the Homeless tracks the number of people residing in New York City shelters each night. Use a table from the Coalition’s website, or create one of your own to depict the size and scope of the problem.) · Is there an existing policy? Problems generally occur due to policy failure—an inadequate law or policy that fails to address a pressing issue. Problems also arise in the absence of an effective policy. Identify the existing policy/law associated with the issue--give its exact title, as specified in the enacting legislation (for example, New York City has a right to shelter mandate that was the result of litigation—Callahan v. Carey). Be sure to include the policy's jurisdiction (Callahan v. Carey applies throughout New York State), which should determine the context for the data above as well as your discussion of the issue. In other words, if your issue is local, you should be discussing it in the context of local government, providing local data, and so on. If your policy is national, however, you might discuss it at that level or at the nexus of local, regional and national government, depending on how it is implemented. · How did the current problem arise? Explain how the government (in the jurisdiction specified above) became involved in this policy and how the issue arrived at its current state. Provide a timeline of the problem in narrative form, focusing only on details relevant to the current issue (a graphic may also be included, but it is limited in size to one-half of a single page). If the agency is thirty years old but the problem only arose two years ago, the timeline narrative should focus on developments during that two year span. If the problem began thirty years ago and the failing policy was developed two years ago to address the issue, go back as far as necessary to give the reader a clear understanding of how the jurisdiction arrived at the present circumstances. In either case, focus only on major developments relevant to the current situation. Do not talk about developments outside of the jurisdiction in which the policy was made unless those outside developments directly influenced the policy under discussion. · Who has felt the impact of the problem? Has the problem resulted in a disparate impact on any particular group? Identify groups affected and the nature of the civil rights or civil liberties violations, if any, alleged. This section of your paper may include excerpts from the original legislation, but that should not exceed a half of one page.

Part Two: Stakeholder Assessment This section of the paper asks you to engage with the parties responsible for addressing the problem. It involves stakeholders, or entities (e.g., agencies, advocacy groups, employee unions, elected officials) that (a) are in a position to participate in policy decisions; (b) stand to gain or lose something, depending on the outcome of a policy decision (e.g., the clients of a specific agency or the public in general); or (c) can heavily influence the outcome of a policy decision (advocacy groups, community-based organizations, or faith-based groups). Your stakeholder group should include all the relevant parties involved in your problem, not just the ones empowered to address it. That is, if you identified your problem as allegations of police abuse of authority, your stakeholder group must include the police department under investigation. Identify the relevant parties involved in the issue. Provide the names (and titles) of stakeholders who represent the interests of organizations heavily invested in the current policy debate (such as a member of the New York City Council who has been vocal on the issue of homelessness, the commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services, real estate developers who get tax breaks for building affordable housing). Include one stakeholder that represents affected parties that may otherwise not have a voice in the debate (for example, the Coalition for the Homeless, or another community-based organization serving the homeless). For each stakeholder (there should be a minimum of three), provide the following information: · Describe/define the issue from the stakeholder’s perspective. An advocacy group for the homeless sees the issue differently than an elected official or a lobbying group for the real estate industry. · Does the stakeholder see the issue as a priority? Is this a pressing issue? Not every stakeholder may see the problem as a high priority (if none of them do, you have selected a poor topic). · Does the stakeholder have close ties to a particular interest group or a constituent group? Identify at least one interest group or constituency that heavily influences the stakeholder's stance on the issue. · Is the issue under discussion potentially a political liability to an elected official? Is it a potential political windfall? (That is, could it cost the official the possibility of re-election or could it boost her in the eyes of potential voters?) · What does the stakeholder want to see happen? (Answer this question in terms of short-term and long-term outcomes.) · Is the stakeholder's involvement essential to developing a workable solution to the problem? Can a solution to the problem be arrived at without some sort of buy-in from the stakeholder?

Part Three: Discussion Describe the debate. What are the relevant parties (stakeholders, the public, the media, etc.) saying about the problem? What issues have dominated in the discussion of the issue? Identify the most prominent options that have been proposed for addressing the problem. Narrow down your discussion to two of the proposals that are being considered by relevant stakeholder groups in the media and describe them in more detail. If either proposal departs significantly from the status quo, discuss how it differs from the existing policy. · Which option is preferable to the majority of stakeholders? · Does that proposal hold government accountable for resolving the problem? · Does that proposal address the disparate impact of the problem on certain groups? · Can the proposed option be implemented? (Take into consideration cost, the likelihood of political opposition, and whether or not the proposed option would be effective at minimizing, if not eliminating the problem). In your discussion: · Identify the challenges for decision makers attempting to address a policy shortcoming and improve outcomes. Your discussion should take into consideration the tension between politics, public pressure for change, fiscal realities, the rights of affected parties, as well as other factors you may identify. · Which solution is likely to prevail? This question is not about arguing in favor of Option A or Option B, but rather a consideration of how things are expected to play out, given the complexity of the situation, the stakeholders jockeying for influence over the outcome, and all of the other factors previously mentioned.