

Claudio Balderacchi

balderac@ufl.edu

Office Hours: M 2:30-4:00 p.m. (and by appointment), AND 305.

Class meetings: MWF Period 6 (12:50-1:40 pm), NRN 0331

## **PUP 3002**

### **Current Controversies in Public Policy**

### **Fall 2013**

#### **Course Description**

This course examines some of the most debated questions in American public policy. In this course, we will examine existing problems, potential solutions, and the reasons behind each policy. After considering the demographic changes characterizing American society and the role of different social actors in the determination of public policies, we will examine specific problems and policies in a number of areas, including environmental, economic, immigration, healthcare, and foreign policy questions. The objective of the course is to familiarize students with some of the most significant policy questions in the United States and favor the development of critical thinking in the analysis of public policies.

#### **Readings**

- One book is required:
  - *Issues For Debate in American Public Policy*, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition. SAGE and CQ Press.

- The other readings include book chapters and journal articles. These readings can be accessed through e-reserves or through the online journals available at the UF library's website.

### **Grade Components**

- Participation (5%): You are required to complete the readings before class. Your participation grade will be based on your participation in class discussions and in two *class debates* scheduled during the semester (see below). Attendance will be taken regularly and will heavily influence your participation grade.
- Two Exams (30% each): the exam will include short answer and/or essay questions based on the course readings *and* the topics examined in class.
- Group Presentations (5%): at the beginning of the semester, small groups of students will be created. Each group will be responsible for gathering material on a specific policy of choice not covered during the course. Students will present their findings in class in the last part of the semester. Further instructions will be provided in class.
- Research Paper (30%): you are required to write a research paper of approximately 5-6 pages (1" margins, Times New Roman, size 12 font, double spaced). The research paper should be related to the course. Late papers will not be accepted. Additional instructions will be provided in class. The research paper is due in class on **December, 4**.

### **Policy on Make-up Exams**

Make-up *exams* will be administered only in the presence of university approved excuses or for medical reasons. In the first case, you will need to present written documentation before the

exam date and to contact me at least one week before the exam date. Make-up *exams* will be administered for medical reasons only in the presence of a proper doctor's note.

### **Grading Scale**

A: 100-92; A-: 91-90; B+: 89-87; B: 86-83; B-: 82-80; C+: 79-77; C: 76-73; C-: 72-70; D+: 70-68; D: 67-63; D-: 62-60; E: <60

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be taken regularly and will heavily influence your participation grade. Should you miss more than four classes without a University approved excuse, 0.5 points will be subtracted from your participation grade for each additional missed class.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are required to comply with the university's Student Honor Code

(<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>). When you commit plagiarism you violate the Student Honor Code. It is important that you fully understand what plagiarism is in order to avoid it. For a better understanding of what plagiarism is, please visit:

<http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/subjects/Physics/StudentPlagiarism.html>

## **Course Outline:**

### **Week 1: A Changing America?**

#### ***August 21:***

- Introduction

#### ***August 23:***

- *Issues For Debate in American Public Policy (IFD)*, Ch.1

## **Week 2: What Actors Influence Public Policies?**

### ***August 26:***

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2001. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Chapter 6.

### ***August 28:***

- Burstein Paul, and April Linton. 2002. "The Impact of Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Social Movement Organizations on Public Policy: Some Recent Evidence and Theoretical Concerns." *Social Forces* 81(2): 380-408.

### ***August 30:***

- Grossmann, Matt. 2012. "Interest Group Influence on US Policy Change: an Assessment Based on Policy History." *Interest Groups and Advocacy* 1: 171-192.

## **Week 3: Environmental Policy**

### ***September 2:***

- Holiday

### ***September 4:***

- IFD Ch. 4

### ***September 6:***

- IFD Ch. 5

## **Week 4: Healthcare Policy**

### ***September 9:***

- IFD, Ch. 13

### ***September 11:***

- Uwe E. Reinhardt. 2012. "Health Care: Solidarity vs. Rugged Individualism." *The New York Times*, June 29, 2012 <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/29/health-care-solidarity-vs-rugged-individualism/>

### ***September 13:***

- IFD, Ch. 14

## **Week 5: Gun Control**

***September 16:***

- IFD, Ch. 10

***September 18:***

- Kates, Don B. and Gary Mauser. 2007. "Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?: a Review of International and Some Domestic Evidence." *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* 30(2): 649-694.

***September 20:***

- FILM: *Newtown Divided* (by PBS Frontline)

**Week 6: Debate and Exam**

***September 23:***

- Class debate #1

***September 25:***

- Exam Review

***September 27:***

- Exam# 1

**Week 7: Economic Policies**

***September 30:***

- IFD, Ch. 7

***October 2:***

- IDF, Ch. 8

***October 4:***

- FILM: *The Untouchables* (by PBS Frontline)

**Week 8: Education**

***October 7:***

- IDF, Ch. 9

**October 9:**

- Duderstadt, James J. 2012. "Creating the Future: the Promise of Public Research Universities for America" in *Precipice or Crossroads?: Where America's Great Public Universities Stand and Where They Are Going Midway through Their Second Century*, eds. Daniel Mark Fogel and Elizabeth Malson–Huddle. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

**October 11:**

- Butler, Stuart M. 2012. "The Coming Higher-Ed Revolution." *National Affairs* 10 (Winter): 22-40.

**Week 9: Immigration**

**October 14:**

- IDF, Ch. 11

**October 16:**

- Marquardt, Marie, Tim Steigenga, Philip Williams, and Manuel Vásquez. 2011. *Living "Illegal": the Human Face of Unauthorized Immigration*. New York and London: the New Press, Ch. 1.

**October 18:**

- Immigration Policy Center. 2013. "A Guide to S. 744: Understanding the 2013 Senate Immigration Bill."  
[http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/guide\\_to\\_s744\\_corker\\_hoeven\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/guide_to_s744_corker_hoeven_final_0.pdf)

**Week 10: Public Debt and Austerity Measures**

**October 21:**

- Thornton, Daniel L. 2012. "The U.S. Deficit/Debt Problem: A Longer-Run Perspective." *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review* 94(6): 441-455.  
<http://research.stlouisfed.org/publications/review/12/11/Thornton.pdf>

**October 23:**

- FILM: Cliffhanger (by PBS Frontline)

***October 25:***

- Krugman, Paul. 2013. "How the Case for Austerity has Crumbled." *The New York Review of Books* June 6, 2013.

**Week 11: Foreign Policy and National Security**

***October 28:***

- IFD, Ch 15

***October 30:***

- IFD, Ch 16

***November 1:***

- Class Debate #2

**Week 12: Exam Week**

***November 4:***

- Exam Review

***November 6:***

- Exam

***November 8:***

- Homecoming

**Week 13: Group Presentations**

***November 11:***

- Holiday

***November 13:***

- Presentation Group 1

***November 15:***

- Presentation Group 2

## **Week 14: Group Presentations**

### ***November 18:***

- Presentation Group 3

### ***November 20:***

- Presentation Group 4

### ***November 22:***

- Presentation Group 5

## **Week 15: Group Presentations**

### ***November 25:***

- Presentation Group 6

### ***November 27:***

- Holiday

### ***November 29:***

- Holiday

## **Week 16: Group Presentations**

### ***December 2:***

- Presentation Group 7

### ***December 4:***

- Presentation Group 8
- **Paper Due**