

PUP 3002; Section 143H – Spring 2016
Current Controversies in Public Policy

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M-W-F: Period 3 (9:35-10:25am); Room: LIT 0113

Office Hours: F 10:45am-12:30pm

Course Description

Public Policy reflects a governmental commitment to a common goal or purpose. Making public policy is a complex task, particularly in the context of American Federalism, where there exist controversies between the states and the federal government over many policy areas. The last years have marked significant developments over controversial policies, from healthcare to gay marriage, while many policies are still hotly debated (gun control, election reform, among others). Despite the controversial nature of many issues in the American political life, the governments at the state and federal levels cannot simply “change” policy, but rather follow a gradual process which often involves political heat, ongoing public support or discontent, as well as media and elite influence.

Course Objectives

This course provides students the framework to understand the formation, adoption, budgeting, implementation and evaluation of public policy. Through this framework, students will be able to critically assess and engage in the complexity of current controversial policy issues, taking into consideration the political and institutional context of government at the state and federal levels. The goal of this course is for students to develop a grounded view of what “public policy” entails, why it is a complex concept, and how the government responds to current controversies in public policy. By the end of this course, students are expected to be able to apply this knowledge to a “current controversy” and thoroughly demonstrate what the federal or state governments choose to do or not to do about it.

Course Materials

Required Text

Clarke E. Cochran; Lawrence C. Mayer; T.R. Carr; N. Joseph Cayer; Mark McKenzie; Laure Peck. 2016. *American Public Policy: An Introduction, 11th Edition*; Custom CengageBrain EBook.

How to access the eBook

Students will access the product by purchasing a printed access card from the bookstore and then following these next steps:

1. Go to <http://cengagebrain.com>
2. Log In or Create a New Account to access your CengageBrain eBook.
3. Enter purchased access code in the Register field, then select Register.

Texts On Reserve

- *Election Administration in the United States: The State of Reform after Bush v. Gore*; EBook.

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary materials (book chapters, scholarly articles and reports, news articles) will be available online and on Canvas.

Grade Weights

Class Participation 15%

Written Assignments 40% (10% each)

Class Debates and Position Paper (15%)

Final Exam (30%)

Course Requirements

i) Attendance/Participation (15%)

The success of this class is heavily dependent on your active engagement and contribution to class discussions. You are expected to attend all class meetings and be prepared for an in-depth discussion of the assigned course material. Note that your physical presence in the classroom (attendance) does not equal active participation.

The lectures are organized around topics and readings following the course schedule. This class is aimed to stimulate discussion among the students under my facilitation. In order for this to be a successful course, it is imperative that you do the assigned readings *before* class, give yourself time to think about them, and prepare yourself to discuss them in class. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in class, make sure to compensate for that by discussing the readings with me during office hours.

ii) Written Assignments (4, 10% each)

During the course of the semester you are required to submit four written assignments (1,250-1,500 words; 600-750 for memo) on Canvas:

- **#1: Assessment of the Policy Process: Which Stage is the Most Time Consuming and Why? Due on Tuesday, January 19, at 5:00pm.**
- **#2: Policy Memo: Present a policy issue priority to Congress; why should it be the priority? Due on Tuesday, February 9, at 5:00pm.**
- **#3: Election Reform Proposal: Which aspect of elections should the federal government reform and why? Due on Tuesday, March 15, at 5:00pm**
- **#4: Federalism and Public Policy Essay: What are the difficulties that federalism poses on the development, adoption, and implementation of public policies? Bring examples from the topics discussed throughout the semester. Due on Tuesday, March 29, at 5:00pm.**

You are expected to utilize readings assigned to a specific topic, as well as take advantage of outside sources if needed. Wikipedia is not a reliable resource, so refrain from using it.

Written Assignments have to be **between 1,250-1,500 words (600-750 words for the memo), double-spaced, 12-point font Calibri, with page numbers** in the bottom, uploaded on Canvas by the designated deadlines. You must include citations if you are using outside sources. Keep in mind that every written submission on Canvas goes through Turnitin for plagiarism. Any plagiarized work will be submitted to the University for Disciplinary Review.

Please be consistent in the format of your essays.

iii) Panel Discussions/Debates (15%; 5% position paper, 10% presentation)

Throughout the semester, the class will have the opportunity to conduct 9 policy debates. Students will be paired into teams of two-three, and will be assigned debate topics. The debate format will consist of two teams (yes/no side), and prepare to debate in class (10%). Debate students are required to submit on Canvas a **400-600 words position paper** (5%) on Thursday before the debate, by 5:00pm on Canvas. Debate students are free to choose the policy authority representing the position (member of Congress, candidate for federal and state office, attorney, activist, state legislator, media, etc). In order to best prepare for the debate, students are expected to utilize outside resources such as news articles, scholarly articles, or evidence from current events.

Non-debate students are expected to be prepared to ask clarification questions, as well as rate their peers' performance. More details about the debates will be provided in class.

The goal of the debates is NOT for a team to win, but rather present well-laid out, well-delivered arguments, and responses to each other's arguments.

iv) Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will be administered on Wednesday, April 20, 2015. You will be presented with 5 current controversies, of which you will choose and write about two. The exam is cumulative, meaning that you are expected to apply everything you have learned throughout the course of the semester in answering the questions. There is no length limit or requirement in regards to your answers; you should provide as big or small an answer you wish, as long as it adequately addresses the question at hand. You are required, however, to bring a blank bluebook/greenbook.

Please note that in case you miss the exam, you will be allowed to take a make-up if and only if there is a significant reason for your absence, per the University's attendance policies, accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Course Policies

I) Late Assignments

Any written assignment is late if it has not been submitted on Canvas by the required deadline. Late submissions will be penalized (downgraded). An additional letter grade will be deducted for each additional day the assignment is late up to a maximum of three days, after which it will receive a 0. You are strongly encouraged to email/upload your assignments early so that you will avoid last minute complications. Excuses for late assignments will not be accepted.

I generally do not assign "incompletes," unless presented with extraordinary circumstances, given proper documentation.

II) Professional Conduct

Always be courteous and polite towards your peers and the instructor, addressing them with respect and in a professional manner. Although you are entitled to your own views and opinions, the use of offensive/derogatory language will not be tolerated.

The use of laptops/tablets is allowed during our meetings only if they are used to take notes or review readings. If I detect that you are using your device in any other capacity (i.e. emails, facebook, twitter etc.) you will be asked to leave the classroom and no attendance points will be awarded to you for that meeting. Repeat offenders will experience a significant reduction of their overall course grade.

The use of cellphones (talking/texting) is absolutely prohibited during our meetings. Professional etiquette dictates that your cellphone is silent and out of reach when in class. If it rings and I hear it, you will be asked to set it on silent. If it rings again you will be asked to leave the classroom.

III) Academic Integrity

As a University of Florida student you are expected to abide by the UF Student Conduct & Honor Code. This means that you have pledged to avoid giving or receiving unauthorized aid when performing an academic task. Possible violations of the Honor Code include – but are not limited to – plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and misrepresentation.

I employ a zero tolerance policy in regards to academic dishonesty. If you cheat you will get an F for the course, while I reserve the right to initiate further disciplinary action against you depending on the severity of your offense. If you are unsure whether a specific action constitutes a violation of the Honor Code make sure to ask the instructor or review the Academic Honesty guidelines at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/index.php/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

IV) Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

V) Counseling

Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking career and academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling.

Class Schedule

Part I: Introduction to the Study of Public Policy

Week 1 (Jan. 6-8): Overview, Course Structure and Introduction to Public Policy

W. Overview of the course. No Readings.

F. No class (SPSA Conference).

Week 2 (Jan. 11-15): Studying Public Policy

M. Why Should We Care About Policy? Why Do Policies Fail? Assign debate topics.

Total Pages: 14

a. *American Public Policy*: Ch1, pp. 1-7

b. [“Public’s Policy Priorities Reflect Changing Conditions at Home and Abroad,”](#) *Pew Research Center Report*. Jan. 2015, pp. 1-5 (Canvas).

c. [“Divided Government is Bad for Obama,”](#) *The Hill*, Oct. 2010.

W. How do we study Public Policy? Effective Research Strategies

Presentation by David Schwieder, Political Science Librarian

Total Pages: 14

a. *American Public Policy*: Ch2, pp. 19-30

F. How Does the Government Decide? Models and Competing Policy Contexts.

Total Pages: 17

a. *American Public Policy*: Ch1, pp. 8-18; Ch. 2, pp. 30-37

Week 3 (Jan. 18-22): Implementing Policy; Who is Accountable?

M. Martin Luther King Jr. Day- NO CLASS

*****Policy Process Assessment Due*****

W. Policy Implementation

Total Pages: 16

- a. "[But Will It Work? Implementation Analysis to Improve Government Performance](#)," R. Kent Weaver (2010) *Issues in Governance Studies*, pp. 1-16.

Optional (18 pages):

b. "[Street-Level Bureaucracy and Public Accountability](#)," Peter Hupe and Michael Hill. 2007. *Public Administration* Vol. 85(2): pp. 279-297.

F. Mock Debate: Are The Courts Influencing the Policy Agenda?

- a. "[Supreme Court Prepares to Take on Politically Charged Cases](#)," NYT, Oct. 2015

- b. "[The Supreme Court's Secret Power](#)," NYT, Sept. 2015

*For Mock Debate guidelines, see Announcements on Canvas

Part II: Economy, and Foreign Policy, and Environmental Policy

Week 4 (Jan. 25-29): Business and Economic Sustainability

M. Economic Policy; Protecting Consumers

Total Pages: 14

- a. Ch3, pp. 38-52

W. Regulating Businesses

Total Pages: 15

- a. Ch. 3, pp. 52-67

F. Maintaining Economic Flow

Total Pages: 15

- a. Ch4, pp. 68-83

Week 5 (Feb. 1-5): The Budget and Policy Priorities

M. Foreign Policy Ideals

Total Pages: 13

- a. Ch. 12, pp. 377-390

W. Challenges to Foreign Policy

Total Pages: 21

- a. Ch12, pp. 390-405

F. Debate #1: Should the U.S. Government be concerned about a Balanced Budget?

Week 6 (Feb. 8-12): Defense and National Security

M. Confronting Terror: Past and New Challenges

Total Pages: 18

- a. Ch12, pp. 405-416

- b. "[Transcript: Republican Presidential Debate](#)," NYT Dec. 15, 2015 (SKIM through).

*****Policy Memo Due*****

W. Immigration

Total Pages: 19

- a. Ch11, pp. 353-372

- F. Debate #2: Should the U.S. end the H-1B Visa Program or grow it?
a. Ch11, pp. 372-376

Week 7 (Feb. 22-26): Energy Policy & Environmental Concerns

M. Energy Policy

Total Pages: 22

- a. Ch5, pp. 91-113

W. Balancing Energy and Environmental Policies

Total Pages: 17

- a. Ch5, pp. 113-130

F. Debate #3: Should the U.S. collaborate with the E.U. to formulate a “zero carbon, zero poverty” policy?

Total Pages: 12

- a. [“Paris Climate Talks Avoid Scientists’ Idea of ‘Carbon Budget’,”](#) NYT Nov. 2015.
b. [“Addressing Competitiveness and Leakage Concerns in Climate Policy:](#) An analysis of border adjustment measures in the US and the EU,” Harro van Asselt, and Thomas Brewer. 2010. *Energy Policy* 38: pp. 42-51.

Week 8 (Feb.29-Mar. 4): SPRING BREAK

Part III: Civil Rights and Liberties

Week 9 (Mar. 8-11): Social Equality

M. Defining Equality

- a. Ch10, pp. 318-330

W. Constitutional Protections

- a. Ch10, pp. 330-344

F. Debate #4: Should affirmative action policies be banned?
(Ch10, pp, 348-352 MUST read for all).

Week 10 (Mar. 14-18): Voting Rights

M. Equal Access to the Polls

Total Pages: 22

- a. “Poll Workers and Polling Places,” Ch9, pp. 175-185 in *Election Administration in the United States* (EBook on Reserve).
b. “Resolving Voter Registration Problems: Making Registration Easier, Less Costly, and More Accurate,” Ch10, pp. 186-198 in *Election Administration in the United States* (EBook on Reserve).

*****Election Reform Proposal Due*****

W. Early Voting

Total Pages: 18

- a. [“Souls to the Polls: Early Voting in Florida in the Shadow of House Bill 1355,”](#) Michael C. Herron and Daniel A. Smith (2012) *Election Law Journal*, pp. 331-347.
b. [“Democrats criticize Scott over ruling that prohibits early voting at Reitz Union,”](#) Gainesville Sun (February 2014).

F. Debate#5: Should the U.S. Government adopt automatic voter registration?

Week 11 (Mar. 21-25): Education

M. Education Policy

Total Pages: 20

a. Ch9, pp. 280-300

W. The Role of Government in Education

Total Pages: 17

a. Ch. 9, pp. 300-317

F. Debate #6: Which level of government should address the Common Core issue?

Part IV: The “Pursuit of Happiness”

Week 12 (Mar. 28-Apr. 1): Raising the bottom?

M. Poverty

Total Pages: 17

a. Ch7, pp. 193-210

*****Federalism and Policy Essay Due*****

W. Social Insurance and Assistance Programs

Total Pages: 16

a. Ch7, pp. 210-226

F. Debate #7: Should the U.S. Government increase the federal minimum wage?

Week 13 (Apr. 4-8): Health Care

M. Healthy America

Total Pages: 24

a. Ch8, pp. 232-256.

W. Affordable Care Act

Total Pages: 23

a. Ch8, pp. 256-279

F. Debate #8: Should all state governments forward with expanding Medicaid?

Week 14 (Apr. 11-15): Open Society?

M. Private Morality

Total Pages: 18

a. Ch13, pp. 417-436.

W. 1st Amendment

Total Pages: 18

a. Ch13, pp. 436-454

F. Debate #9: Should private corporations claim rights to free exercise of religion as a way to avoid compliance with federal and state laws?

a. Ch13, pp. 454-466

Part V: Wrapping Up

Week 15 (Apr. 18-20):

M. Course Overview

W. Final Exam

Grading Scale

A =93.00+

A- =90.00-92.99

B+ =87.00-89.99

B =83.00-86.99

B- =80.00-82.99

C+ =77.00-79.99

C =73.00-76.99

C- =70.00-72.99

D+ =67.00-69.99

D =63.00-66.99

D- =60.00-62.99

E =59.99 and below

For information of UF grading policy

see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>