

**PUP 3002; Section 0719 – Fall 2014**  
**Current Controversies in Public Policy**

Instructor:

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**M-W-F: Period 2 (8:30-9:20am); Room: MAT 16**

Office Hours: F: 9:30-11:30am

**Course Description**

Public Policy is “whatever governments choose to do or not to do”<sup>1</sup>. This broad definition consists of several steps in the policy process, from policy development and analysis, to implementation and, finally, evaluation. 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 (minimum wage, 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 government(s) “choose to do or not to do” about it.

**Grade Weights**

Class Participation 20%

Critical Essays 20% (10% each)

Final Exam (30%)

Final Paper (30%)

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<sup>1</sup> Dye, Thomas. 2013. Understanding Public Policy, 14<sup>th</sup> edition: pp. 3.

## Course Requirements

### i) Attendance/Participation

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) Critical Essays (2)

During the course of the semester you are required to write two short essays (about 4-6 pages, double-spaced) on two topics of your choice out of those introduced in the course. We will assign topics during our first meeting. The review essays will be due at midnight before the day each topic is to be discussed in class.

The critical essays should discuss, compare, and contrast the readings assigned to a specific topic. A great critical essay is not a summary of the material; on the contrary, you are expected to summarize as little as possible so that you will have enough space left for a thorough critical evaluation of the arguments and evidence present in the readings. What is more, you are expected to go a step further and offer your own perspective on the caveats of the assigned literature by emphasizing aspects that were – intentionally or unintentionally – ignored by the author(s).

Essays have to be **4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font Calibri, with page numbers** in the bottom, emailed to me at midnight before the day each topic is to be discussed in class.

Please be consistent in the format of your essays.

### ii) Final Paper

One final paper is required for this class (10-15 pages, double-spaced). You will choose one public policy out of those introduced in the course, and will address one aspect in the policy process. An integral part of the paper is a detailed overview of the literature on this specific aspect of the policy process, followed by an in-depth analysis of government action (or inaction) on the topic. Papers may take one of the following forms:

- Policy Development; this can include the federal or state levels, or both.
- Policy Implementation; this can include the federal or state levels, or both.
- Policy Evaluation; this can include the federal or state levels, or both.
- Models for Policy Analysis; compare two of the existing policy models and make a case that one of each better explain the policy issue of your choice.

The final paper is due on **Monday, December 8 2014**. More details about the final paper will be provided as the course develops.

### iii) Final Exam

The final exam will be administered on **Friday, December 19 2014**. 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.

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, accompanied by appropriate documentation.

## **Course Policies**

### **I) Late Assignments**

A critical essay is late if it has not been submitted (via email to the instructor) by midnight before the day the topic is to be discussed in class. A final paper is late if it has been submitted on E-Learning after 23:59:59 on Friday, December 8, 2014. In both cases, a late submission will be downgraded a letter grade even if it is only a minute late. 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.

Please note that passing the course requires you to complete all assignments. 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.

## Course Materials

### Required Texts

- Understanding Public Policy. 2013. Dye, Thomas R. 14<sup>th</sup> ed., Pearson.
- Issues for Debate in American Public Policy. 2014. CQ Researcher 15<sup>th</sup> ed., CQ Press.

### Recommended Texts

- Moral Controversies in American Politics. 2011. Tatalovich, Raymond and Bryon W. Daynes. Sharpe.

### Supplementary Materials

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

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## Class Schedule

### Part I: Introduction to the Study of Public Policy

#### Week 1 (Aug. 25-29): Overview, Course Structure and Introduction to Public Policy

M. Overview of the course. Assign topics for critical essays. No Readings.

W. What is Public Policy? The implications of the nation's demographics on public policy

a. Ch. 1 "Policy Analysis," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 3-12).

b. "[An Aging Nation: The Older Population in the United States](#)," U.S. Census Report, pp. 1-22 (May 2014).

F. No class (APSA Conference).

#### Week 2 (Sept. 1-5): Understanding How to Make Policy in Spite of Politics

M. No class (Labor Day).

W. Modelling Public Policy and Institutional Structures

a. Ch. 2 "Models of Politics," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 15-31).

b. Ch. 5 "Federalism and State Policies," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 83-104).

F. Making Policy in Spite of Politics

a. Ch. 3 "The Policy Making Process," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 33-61).

b. Ch. 10 "Polarization in America," in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 227-246).

#### Week 3 (Sept. 8-12): Assessing Policy despite Politics

M. Policy Implementation

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

b. "Challenges from State-Federal Interactions in US Climate Change Policy," Lawrence H. Goulder and Robert N. Stavins (2011) *American Economic Review* pp. 253-257 (E-Learning).

- W. Policy Evaluation and Polarized Politics
  - a. Ch. 4 “Policy Evaluation,” in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 63-81).
  - b. “Criminal Background Checks in U.S. Higher Education: A Review of Policy Developments, Process Implementations, and Postresults Evaluation Procedures,” Stephanie Hughes et al. (2013) *Public Personnel Management* pp. 421-437 (E-Learning).
- F. Partisanship or Simple Economics? Government Spending Vs. Welfare
  - a. Ch. 13 “Government Spending,” in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 305-327).
  - b. Ch. 7 “Welfare,” in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 141-159).

## Part II: Business, Economy, and National Security

### Week 4 (Sept. 15-19): U.S. Economy

- M. Economic Policy
  - a. Ch. 10 “Economic Policy,” in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 207-227).
  - b. “The Economic Recovery and Monetary Policy: The Road Back to Ordinary,” John C. Williams (June 2014) (E-Learning).
  - c. “Reforming the Banks for Good,” Jennifer Taub (Summer 2014) (E-Learning).
- W. The Dodd-Frank Financial Reform
  - a. Ch. 3 “The Federal Reserve,” in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 51-74).
  - b. “Wall Street Fires Back,” Gary Rivlin for *The Nation* (May 2013) (E-Learning).
  - c. “Breaking Up with Occupy,” Nathan Schneider for *the Nation* (September 2013) (E-Learning).
- F. U.S Trade Policy
  - a. Ch. 4 “U.S. Trade Policy,” in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 77-98).
  - b. “Does the U.S. Trade More Widely than It Appears?” Roc Armenter for *Business Review* (2014) (E-Learning).

### Week 5 (Sept. 22-26): U.S Business and Growth

- M. Taxes, Taxes, Taxes
  - a. Ch. 11 “Tax Policy,” in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 229-247).
  - b. “2014 Mid-Year Tax Policy Outlook,” Ed McClellan for *Financial Executive*, pp. 25-29 (Spring 2014)(E-Learning).
- W. Tax Cuts, Tax Breaks and Job Creation
  - a. “Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind,” Larry Bartels, *Perspectives on Politics*, (2005) (pp. 15-31) (E-Learning).
  - b. “Small Business, Innovation, and Tax Policy: A Review,” William Gale and Samuel Brown, *National Tax Journal*, (2014) (pp. 871-892) (E-Learning).
- F. Offshoring and Job Creation
  - a. “Global Outsourcing,” *Research Starters* (2014) pp. 1-5 (E-Learning).
  - b. “Outsourcing Jobs: Is it Bad?” Kathleen Madigan and Michael J. Mandel for *BusinessWeek* (2003) pp. 1-3 (E-Learning).
  - c. “[Apple: why doesn't it employ more US workers?](#)” *The Guardian* (April 2012).
  - d. “Unemployment and Job Creation Programs: Is there a Skills Gap?” Belinda P. Shipp and Robert L. Howard (June 2013) pp. 103-118 (E-Learning).

## **Week 6 (Sept. 29-Oct.3): Defense and National Security**

### M. Using (or not) Military Force

- a. Ch. 15 "Defense Policy," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 325-351).
- b. "[North Korea renews threat of nuclear test](#)," Reuters May 2014).
- c. "[Benghazi US consulate attack: Timeline](#)," BBC (November 2012).
- d. "[US seizes Benghazi raid 'ringleader' Ahmed Abu Khattala](#)," BBC (June 2014).

### W. Homeland Security

- a. Ch. 16 "Homeland Security," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 353-367).
- b. "[The Debate Over Airport Security](#)," Council on Foreign Relations (December 2010).
- c. "[Police Departments getting military's surplus](#)," The Washington Times (August 2014).

### F. Whistleblowers and Cybersecurity

- a. Ch. 11 "Whistleblowers," in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 253-277).
- b. "Obama's Crackdown on Whistleblowers," The Nation (April 2013).
- c. Ch. 16. "Improving Cybersecurity," *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 377-399).

## **Part III: The Welfare State, Broadly Defined**

### **Week 7 (Oct. 6-10): Social Welfare Policies I**

#### M. Minimum Wage

- a. Ch. 12 "Minimum Wage," in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 281-303).
- b. "[Minimum Wage Laws in the States](#)," US Department of Labor.
- c. "[2013 State Legislation on Minimum Wage](#)," National Conference of State Legislatures.

#### W. Health Care

- a. "[What happened to Health Care Reform?](#)" Paul Starr, Princeton (1994).
- b. Ch. 8 "Health Care," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 161-173)
- c. [Supreme Court Rejects Contraceptives Mandate for Some Corporations](#), NYT (June 2014).

#### F. Immigration

- a. Ch. 12 "International Trade and Immigration," in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 249-267).
- b. Ch. 15 "Border Security," in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 353-375).
- c. "[Undocumented Student Tuition: Overview](#)," National Conference of State Legislation (May 2014).

### **Week 8 (Oct. 13-15): Social Welfare Policies II**

#### M. Paid Sick Leave and Right-to-Work

- a. "[Family and Medical Leave Act](#)," US Department of Labor.
  - i. "[State Family and Medical Leave Laws](#)," National Conference of State Legislatures (December 2013).
  - ii. "[Florida blocks cities, counties from voting on sick pay laws](#)," CNN (June 2013).
- b. "[Right-to-Work Resources](#)," National Conference of State Legislatures.
  - i. "[The War on Organized Labor](#)," NYT (February 2012).

- ii. [“American unions membership declines as public support fluctuates,”](#) Drew Silver for Pew Research (February 2014).

W. Education

- a. Ch. 9 “Education,” in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 174-205).
- b. [“2012 census of Governments: Survey of School System Finances,”](#) US Census.
- c. [“For-Profit Colleges and Universities,”](#) National Conference of State Legislatures (July 2013).

F. No class (Homecoming).

**Week 9 (Oct. 20-24): Civil Rights defined by gender and race**

M. The (ongoing) battle for civil rights

- a. Ch. 14 “Civil Rights,” in *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 292-323).
- b. [“The New Racism: This is how the civil rights movement ends,”](#) Jason Zegerle for New Republic (August 2014).

W. Gender Pay equality

- a. [“A Guide to Women’s Equal Pay Rights,”](#) Women’s Bureau, US Department of Labor (April 2012).
- b. [“State Equal Pay laws,”](#) National Conference of State Legislatures.
- c. [“Size of Gender Gap Varies by State, Job,”](#) the Pew Charitable Trusts (January 2014).

F. Racial Profiling

- a. Ch. 7 “Racial Profiling,” in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 153-175).
- b. [“U.S. to Expand Rules Limiting Use of Profiling by Federal Agents,”](#) NYT (January 2014).
- c. [“Another Police Shooting in Ferguson, Missouri,”](#) Newsweek (August 2014).

**Week 10 (Oct 27-31): “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”**

M. LGBT Rights

- a. Ch. 3 “Gay Rights,” in *Moral Controversies in American Politics* (pp. 80-109).
- b. Ch. 9 “Gay Marriage,” in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 203-224).
- c. [“Winning the Freedom to Marry: Progress in the States,”](#) Freedomtomarry.org Updated Table.

W. Abortion and the Right to Life/Choose

- a. Ch. 1 “Abortion,” in *Moral Controversies in American Politics* (pp. 3-44).
- b. [“Abortion Restriction in States,”](#) NYT (June 2013).

F. Religion

- a. Ch. 5 “God and Country,” in *Moral Controversies in American Politics* (pp. 132-160).
- b. [“Special Report: Taxpayers fund creationism in the classroom,”](#) Politico (April 2014).
- c. [“Who ‘Won’ the Creation Vs. Evolution Debate?”](#) [www.npr.com](http://www.npr.com) (February 2014).

**Week 11 (Nov. 3-7): Civil Rights and Liberties**

M. Freedom of the Media (?)

- a. Ch. 5 “Media Violence,” in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 101-123).
- b. “Concentration, Reactive-Proactive Aggression, Non-Verbal Aggression, and Wellness among Video Games Playing Adolescents,” N.K. Rathee et al. (March 2014) pp. 33-41 (E-Learning).

#### W. Government Surveillance

- a. Ch. 8 "Government Surveillance," in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 177-200).
- b. "Privacy and the Surveillance Explosion," Timothy C. Mack for *The Futurist* (January-February 2014) pp. 42-47 (E-Learning).

#### F. Gun Control

- a. Ch. 6 "Gun Control," in *Moral Controversies in American Politics* (pp. 161-195).
- b. "[Election silence over Trayvon Martin and America's guns](#)," BBC news (October 2012).
- c. "[Amid Wave of Pro-gun Legislation, Georgia Proposes Sweeping Law](#)," NYT (March 2014).
- d. "[Guide dogs and guns: America's blind](#)," BBC (August 2014).

### Part IV: The Politics of Reform

#### Week 12 (Nov. 10-14): Election Reform

##### M. Voting Rights Act

- a. "[Voting Rights Act: Major Dates in History](#)," www.aclu.org.
- b. "Note: The Times, They are Changing: The VRA is No Longer Constitutional," Glenn Kunkes (2012) *Journal of Law & Politics*, pp. 357-385 (E-Learning).
- c. "[Supreme Court Invalidates Key Part of Voting Rights Act](#)," NYT (June 2013).
- d. "[Shelby County Vs. Holder](#)," SCOTUS Blog.

##### W. Voter Registration I: The National Voter Registration Act of 1993

- a. "[The National Voter Registration Act](#)," U.S. Department of Justice.
- b. "People Who Have Their Tickets But Do Not Use Them: Motor Voter and Turnout Revisited," (2006) Robert D. Brown and Justin Wedeking, *American Politics Research*, pp. 479-504 (E-Learning).
- c. "[The Cost of Inaccuracy: Voter Registration Examined](#)," National Conference of State legislatures, pp. 1-5, (March 2012).

##### F. Voter Registration II: Voter Registration Reforms

- a. "[Voting Law Changes in 2012](#)," Brennan Center for Justice (2011), pp. 1-37.
- b. "[The State of Voting in 2014](#)," Brennan Center for Justice (June 2014).
- c. "[Voter Registration Drives](#)," Brennan Center for Justice (December 2012).

#### Week 13 (Nov. 17-21): Voting Access Vs. Integrity

##### M. Help America Vote

- a. "[Implementing the Help America Vote Act](#)," Leonard M. Shambon (2004) *Election Law Journal*, pp. 424-443).
- b. "[Gambling with Democracy](#): The Help America Vote Act and the Failure of the States to Administer Federal Elections," Bradley Griffin (2004) *Wash. Uni. Law Review*, pp. 509-531).

##### W. Early Voting

- a. "[What is Early Voting?](#)" Demos (July 2013).
- b. "[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.
- c. "[Democrats criticize Scott over ruling that prohibits early voting at Reitz Union](#)," Gainesville Sun (February 2014).



F. Voter ID

- a. "[Voter Identification](#)," Spencer Overton (2006) *George Washington Uni. Law School*, pp. 2-67).
- b. "[Topeka seniors shut out of primary ID law, poll worker](#)," cjonline.com (August 11 2014).

**Week 14 (Nov. 24-28): Campaign Finance**

M. Citizens United and Beyond

- a. "[Citizens United and the Illusion of Coherence](#)," Rick Hasen (2011) *Michigan Law Review*, pp. 581- 622.
- b. "A Triumph for Political Speech," Jennifer Rubin (2010) (E-Learning).
- c. "[Wisconsin recall breaks record thanks to outside cash](#)," Center for Public Integrity (June 2012).
- d. "[Election Spending 2014: Nine Toss-Up Senate Races](#)," Ian Vandewalker for Brennan Center for Justice (August 2014)(E-Learning).

W.-F. No Class (Thanksgiving)

**Part V: Policy and Ethics**

**Week 15 (Dec. 1-5): Death (or Life) with Dignity (?)**

M. Assisted Suicide

- a. "Death with 'dignity'," Susan Behuniak (2011) *Politics & the Life Sciences*, pp. 17-32 (E-Learning).
- b. "Physician-Assisted Suicide," Clinical Decisions (April 2013) *The New England Journal of Medicine*, pp. 1450-1452)(E-Learning).
- c. "[Views on End-of-Life Medical Treatments](#)," Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project (Nov 2013), pp. 1-27.

W. Death Penalty

- a. Ch. 2 "Death Penalty," in *Moral Controversies in American Politics* (pp. 45-79).
- b. "[The Cost of Punishment](#)," National Conference of State Legislatures (July/August 2011).
- c. "[Capital Punishment](#)," National Conference of State Legislatures (April 2012).

F. Poverty

- a. "[The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report](#)," The Council of Economic Advisers (January 2014), pp. 2-46.
- b. "Demographics of Poverty," Research Starters (January 2014)(E-Learning).
- b. "Homelessness," Jennifer Christian and Alexandra Howson (2014) *Research Starters Sociology*, pp. 1-6 (E-Learning).

**Week 16 (Dec. 8-10): The Human Impact**

**\*\*FINAL PAPER DUE\*\***

M. Environmental Ethics

- a. Ch. 1 "Climate Change," in *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (pp. 1-24).
- b. "Why Human Health and Ethics Must Be Central to Climate Change Deliberations," *Plos Medicine* (June 2012)(E-Learning).
- c. "How Green is Brown," *The Nation* (July 2014)(E-Learning).

W. Animal Ethics

- a. Ch. "Animal Rights," in *Moral Controversies in American Politics* (pp. 227-261).
- b. "Standing in Livestock's 'Long Shadow'," Brian Henning (2011) *Ethics & Environment*, pp. 63-90 (E-Learning).

**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>