

**University of Florida  
Department of Political Science  
Fall 2015**

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**W 9:00-12:00, and by appointment**  
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**Current Controversies in Public Policy (PUP 3002)**

Course Description

Framework to understand the formation, adoption, budgeting, implementation and evaluation of public policy. This framework provides a basis for detailed discussions and debates about current policy issues

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students will be able to identify and interpret policy debates on a number of current events. In addition, students will be able to assess policies that are part of the public spectrum and recommend possible alternatives. And finally, students will learn to think critically, write concisely, and to use textual evidence as part of their writing and class discussions.

About the Syllabus

Based on the composition of the class, our progress discussing these issues, elements beyond our control, and student needs, this syllabus is flexible and may change. Throughout the semester, you will be notified of any changes that might emerge. During the first day of class the professor will read and explain this syllabus at length. It is the student's responsibility to understand the requirements for this class and asking all the appropriate questions about this document to the professor. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at <https://catalogue.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance>.

Readings

Required readings will be available in our Canvas page identified by a C. This syllabus is a living document, and in case of changes in the readings students will be properly notified.

Assigned Texts

Nicole Aschoff (2015). *The New Prophets of Capital*. Verso.

Carl Cederström and André Spicer (2015). *The Wellness Syndrome*. Polity.

Writing Requirements and Grade

The grade will be based on a class presentation (10 points), first short paper (10 points), a mid-term examination (30 points), second short paper (10 points), a final examination (30 points), attendance (5 points), participation (5 points).

#### Presentation (10 points)

Students will select one of the class readings during the semester and conduct a 10-minute presentation breaking down the reading to the class. It is the student's responsibility to make sure to contact the professor and select the reading of their choosing. The professor will provide the guidelines for the evaluation.

#### Short papers (10+10=20 points)

The first short paper will be based exclusively on the text *The New Prophets of Capital*. The second short paper will be based on the text *The Wellness Syndrome*. These two short papers (each four pages long) will be written following the guidelines of a prompt offered by the professor.

#### Exams (30+30=60 points)

The mid-term and final examinations will be short in nature. Blue books will be handed and the student is expected to complete the exam during the exam period.

#### Participation (5 points)

Students are expected to attend and be active components of the class and discussion. It is expected that by the end of the semester all students have participated by offering quality contributions. If you do not feel comfortable by participating in class feel free to send me an email with your thoughts to [casuarez@ufl.edu](mailto:casuarez@ufl.edu)

#### Attendance (5 points)

Students are therefore allowed three absences from days of class without penalty. Attendance will be taken by either roll book, or index card. Any absence after the third one will be penalized by taking three points per missed class. Written evidence will be required in order to justify absences.

#### Grade scale

A	94 and above
A	90-93
B	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
E	59 and below

#### Rubric

The short papers will be graded according to the following elements: (1) format and timeliness, (2) textual evidence, (3) critical evaluation, (4) spelling and grammar.

The presentation will be evaluated according to the following elements: (1) background, (2) summary, (3) critical evaluation, (4) discussion, and (5) presentation style. A more detailed description of the rubric used for evaluation will be posted as a document on our Canvas class page.

### Academic Honesty

An important component in academic work is recognizing one's work as well as others. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not allowed. **Any violations of the academic honesty policy will be vigorously pursued. All students are expected to adhere scrupulously to the University policy concerning academic honesty.** In order to respect this principle students are expected to abide by the Academic Honesty Policy. A copy of the Academic Honesty Policy can be found in the following link, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the policy. Following these guidelines will assure that original academic work will be recognized and celebrated.

### Concerns with a Grade

In the case that a student disagrees with a grade that concern should be presented in writing. This statement should be handed in writing the next class day after receiving your grade. The merits of the concern will be evaluated taking into consideration how deeply the student is thinking about the subject at hand, and whether or not this student can provide textual evidence to justify their claim. After careful evaluation, I will notify the student about my decision and adjust the grade accordingly if applicable.

### Incompletes

Students who have not completed the required class work will only be evaluated by the work that was turned in by the day it was due. Incompletes will only be awarded under exceptional circumstances. Incompletes will be given when students comply with the following conditions, (1) notifying the professor two weeks prior to the last day of class, (2) providing written evidence for the medical condition, or situation that has prompted the student to request an incomplete. The student and professor should agree upon a proper arrangement on how the missing work will be submitted. The student will have the following semester as the time period to complete the missing work; failure to do so will result in an E.

### Special Needs

Testing accommodations and other needs will be addressed for students with proper documentation. Please make sure to inform me of these needs in writing during the first week of class. Retroactive accommodations will not be considered. In case of questions about Disability Resource Center feel free to contact them at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

### Classroom interaction

Respect is required at all times. Textual evidence is crucial when engaging in intelligent academic debates. Please make use of this tool when elaborating your arguments in the classroom. Refrain from comments that are not related to class discussion. Video or audio recording of the class is not allowed. Finally, the use of cell phones, and laptops are prohibited.

### Course evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

## **Course Outline**

### **I. Introduction**

Review course syllabus.

### **II. Understanding Public Policy (8/27-9/1)**

Reading: Easton, David. *An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems*. C

Questions for discussion: Why is Easton proposing a systems approach to understanding politics? Do you understand this way of understanding politics as sound?

Reading: Dye, Thomas. *Policy Analysis*. C

Questions for discussion: What are the basic principles of the policy process? Are these principles universal?

### **III. Policymaking Process (9/3-9/8)**

Reading: Dye, Thomas. *The Policymaking Process*. C

Questions for discussion: What are the main theories of policy making? Where these theories the result of a particular context?

Peters, B. Guy. *Agenda Setting and Public Policy*. C

Questions for discussion: How crucial is agenda setting as part of framing a particular policy? Are there different ways by which agenda can be set in place?

### **IV. Contextualizing Public Policy (9/10)**

Reading: Peters, B. Guy. *The Structure of Policymaking in American Government*. C

Questions for discussion: Does context matter when studying public policy? Is there an “ideal” context for conducting public policy?

### **First Short Paper Questions will be distributed (9/15)**

### **V. The Neoliberal State and values (9/15-9/24)**

Reading: Harvey, David. *The Neoliberal State*. C

Questions for discussion: What are the basic elements of the Neoliberal State? What are the tensions that exist there according to Harvey?

Reading: Salamon, Lester. *The Marketization of Welfare*. C

Questions for Discussion: What was the logic behind the expansive role of the American State? What were some of the reasons that promoted its retrenchment?

Reading: Aschoff, Nicole. *The New Prophets of Capital*.

### **First Short Paper Due (9/29)**

### **VI. Neoliberalism and Surveillance (9/29-10/01)**

Reading: Molina, Devin. *A comment on the Minutemen Militia of the US and Neoliberal State Activity*. C

Questions for discussion: How can state policies impact who patrols borders? How can neoliberalism be linked to border politics?

Reading: Wacquant, Loïc. *The Criminalization of Poverty in the Post Civil-Rights Era*. C  
Questions for discussion: What types of policies have brought a change to prison systems in the US under the logic of neoliberalism? How has poverty become a significant component to what happens in American jails?

### **VII. Housing Policy (10/6-10/8)**

Reading: Page, Max. *The Foul Core of New York*. C

Questions for discussion: How is slum clearance related to law? How was law articulated into policy?

Reading: Pader, Ellen. *Space of Hate*. C

Questions for discussion: How can housing codes impact everyday life? Do housing codes respond to a particular cultural notion? Why are occupancy standards a culturally contested dynamic?

## **Mid Term Exam (10/13)**

### **VIII. Environmental Policy (10/15-10/20)**

Reading: Rabe and Borick. *Conventional Politics for Unconventional Drilling*. C

Questions for discussion: What are the main challenges that states face today in terms of fracking? How has the state addressed the major environmental challenges?

Reading: Davis. *Substate Federalism and Fracking Policies*. C

Questions for discussion: What type of tensions emerges between state and local government over the practice of fracking? What type of factors does influence how different states approach fracking?

### **IX. Food Policy (10/22-10/27)**

Reading: Sacks, Swinburn, and Lawrence. *Obesity Policy Action*. C

Questions for Discussion: What type of policy approaches are the authors suggesting in order to face the obesity epidemic? Do you understand that this approach is only pertinent to the Australian experience, or could it apply to other countries?

Reading: Dodson, Fleming and et.al. *Preventing Childhood Obesity Through State Policy*. C

Questions for discussion: Do state legislators have had a significant say in how to address childhood obesity? How crucial is the lobby of companies that produce unhealthy foods as part of this debate?

## **Second Short Paper Questions will be distributed (10/29)**

### **X. Health Care Policy (10/29-11/10)**

Reading: West, Emily. *Consumer subjectivity and US Health Care Reform*. C

Questions for discussion: How significant is the use of the term "consumer" as part of the health care policy debate in the US? Can the words used and the framing that is presented has a significant impact on Public Policy?

Reading: Carl Cederström and André Spicer, *The Wellness Syndrome*.

## **Second Short Paper Due (11/12)**

### **XI. Immigration Policy (11/12-11/17)**

Reading: Fymer, Paul. *A Rush and a Push and the Land is Ours*. C

Questions for discussion: What are the main challenges that states face today in terms of immigration policy? Is this a challenge that is only national in nature?

Reading: Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. C

Questions for discussion: Why have we seen an increase of walls in our lives? What do these walls have to do with sovereignty?

### **XII. Education Policy (11/19-11/24)**

Reading: Miller and Smith. *Did the No Child Left Behind Miss the Mark?* C

Questions for discussion: What type of tools does the author use to assess the No Child Left Behind Policy? Where the policy outcomes that the Bush administration had with this program successful?

Reading: McGuinn, Patrick. *Stimulating Reform*. C

Questions for discussion: Have there been significant transitions in education policy from the Bush and Obama administrations? How can it be evidenced that a transition has occurred?

### **XIII. Gun Control (12/1-12/3)**

Reading: Smith, Andrew. *America's Control Dilemma*. C

Questions for discussion: Is Gun Control part of the American DNA according to the author? What type of suggestions does the author offer to address this American debate?

Esposito and Finley. *Beyond Gun Control*. C

Questions for Discussion: How can neoliberalism be linked to the Gun Control debate? What type of policies can help address the Gun Control debate that they have outlined?

**Final Exam TBA**