

**University of Florida
Department of Political Science
Fall 2024**

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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 several 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

Norton, Pelot-Hobbs and Schept. (2024). *The Jail is Everywhere*. Verso.

Michael Hill and Frédéric Varone. (2021). *The Public Policy Process* (8th edition). Routledge.

Gregory Salle. (2024). *Superyachts*. Polity Press.

Writing Requirements and Grade

The grade will be based on reaction papers (10 points), first short paper (20 points), a mid-term examination (20 points), second short paper (20 points), a second examination (20 points), attendance (5 points), and participation (5 points).

Reaction Papers (10 points)

Class members will be asked to submit via Canvas 490-500 words, single spaced- reaction paper. A two-page document will be submitted, the first page will include the student's name, email, and word count for the assignment. The second page should only include 490-500 words addressing the readings for every Monday, Wednesday and Friday of every week. The professor will randomly select five papers that will be graded and will be used to calculate your grade. The reaction paper should not be a summary of the readings, but instead it should: *ask probing questions, propose what might come next, compare or contrast this reading or concepts to another paper or concepts we have discussed in class, highlight important implications of the work for understanding public policy.* The grade scale for this assignment is 0 points for papers that were not submitted, 1 point for a satisfactory submission and 2 points for a remarkable submission. Papers that are not submitted through Canvas will be penalized. Please familiarize yourself with Canvas.

Two Four Page Papers (20 + 20= 40 points)

Students will read one of the books (see above) and address the question offered by the professor. The assignment will rely only on the selected book as a source.

Midterm Exam (20 points)

The mid-term will be held during class hours. Blue books will be required, and the student is expected to complete the exam during the exam period.

Second Exam (20 points)

The second exam will be due at the end of the semester. The format of the exam will be announced in a timely fashion during the semester.

Participation (5 points)

Students are expected to attend while the class is broadcasted on Zoom 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. The rubric for participation will be posted on our Canvas page. If you do not feel comfortable by participating in class, feel free to send me an email with your thoughts to casuarez@ufl.edu.

Attendance (5 points)

The professor will take attendance either by roll book, canvas, or index card. Students are therefore allowed three absences from days of class without penalty. Any absence after the third one will be penalized by taking three points per missed class. A student who leaves the class before it is over will not be considered as present in terms of attendance. Written evidence will be required to justify absences. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of their number of absences during the semester. If a student has any questions about their attendance on a particular day, this issue should be brought up in writing no later than the following class.

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

On Canvas

The Canvas grade book will be updated as class assignments are graded. Please note that the grade book does not include the grades for Participation and Attendance. Also Canvas calculates attendance throughout the semester in a way that does not reflect your final attendance grade.

On Timeliness

Students are expected to turn in their assigned work on time through Canvas, not email. If students are not able to turn in their work on time through Canvas they will have offer written evidence in order to justify the tardiness. If said evidence is not produced one letter grade will be deducted per day after due date.

Rubric

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

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.

Accessibility

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 is prohibited. The topics we discuss in this course may be controversial and may touch upon deeply held positions or beliefs held by you or your classmates. While I want to encourage open discussion, I also encourage you to consider how your interventions affect others. How we say something is often even more important than what we say; if you are struggling with how to articulate your questions or reactions to the readings please inform the professor.

In Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered

published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

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

Readings: Hill and Varone. *Chapters 1, 2 and 3*.

Questions for discussion: What is public policy? Are these principles of public policy universal?

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: Hill and Varone, *Chapter 6*.

Questions for discussion: What are the most recent theoretical contributions to the field?

III. Agenda Setting

Reading: Hill and Varone. *Chapter 8*.

Questions for discussion: How important is the agenda setting stage? How is policy agenda established?

IV. Policy Formulation

Reading: Hill and Varone. *Chapter 9*.

Questions for discussion: What are the key elements of the formulation process?

V. Policy Implementation

Reading: Hill and Varone. *Chapter 10*.

Questions for discussion: What are the main theories behind policy implementation? How does policy implementation work?

VI. Bureaucracy

Reading: Hill and Varone. *Chapter 11*.

Questions for discussion: How crucial is the bureaucratic structure to the policy process?

VII. The Unwritten

Readings: Hill and Verone. Chapters 12

Questions for discussion: What type of factors are usually present in the policy process that are not “written”?

First Paper Prompt will be distributed (9/4)

VIII. Policy Evaluation

Reading: Hill and Varone. Chapter 14.

Questions for discussion: Is there are system or model that can be used to evaluate policy? What kind of changes can be set in place to change policies that are deemed as problematic?

IX. Policy Change and Politics

Reading: Caughey and Warshaw. *Policy Preferences and Policy Change*. C

Questions for discussion: What drives policy change? Does state policy making responds to mass policy preferences?

X. The Neoliberal State and its values

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: Thorsen, Dag Einar. *The Neoliberal Challenge*. C

Questions for discussion: What was the logic behind the expansive role of the Neoliberal State? Do we live in a neoliberal age?

First Paper Due (9/18)

XI. Neoliberalism and Surveillance

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?

Reading: Roberts, Dorothy. *Prison Foster Care and Black Mothers*. C

Questions for discussion: What are the precise policies that lead to the punishment of black mothers? How does Neoliberalism play a significant role in the author’s argument?

Reading: Williamson, Trump and Einstein. *Black Lives Matter: Evidence that Police-Caused Deaths Predict Protest Activity*. C

Questions for discussion: How has popular protest been promoted by police actions? What are the policy implications of this reality?

XII. Housing 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 (6/2)

XIII. Environmental Policy

Reading: Teodoro, Haider and Switzer. *U.S. Environmental Policy Implementation on Tribal Lands: Trust, Neglect, and Justice*. C

Questions for discussion: What are the main challenges that federal policy faces when being implemented tribal lands? How has states addressed the major environmental challenges?

Reading: Galvin and Healy. *The Green New Deal in the United States*. C

Questions for discussion: What type of economic commitment is needed for a Green New Deal? How do the authors relate this investment with previous economic bailouts in the US?

Second Paper Prompt will be distributed (10/23)

XIV. Health Care Policy

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: Jacobs and Mettler. *When and How New Policy Creates New Politics: Examining the Feedback Effect of the ACA on Public Opinion*. C

Questions for discussion: How have past policies impacted new policies? Are there any considerations to consider since ACA has been subject to significant debate?

Reading: Ella Vermeir, Lois A. Jackson and Emily Gard Marshall. *Barriers to primary and emergency healthcare for trans adults*. C

Questions for discussion: What type of barriers does the trans community encounter in the health care system? What are the policy implications of the findings of this paper?

XV. Immigration Policy

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?

Second Paper Due (11/13)

XVI. Class inequality

Reading: Monks, James. *The Role of Institutional State Aid Policies in Average Student Debt*. C

Questions for discussion: How have states decreased the subsidies for state colleges? What led to this practice?

Reading: Epp, Derek. *Policy Agendas and Economic Inequality in American Politics*. C

Questions for discussion: What is the connection between economic inequality and US Congressional agendas? Is there a commitment to addressing economic inequality?

Reading: Wright, Graham. *The Political Implications of American Concerns About Economic Inequality*. C

Questions for discussion: What type of concern has the American public shown for economic equality? What type of political consequence does it have?

XVII. Disaster, Pandemics, Resiliency

Reading: Tierney. *Resiliency and the Neoliberal*. C

Questions for discussion: How Public Private Partnerships end up taking the place of the state in the context of disaster response?

Reading: Adolph et. al. *Pandemic Politics: Timing State-Level Social Distancing Responses to COVID-19** C

Questions for discussion: What was the criteria used by governors to implement social distancing measures?

XIX. Gun control

Reading: Coates and Pearson-Merkowitz. *Policy Spillover and Gun Migration: The Interstate Dynamics of State Gun Control Policies*. C

Questions for discussion: How can different state policies on guns impact the gun control debate? How does federalism facilitate or makes the debate of gun control more difficult?

Reading: McGinty (et. al.). *Common Sense or Gun Control?* C

Questions for discussion: How is media framing a key element of the gun debate? Can gun control deter gun violence?

Reading: Burton (et. al.) *Gun Owners and Gun Control*. C

Questions for discussion: What is the gun control attitudes of gun owners? Do they share similar views?

Second Exam TBA