

PUP 6007 - Policy Process

Spring 2026

Instructor: Cristian Pérez Muñoz

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Office Hours: Mondays (1 pm–4 pm) [\(by appointment\)](#)

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Class Hours: Tuesdays: 11:45 AM - 2:45 PM

Room: AND 316

Course Description

This seminar offers an overview of major approaches and methodologies for studying models and theories of the public policy process. That is, the process through which policy decisions are made and materialized. During the semester, we will examine various theories of the policy process as well as the main stages of the policy cycle: agenda setting, policy formation, decision-making, implementation, and policy learning/evaluation. The course will conclude by analyzing the policy process in the context of welfare and health policies in the US.

Course Objectives:

Upon completing this course you should be able to:

- Understand different theoretical approaches and debates in the public policy process literature.
- Understand the dynamics and interactions of different institutions and actors during the stages of public policy design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Identify and understand the alternative policy tools to implement public policies.
- Analyze and recognize practical issues related to the different stages of the public policy process

Course Requirements

This course will have three instances of evaluation. Students will be evaluated based on their participation in class, one policy brief prospectus, and a final policy brief (5000 words long, single spaced). The characteristics of each instance of evaluation are explained below.

1. **Participation:** Students are expected to come to class with the readings completed and prepared for discussion. This is a graduate seminar course in which each student must participate actively. Absence will adversely affect your participation evaluation. On mid March, I will provide each student with a **midterm participation** grade including comments about their performance in class. Participation will represent **40% of the final grade**.
2. **Policy Brief Prospectus:** The prospectus should be about five pages long and should include the following elements: (1) an introduction describing and explaining a research problem, (2) a literature review about the identified research problem, (3) a working bibliography. Students will give a 25-minute live presentation to the class on the Policy Brief proposal towards his or her final Policy Brief. These presentations will take place on April 7. This item will represent the 30 % of the final grade. **The Policy Brief proposal is due on: 04/07.**
3. **Policy Brief:** The policy brief may be written individually or collaboratively in groups of no more than two students. This document will have to be 5000 words long (simple space, times new Roman 12 or equivalent). Students should identify a public policy problem and write a policy report aimed to convince a hypothetical policymaker about a particular course of action. Further details of how to write this assignment will be given to you in class and on the course website. This item will represent the 30 % of the final grade. **Policy Brief is due on Friday 04/25**

Grade Distribution:

Class participation	40%
Policy Brief proposal/presentation	30%
Policy Brief	30%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 94	A	74 - 76	C
90 - 93	A-	70 - 73	C-
87- 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
84 - 86	B	64 - 66	D
80 - 83	B-	61 - 63	D-
77 - 79	C+	<61	F

Course Policies¹

Class Modality

This class will be offered on campus. You will be notified in advance in case we need to move the class to an online setting. However, this will be only in exceptional circumstances (i.e. a global pandemic).

During Class

Unless I explicitly declare so, nothing I say in this class will be my personal opinion on the topics covered. Instead, I will focus on presenting different points of view on the topics discussed. When issuing a subjective opinion on a given issue, students will hear me say something along the lines of "I personally believe," "according to how I see this issue," and so on. In any case, my personal opinions will be announced and infrequent.

I have carefully chosen a manageable number of readings and references that come from academic sources. These viewpoints have been discussed and debated within political science or other academic disciplines and have been collectively judged by experts in that field to be well-argued and rigorous.

While I have chosen a wide range of viewpoints to present to you, it would be impossible to show all viewpoints on all issues. The debate in class will help us to identify, address and evaluate any alternative perspective on the topics covered in class.

We are a diverse group of people, and every one of us has a different opinions. It is crucial to treat your instructor and classmates with respect and kindness during class meetings and activities. For more information on netiquette guidelines, see the [UF Netiquette Guide for Online Courses](#).

AI tools and Writing assignments*

This course recognizes the evolving phenomenon of using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in academic research and writing. This syllabus emphasizes the importance of original thought, critical analysis, and teacher-student interaction to ensure the integrity and educational value of writing assignments.

¹The items with an asterisk(*) are textually copied from [UF Policy on Course Syllabi](#).

- *Original Thought and Critical Analysis:* Students are expected to develop their own ideas and arguments in their essays. AI tools may assist in refining these ideas, but the core analysis and argumentation must be the student's own work.
- *Teacher-Student Interaction:* Students are encouraged to engage actively with the instructor about their essay writing process. This includes discussing the development of their essay, their understanding of the topic, and the analytical approach taken. Such interactions are vital for fostering a deeper understanding and ensuring the authenticity of the student's work.
- *Use of AI Tools:* While AI can be a valuable tool for certain aspects of writing, such as grammar checking or initial research, it should not be used to generate substantial parts of the essay. Students should use AI responsibly and in a manner that supports their own learning and intellectual growth.

Attendance Policy*

Attendance at all classes is mandatory and will be registered. A penalty of one point will be subtracted from the final grade for each unexcused absence. Late work is not accepted. Exceptions include documented illness, legal, or civic/university duty situations. If you miss an assignment and have a valid excuse, please email me within the same week to evaluate the situation and eventually arrange a makeup. "The requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies". [Click here to read the university attendance policies.](#)"

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 educational 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 delivered by any 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 presentations 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 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.

Student Privacy*

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

Software Use*

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Academic Integrity and Honesty*

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment. The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code](#). Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Accommodations for Disabilities*

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Online Course Evaluation*

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.

Technical Support*

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Health and Wellness*

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care](#) website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center](#) website.
- University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent. Please note that the schedule of activities and procedures in this course are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Any change in the syllabus will be communicated to all students in the class. Changes will be posted on Canvas and announced in class.

Course Outline

Readings: All the required readings are available in [Canvas](#). The following is a list of recommended books:

- Thomas Birkland. 2019. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*, Routledge.
- Kevin Smith and Christopher W. Larimer. 2016. *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. Westview press.
- Michael Hill and Frédéric Varone. 2016. *The Public Policy Process*. Routledge.
- Michael Howlett, M. Ramesh, and Anthony Perl. 2009. *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*. Oxford University Press.

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 1 (Tuesday, 01/13)	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland (Chapter 1) (Recommended)*
Week 2 (Tuesday, 01/20)	<p>The study of Policy-Making Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland (Chapter 2 and 10) • Harold D Lasswell. 2003. "The policy orientation", In Sandra Braman (edit) <i>Communication Researchers and Policy-Making</i> MIT Press, pp.85-104 • Deborah Stone. 1997. <i>Policy paradox : the art of political decision making</i> W.W. Norton (Chapter 1) • David L. Weimer, Aidan R. Vining. 2011. <i>Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice</i>. Routledge. (Chapter 2)
Week 3 (Tuesday, 01/27)	<p>Policy theories (I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas R. Dye. 2017. <i>Understanding Public Policy</i>, Longman, 15th Edition (Chapter 2), pp. 9-24 • Elinor Ostrom. 2007. "Institutional Rational Choice An Assessment of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework", In Paul Sabatier (edit) <i>Theories of the policy process</i>: pp. 21-64. • Helen Ingram, Anne L. Schneider, and Peter DeLeon. 2007. "Social construction and policy design." In Paul Sabatier (edit) <i>Theories of the policy process</i>: pp. 93-126. • Paul A Sabatier. 1988. "An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein", <i>Policy Sciences</i> 21(2): 129-168.
Week 4 (Tuesday, 02/03)	<p>Policy Theories (II)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael D. Jones and Mark K. McBeth. "A narrative policy framework: Clear enough to be wrong?" <i>Policy Studies Journal</i> 38.2 (2010): 329-353. • Tanya Heikkila and Michael D. Jones. 2022. "How diverse and inclusive are policy process theories?" <i>Policy and Politics</i> 50 (1): 21-42. • Nicole Herweg, Nikolaos Zahariadis, and Reimut Zohlnhofer. 2018. "The Multiple Streams Framework: Foundations, Refinements, and Empirical Applications", In <i>Theories of the Policy Process</i>.
Week 5 (Tuesday, 02/10)	<p>Public Opinion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Burstein. 2003. "The impact of public opinion on public policy: A review and an agenda." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 56 (1): 29-40. • Page, Benjamin and Robert Shapiro. "The Effects of Public Opinion on Policy" <i>American Political Science Review</i> 77(1): 175-190. • Gilens, Martin. 2009. "Preference Gaps and Inequality in Representation." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> 42(2): 335-341. • Maria Schaffer, Bianca Oehl, and Thomas Bernauer. 2022. "Are policymakers responsive to public demand in climate politics?" <i>Journal of Public Policy</i> 42 (1): 136-164.

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 6 (Tuesday, 02/17)	<p>Agenda Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland (Chapter 6) (Recommended)* • Roger Cobb, Jennie-Keith, and Marc Howard Ross. 1976. "Agenda building as a comparative political process", <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 70(1): 126–138. • Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz. 1962. "The Two Faces of Power", <i>American Political Science Review</i> 56 (1962): 947–952 • Deborah Stone. 1989. "Causal stories and the formation of policy agendas", <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> 104.2 (1989): 281–300. • Jessica T Feezell. 2018. "Agenda setting through social media: The importance of incidental news exposure and social filtering in the digital era." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 71 (2): 482-494.
Week 7 (Tuesday, 02/24)	<p>Policy Formulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birkland (Chapter 8) (Recommended)* • Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram. 1990. "Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools", <i>Journal of Politics</i> 52 (May 1990): 510–529. • Lester Salamon. 2002. "The New Government and Tools of Public Action: An Introduction". In <i>The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance</i>. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 1–47. • Michael Howlett. 2011. <i>Designing Public Policies</i>. Routledge. (Chapter 4), pp. 41–58.
Week 8 (Tuesday, 03/03)	<p>Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Howlett, M. Ramesh, and Anthony Perl. 2009. <i>Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems</i>. Oxford University Press. (Chapter 6), pp.176–209 • G.R. Teisman. 2000. "Models for Research into Decision-Making Processes: On Phases, Streams and Decision-Making Rounds", <i>Public Administration</i> 78, no. 4: 937–956. • M. Cohen, J. March, and J. Olsen. 1972. "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice", <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 17, no. 1: 1–25. • Andreea Salajan, Svetla Tsolova, Massimo Ciotti, and Jonathan E. Suk. 2020. "To what extent does evidence support decision making during infectious disease outbreaks? A scoping literature review." <i>Evidence and Policy</i> 16 (3): 453–475.

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 9 (Tuesday, 03/10)	Policy Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Howlett, M. Ramesh, and Anthony Perl. 2009. <i>Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems</i>. Oxford University Press. (Chapter 7), pp.210–240 • Richard E Matland. 1995. "Synthesizing the implementation literature: The ambiguity-conflict model of policy implementation", <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> 5:145–174. • Evelyn Z Brodkin. 2003. "Street-Level Research: Policy at the Front Lines", in Mary Clare Lennon and Thomas Corbett (edit) <i>Policy Into Action: Implementation Research and Welfare Reform</i>, pp. 145–163. • Laurence J. O'Toole. 2000. "Research on Policy Implementation: Assessment and Prospects" <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> 10, no. 2: 263–288.
Week 10 (Tuesday, 03/24)	Policy Evaluation and Policy Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Spicker. 2006. <i>Policy Analysis for Practice</i>. Policy Press (Chapters 9 and 10), pp. 145–180. • Colin J. Bennett and Michael Howlett. 1992. "The lessons of learning: Reconciling theories of policy learning" <i>Policy Sciences</i> 25(3): 275–294 • Peter J. May. 2015. "Implementation failures revisited: Policy regime perspectives", <i>Public Policy and Administration</i> 30.3-4 (2015): 277–299. • Ching Leong and Michael Howlett. 2022. "Policy learning, policy failure, and the mitigation of policy risks: Re-thinking the lessons of policy success and failure." <i>Administration and Society</i> 54, (7): 1379-1401.
Week 11 (Tuesday, 03/31)	Welfare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe Soss, Richard Fording, and Sanford F. Schram. 2011. "The organization of discipline: From performance management to perversity and punishment", <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> 21.suppl 2 (2011): 203–232. • Martin Gilens. 2005. "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness", <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i>, Volume 69, Issue 5, pp. 778–796. • Evelyn Z. Brodkin. 2011. "Policy work: Street-level organizations under new managerialism." <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> 21: 253–277. • Scott W. Allard and Mario L. Small. "Reconsidering the urban disadvantaged: The role of systems, institutions, and organizations." <i>The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, 69 (5): 6–20.

Week	Content/Reading assignments
Week 12 (Tuesday, 04/07)	<p>Class Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No readings assigned
Week 13 (Tuesday, 04/14)	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacob S. Hacker. 2010. "The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Reform Happened: Or Why Political Scientists Who Write about Public Policy Shouldn't Assume They Know How to Shape It." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> (2010): 861–876. • Simon F. Haeder, and David L. Weimer. 2013. "You can't make me do it: state implementation of insurance exchanges under the Affordable Care Act." <i>Public Administration Review</i> 73 (1): 34–47. • Daniel Beland, Philip Rocco, and Alex Waddan. 2014. "Implementing health care reform in the United States: Intergovernmental politics and the dilemmas of institutional design." <i>Health Policy</i> 116.1: 51–60. • Donald Moynihan, Pamela Herd, and Hope Harvey. 2015. "Administrative burden: Learning, psychological, and compliance costs in citizen-state interactions." <i>Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory</i> 25 (1): 43–69
Week 14 (Tuesday, 04/21)	<p>Summary and Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No readings assigned