

Current Controversies in Public Policy

Spring 2019

The University of Florida

Instructor:

Mr. Armstrong, Brandon

Contact Information:¹

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Office:

Anderson Hall 207

Course Number:

PUP 3002

Class Periods:

T 2 & Th 2-3

Office Hours:

T 9:30-10:30am &

Th 10:35-11:05am

Purpose and Format of Course: This course will examine current controversies in public policy. However, the primary focus of this course is on crime policy and how it impacts the criminal justice system and our communities. We will begin the semester with a discussion of why public policy is important and how it is implemented. We will then discuss crime, the criminal justice system, and crime trends. In addition, you will also learn a practical guide for public policy analysis, and how to produce policy memos and proposals.

For the remainder of the semester, we will discuss other contemporary topics in crime and public policy such as race and public policy, race and criminal justice policy, poverty and crime, arresting citizenship, the “New Jim Crow”, and others. We will end the semester with presentations of your criminal justice reform proposal projects. The format will be a combination of lectures and discussions.

The Required Textbooks:

1. Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E. M. (2015). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. CQ press.
2. Alexander, M. (2012). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-blindness*. The New Press.
3. Hinton, E. (2016). *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*. Harvard University Press.

The Reserve Articles: These readings are available via the UF Library Database.

Criminal Justice Reform Proposal: During the course of the semester, you are required to submit a group project. The project will be comprised of a written assignment, which you will have the opportunity to present at the end of the semester. The written assignment

¹You can expect a response from the instructor within 48 hours through any of the aforementioned methods of communication. Please do not send multiple correspondences. You will be contacted as promptly as time allows.

and presentation will be based on a crime policy/criminal justice system issue. This assignment will be completed in the following phases: policy position presentation, written policy position submission (the introduction and the definition of the problem), reform proposal presentation, and written reform proposal submission.

The criminal justice reform proposal projects should include the following:

- Introduction
- Define the Problem
- Assemble Some Evidence
- What are the Alternatives?
- Criteria/ Objectives
- Projected Outcomes/ Will it Work?
- Cost-Benefit Analysis/ Examine the Trade Offs
- Conclusions/ Transition Strategy

3,500 – 3,750 words (500 – 750 words for the first benchmark), double-spaced, 12-point font Calibri, with page numbers in the bottom, uploaded via Canvas by the designated deadlines. You must include citations if you are using outside sources in APA citation format.

Exams: You will be tested on all of the material covered in the readings, class discussions, and films. The exams will be comprehensive, but remain separated – e.g., the midterm will only cover the first half of the course, while the final will only cover the second portion of the course. One week before each test, a review of the topics will be given. Also, I would like to request that you use the bathroom before you begin your examinations on exam days.

Attendance Policy and Missed Work: After three unexcused classes are missed, you will not receive points for attendance. In addition, after three unexcused classes are missed, you will not receive the percentage points for class participation (and will not have the option of submitting an optional paper). It is your responsibility to sign the attendance roster that will be given out at the beginning of each class session. If you forget to, speak with me after the class session has ended. Also, get to class on time. If you arrive to class after the attendance sheet has been turned in, that will be considered as an unexcused absence. The policy for missed work in this class is consistent with the university's policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>).

Classroom Behavior (Cell Phones and Laptops): Please turn off your phones before our class begins. Remember, a student who takes his/her work seriously will make sure that his/her phone is off during class meetings. Laptops are only permitted to be used in class to take notes in exceptional cases. If students want to review readings or notes during class, they will need to bring a printed copy of these materials.

Also, if you engage in behavior such as texting, browsing the internet, sleeping, loud yawning, or any other behavior that I consider to be disrespectful to me or to your classmates, you will not receive all of the percentage points for class participation. I expect you to pay attention at all times in class especially when films are shown. You do not have my permission to do the work in your other classes when films are shown. If I find out that you're doing this, I have the right to deduct points from your participation grade.

Class Participation and the Optional Paper Assignment: We will discuss a number of political and public policy issues during the course of the semester. I understand that some students are more comfortable participating in class discussions than others. Therefore, I am giving you the option of either participating in our class discussions on a regular basis (once or twice a week) or writing a paper.

If you participate verbally, I will keep a record of it. In addition, throughout the semester, I will notify each of you to let you know if you have participated regularly. If you participate in our discussions, you will not have to write a participation paper. If you have not participated in our discussions regularly, a 10 page typed, double-spaced paper is due on the last day of class. You can write an analysis which gives your opinion on any topic(s) we have discussed in class.

Your Grade will be Based on:

Attendance	50pts
Participation or Optional Paper	50pts
Midterm Test	200pts
Final Test	200pts
Public Policy Memo	100pts
Public Policy Proposal	300pts
Presentations	100pts
Total	1000pts

Grading Scale:

930.00+ A	900.00–929.99 A-	870.00–899.99 B+	830.00–869.99 B
800.00–829.99 B-	770.00–799.99 C+	730.00–769.99 C	700.00–729.99 C-
670.00–699.99 D+	630.00–669.99 D	600.00–629.99 D-	Below 599.99 F

Extra Credit Opportunities: There may be two (or three) extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. However, the opportunities are based on the discretion of the instructor.

Disabilities Statement: Students requiring accommodations must first register with the Dean of Student's office, Disability Resource Center. The Dean of Student's office will provide

documentation, which the student will then give to the instructor. For more information, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism and cheating on examinations. The penalty for cheating is a grade of 0 on the exam or paper. In addition, the Dean of Student's office may choose to administer a harsher punishment such as a temporary suspension from this class or a permanent expulsion from the university.

Course Evaluation: You will have the opportunity to evaluate the class on the last day. You can also fill out an evaluation on evaluations.ufl.edu during the last two weeks of class.

Class Schedule:

Week One (Jan.7-11): Introduction: Why Should We Care About Policy? Why Do Policies Fail?

Week Two (Jan.14-18): Crime and Criminal Justice & Defining the Problem

Week Three (Jan.21-25): Race and Public Policy & Assembling Evidence and Constructing Alternatives

Week Four (Jan.28-Feb.1): Race and Public Policy (Cont.) & Selecting the Criteria

Week Five (Feb.4-8): Race and Criminal Justice Policy & Projecting the Outcomes

Week Six (Feb.11-15): Race and Criminal Justice Policy (Cont.)

Week Seven (Feb.18-22): Race and Criminal Justice Policy (Cont.) & Confronting the Trade-Offs

Week Eight (Feb.25-Mar.1): Midterm & Policy Position Memo Presentation

Week Nine (Mar.4-8) Spring Break

Week Ten (Mar.11-15): Poverty to Crime

Week Eleven (Mar.18-19): Poverty to Crime (Cont.) & The 13th Amendment

Week Twelve (Mar.25-29): Arresting Citizenship?

Week Thirteen (Apr.1-5): Arresting Citizenship? (Cont.)

Week Fourteen (Apr.8-12): The New Jim Crow

Week Fifteen (Apr.15-19): The New Jim Crow (Cont.) & Final Presentations

Week Sixteen (Apr.22-26): Final Exam

Disclaimer:

Please be aware that this syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified in class and via email when, and if, any changes are made.