RPAD 499 – Policy Capstone
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy
University at Albany, SUNY

SPRING 2015
Tuesday, 4:15pm – 7:05pm, BA 224

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course asks students to integrate the various theories, concepts and issues raised throughout their academic work in the field of public policy. This course seeks to deepen students' understanding of public policy and the various contexts through which public policy issues are framed in contemporary America. The course will afford students the opportunity to reflect upon their curricular and co-curricular experiences as public policy majors that have contributed and informed their understanding of public policy.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The following texts are available at the University at Albany Bookstore:


BLACKBOARD
Additional readings will be made available on the course’s Blackboard site.

ATTENDANCE AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Students are expected to attend all classes and to complete all course requirements (assignments) on time. If you are unable to maintain a pattern of attendance, please do not take the class. Missing a class may result in a deduction of two (2) “points” per class missed (see GRADING, below).

For example, if a student compiled 90 points through the duration of the course and misses three class meetings, six (6) points will be deducted resulting in 84 total points bringing the final course grade from an “A-“ to a “B.”
PARTICIPATION
“Participation” means engagement, informed by knowledge of readings and other materials. It requires more than simply coming to class but it does not mean an effort to dominate discussions.

Indications of continuous learning through thoughtful in-class participation — such as the integration of readings in your work and comments throughout the semester — may contribute as many as five (5) additional points to your final course grade.

For example, a student who compiled 85 points and contributes in a thoughtful manner throughout the course can earn five additional points resulting in 90 total points. Their final course grade would go from a “B” to an “A-.”

USE OF CELLULAR TELEPHONES
The use of cellular telephones is prohibited during class. Please silence or turn off cellular phones (even setting them to vibrate can be distracting) prior to the start of the class session. Texting, using social media (Facebook and the like) or utilizing your cellular phone in any like manner during class is not permitted.

PUBLIC POLICY “PORTFOLIO”
The course is intended to provide students with an experience that leverages their collective academic work as a public policy major (both in-class, and out-of-class). To that end, the course provides students with an opportunity to reflect and apply what they have learned throughout their time in the major.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY — You have read a lot as a public policy major – textbooks, “book” books, journal articles, newspaper articles, etc. (and the list goes on). Identify sources, based on the course work and associated syllabi that you believe have had the most significant impact on your work as a public policy major.

Identify five sources (e.g. books, articles or other such documents) you utilized during your academic work at UAlbany related to public policy. For each, provide a brief (150 - 200 words) “descriptive and evaluative paragraph.” The paragraph should discuss the “relevance, accuracy, and quality” of the sources cited.

The Olin and Uris Library at Cornell University have provided a useful guide for drafting your annotated bibliography at http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm.

Your annotated bibliography should be single-spaced; the citation should be in APA style format (http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx); pages should be numbered.
You may provide annotations for books and/or articles, whichever you chose. If you chose articles, you should provide two article annotations to every one book annotation. Therefore, if you chose to annotate only articles, you should provide ten sources (articles); if you chose to annotate only books, you should provide five sources (books).

**ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT** - Five mini-cases on ethics in managerial decision-making portray real life managerial dilemmas in a way that will examine and sort out how managers would address a management problem in a governmental agency or non-profit organization.

Students will be assigned to one of the five cases presented. Response papers should not exceed three pages, and be double-spaced.

*The response paper should be submitted (uploaded) through the course’s Blackboard learning management system by 4:15pm the day it is due.*

**POLICY ANALYSIS PROJECT** – Students will be assigned to teams and be assigned a policy problem they must work to address. They will have seven days to complete a policy memo and associated presentation that they will make to classmates.

The policy problem will be assigned on Tuesday, February 17th (in class) and be due the following Tuesday, February 24th.

**ISSUES FOR DEBATE – POSITION PAPER(S)** – Throughout the second half of the course, we will examine specific policy areas including jobs, income inequality, healthcare reform and energy policy. As students of public policy, we are acutely aware that any single policy area has more than one perspective. Furthermore, we know all too well that policy alternatives also come with varying costs and benefits.

Each week, beginning with class on March 3rd, you will be asked to write a position paper and be prepared to articulate succinct arguments in class to support (or refute) the viability of a policy alternative. Xavier University Library provides a guide for writing a position paper at: [http://www.xavier.edu/library/students/documents/position_paper.pdf](http://www.xavier.edu/library/students/documents/position_paper.pdf).

Position papers should not exceed three pages, and be double-spaced.

*Position papers should be submitted (uploaded) through the course’s Blackboard learning management system by 4:15pm the day they are due.*

**CASE STUDY RESPONSE PAPER(S) & PRESENTATIONS** – The final half of the course will focus on actual applications of public policy processes through a variety of case study exercises. Case studies are available through the course’s Blackboard page. Questions, to
be addressed in writing in anticipation of the following week’s class meeting, will also be uploaded to Blackboard.

Response papers should not exceed three pages, and be double-spaced.

*Response papers should be submitted (uploaded) through the course’s Blackboard learning management system by 4:15pm the day they are due.*

**48-HOUR PROJECT**
On Sunday night, May 3rd, you will be assigned a policy problem that must be completed by class on **Tuesday, May 5th**. You will have 48-hours to complete the project which includes a policy memo to a decision-maker and an associated presentation detailing your recommendations. *You will be assigned to teams.*

*Policy memos should be uploaded to Blackboard by 4:15pm.*

**48-HOUR PROJECT – (IN CLASS) PRESENTATION**
You should prepare a 10-minute presentation highlighting the components of your 48-hour project policy memo to be shared with the class.

*Each team member must upload a copy of their team’s presentation to Blackboard by 4:15pm.*

**A NOTE ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**
(adapted from the Undergraduate Bulletin: [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html))

The following behaviors are examples of academic dishonesty and are therefore unacceptable:

*“Plagiarism: Presenting as one’s own work the work of another person (for example, the words, ideas, information, data, evidence, organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone else). Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment, submission of another student’s work as one’s own, the purchase of prepared research or completed papers or projects, and the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else. Failure to indicate accurately the extent and precise nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences for violating University regulations.*

Examples of plagiarism include: failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major
idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper’s or project’s structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person’s data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one’s own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.

**Multiple Submission**: Submitting substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once, without the prior explicit consent of the instructor(s) to whom the material is being (or has in the past been) submitted.

**Unauthorized Collaboration**: Collaborating on projects, papers, or other academic exercises that is regarded as inappropriate by the instructor(s). Although the usual faculty assumption is that work submitted for credit is entirely one’s own, standards on appropriate and inappropriate collaboration vary widely among individual faculty and the different disciplines. Students who want to confer or collaborate with one another on work receiving academic credit should make certain of the instructor’s expectations and standards.

**Falsification**: Misrepresenting material or fabricating information in an academic exercise or assignment (for example, the false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of experimental or computer data, etc.).

When a faculty member has information that a student has violated academic integrity in a course or program for which he or she is responsible and determines that a violation has occurred, he or she will inform the student and impose an appropriate sanction.”

**GRADING**
Students’ final course grades are based on the compilation of a “portfolio” consisting of the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics in Government</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues for Debate – Position Paper * (5 pts each x3)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study – Response Paper * (5 pts each x3)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study – Presentation * (5 pts each x3)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis Project – Memo</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis Project – Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>48-Hour Project – Memo</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-Hour Project – Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Points translate to the following letter grades: A (96 – 100), A- (90 – 95), B+ (87 – 89), B (83 – 86), B- (80 – 82), C+ (77 – 79), C (73 – 76), C- (70 – 72), D+ (67 – 69), D (63 – 66), D- (60 – 62), E (<60).

COURSE SCHEDULE
The following schedule includes both reading and written assignments for the course. The schedule is subject to change.

PART I: POLICY ANALYSIS

January 27  Introduction
February 3  Bardach, pgs. 1 – 78.
           DUE: Annotated Bibliography
February 10 Bardach, pgs. 79 – 123.
           DUE: Ethical Government Management – Response Paper
February 17 Policy Analysis Project (Groups Meet)
           NO CLASS
February 24 Bardach, pgs. 125 – 140.
           Policy Analysis Project Memo Due & In-Class Presentations

PART II: ISSUES FOR DEBATE

March 3  Education Policy, Scott & Furlong, pgs. 362 - 401
           DUE: Position Paper
March 10 Environmental & Energy Policy, Scott & Furlong, pgs. 402 - 451
           DUE: Position Paper
March 17 NO CLASS. CLASSES SUSPENDED.
March 24 Healthcare Policy, Scott and Furlong, pgs. 274 – 323
           DUE: Position Paper

PART II: POLICY IN PRACTICE

March 31 CASE: Flu Vaccine
           DUE: Response Paper & Presentation
April 7  CASE: Wolf Politics, Part I  
DUE: Response Paper

April 14  CASE: Wolf Politics, Part II  
DUE: Presentation

April 21  CASE: Legislative Strategy, Part I  
DUE: Response Paper

April 28  CASE: Legislative Strategy: Part II  
DUE: Presentation

May 5  48-Hour Project Due & In-class Presentations