RPOS/RPUB350: Topics in Comparative Public Policy

RPOS 350 / RPUB 350
Topics in Comparative Public Policy: Trade, Aid and Debt
Fall Semester 2010
Class number 14112 / 15582
5:45-7:05 Mondays and Wednesdays, in Humanities 137

Professor Holly Jarman
Office Hours for Professor Jarman: Mondays and Wednesdays 4-5pm in Humanities B16, please email hjarman@albany.edu for appointments at other times.

Blackboard Site for this Course: https://bls.its.albany.edu/webct/logon/816583158001

Course Summary

What are the consequences of the recent financial crisis for public policies? How do industrialized states cope with the demands placed on their institutions, societies, and budgets by economic globalization? The course tackles these core questions by analyzing public policy in a comparative context, examining multiple levels of policymaking through a series of policy case studies including finance, health policy and climate change. By the end of the course, you should have an appreciation of the underlying structural and political differences between modern industrial countries and how these affect the policies that they adopt. This course combines elements of global politics, comparative politics and public policy, and is aimed at upper level undergraduates who want to reflect on these topics in some depth. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- discuss the global economy with others, using evidence from contemporary sources to construct coherent arguments in writing and in person.
- evaluate trade, aid and financial policies in depth: explain why an existing policy came to be, debate its effectiveness, and identify potential alternatives.
- compare US policy debates with those in other countries and at the global level, and discuss those differences with others.

This course contributes to fulfillment of the University at Albany learning objectives for social science courses, which are as follows:

1. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding that human conduct and behavior more generally are subject to scientific inquiry.
2. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena.
3. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions.
4. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, models, and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.
5. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematical analysis, employment of interpretive analysis.

**Required Texts**

You do not need to purchase texts for this class. All the required readings are available on our Blackboard site, which can be accessed at [https://bls.its.albany.edu/webct/logon/816583158001](https://bls.its.albany.edu/webct/logon/816583158001).

**What I Expect From You**

- Please come prepared. I expect you to read all of the required texts for each class before you come to class. Come to class ready to discuss, debate and disagree with the arguments they contain, with your fellow classmates, and me!
- Please be respectful of other people’s opinions. This does not mean that those opinions should or will go unchallenged, but that we all agree to listen carefully to one another and offer constructive criticism.
- Assignments should be submitted to Blackboard by 12 noon on the day of the deadline. 5 points will be deducted from late assignments for every day that they are late, unless there are mitigating circumstances (see below). If for some reason Blackboard does not allow you to upload, simply send the assignment by email to me at hjarman@albany.edu – assignments submitted by email before the deadline are still considered on time, but Blackboard submission is strongly preferred as it stops assignments from getting lost in my inbox.
- Please respect the university’s policy on academic integrity, available at: [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html). Using someone else’s argument without citing their work, quoting an article, book, web site or other source without giving the source, claiming as your work a paper written by someone else, and resubmitting a paper you wrote for another class are all examples of plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered to be a serious matter, even if it was not intentional. Plagiarism could result in any of the following, depending on the seriousness of the case: requirement to rewrite the affected assignment, lowering the assignment or the course grade by a full grade or more, failing the assignment or the course, or withholding permission to withdraw from the course.

**Assessments**

There are no prerequisites for this course. The course is graded A-E. Formal requirements, in addition to full participation in class discussion on the basis of the assigned readings, are:

1. Weekly Quizzes 40%
2. Attendance 15%
3. 3 Response Papers 45%
1. **Weekly Quizzes (40%)**

I expect you to come to class having read and thought about all the assigned readings for that class. One quiz will be given in class per week at the beginning of the Monday session, based on all of the readings for that week. Each quiz will ask five straightforward comprehension questions about the readings – they are designed to test your understanding of what you have read. Each quiz is worth a maximum of 5 marks, and your top 8 quizzes will count towards your final grade. **There will be no opportunities to make up quizzes that you miss.**

2. **Attendance (15%)**

Attendance will be taken in all lectures and regular attendance is expected barring mitigating circumstances.

3. **Response Papers (30%)**

During the semester, you will write three response papers which address topics covered in our class. The paper should take the form of a response to a focused question rather than a discussion of a broad topic. It is better to make a few coherent points well than to cram in irrelevant information just for length. The paper length is deliberately short to encourage students to edit and revise their work. Make every word count!

In order to receive a good grade I strongly recommend that you do the following:

- Start by reading the Blackboard readings relevant to your topic, and supplement these with related readings: search the library catalog, online academic databases such as JSTOR, EBSCO or Google Scholar for journal articles, and Lexis Nexis for newspaper articles. Use this evidence to back up your argument. Look at the web sites of relevant organizations e.g. the OECD for useful data and reports.
- Formulate a clear question and use this as the title of your paper e.g. ‘Why did the Copenhagen Summit fail to effectively tackle the issue of climate change?’
- Draft your paper well before the deadline and edit it several times. It is obvious when a paper has been written at the last minute or has not been edited.
- Read your paper aloud to see if the prose flows well.
- Run spelling and grammar checks before you submit your paper.

**Length and Formatting:**

- Each paper should be no more than 4 pages long plus a bibliography.
- Papers should be formatted using a plain 12 point font (e.g. Arial or Times New Roman) and double-spaced with page margins of no more than 1 inch.
- Please write the title of the paper in the form of a question on the first page, write your name in the header of the paper so that it appears on all pages, and number all pages.
Please include in-text references in the Harvard style (Author, Publication Year: page number) e.g. (Young, 1998:63) as well as a bibliography at the end of the paper which lists all of the publications that you cite.

What You Can Expect From Me

• **Instructor accessibility:** I will hold regular office hours each week in Humanities B16 on Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-5pm. Please try to come and see me during those hours. If you can’t come to office hours due to a conflict with another class or a work commitment (and only for those reasons), I can arrange an alternative meeting time with you—but be aware that you might have to wait a bit longer for an appointment. Many problems can be solved if you bring them to my attention early enough, so please come to me sooner rather than later.

• **Grading:** If you submitted your assignment on time, you have the right to get the graded work returned to you within a reasonable timeframe (approximately one week), with a set of written comments.

• **Right to appeal:** if you believe your grade is wrong for whatever reason, I encourage you to visit me in my scheduled office hours to talk about the problem. However, I ask that you do so within two weeks of receiving the grade. Appeals about assignments that are more than two weeks old will not be considered unless there are mitigating circumstances. Making an appeal is no guarantee that your grade will be raised: it may go up, down or stay the same depending on the results of the review.

• **Mitigating circumstances:** From time to time, unforeseen circumstances mean that students will have to miss classes or assignments. In such circumstances, please let me know the situation as soon as it is practical, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

• **Alternative class requirements:** Please contact me at the start of the course if you require alternative assessment arrangements e.g. extra time to finish assignments. If you are new to the university, you may wish to contact UAlbany’s Disability Resource Center for advice, [http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml)
# Class Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Why We Compare Policies</td>
<td>Sep 1</td>
<td>Why Policies Differ I: Democracies &amp; Their Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 6</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Sep 8</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 13</td>
<td>Why Policies Differ II: Interest Groups &amp; the Scope of Conflict</td>
<td>Sep 15</td>
<td>Why Policies Differ (or not) III: Culture and the Spread of Ideas</td>
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<td>Sep 20</td>
<td>Our Case Study Countries in Context: From Bretton Woods to G8</td>
<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>Our Case Study Countries in Context: From G8 to G20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>The Financial Crisis: what went wrong &amp; who’s to blame?</td>
<td>Sep 29</td>
<td>The Financial Crisis: Tax, Stimulus &amp; Austerity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Emerging Economies: the BRIC</td>
<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>China’s Global Role</td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Climate Change I: Policies &amp; Initiatives</td>
<td>Oct 27</td>
<td>Climate Change II: The Copenhagen Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Aid Policy and Altruism</td>
<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>Aid Policy and Commercial Interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Guest Speaker</td>
<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>Guest Speaker</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Health Policy I: the Rich Countries</td>
<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>Health Policy II: the Poor Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Special Session on the US-EU Lisbon Summit</td>
<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Education Policy I: Schools</td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Education Policy II: Higher Education &amp; Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Measuring Success I</td>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Measuring Success II</td>
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Reading List

Aug 30: Why We Compare Policies

No readings. Take a look at the syllabus and study tips posted on Blackboard.

Sep 1: Why Policies Differ I, Democracies & Their Institutions


Sep 6 & 8: NO CLASS

Sep 13: Why Policies Differ II, Interest Groups & the Sphere of Conflict


Sep 15: Why Policies Differ (or Not) III, Culture & the Spread of Ideas


Sep 20: Our Case Study Countries in Context, From Bretton Woods to G8


Sep 22: Our Case Study Countries in Context, From G8 to G20

**Sep 27: The Financial Crisis, What Went Wrong & Who’s to Blame?**


**Sept 29: The Financial Crisis, Tax, Stimulus & Austerity**


**Oct 6: Welfare Policy II, Reforming Public & Private**


**Oct 11: Trade Policy & Economic Growth**


**Oct 13: The Doha Round & The Future of the Global Economy**


**Oct 18: Emerging Economies, the BRIC**


Oct 20: China’s Global Role


Oct 25: Climate Change I: Policies & Initiatives


Oct 27: Climate Change II: The Copenhagen Agenda


Nov 1: Aid Policy & Altruism

Dambisa Moyo ‘Dead Aid: why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa’ p3-47, Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York.

Nov 3: Aid Policy & Commercial Interests


Nov 8: Guest Speaker

Nov 10: Guest Speaker

Nov 15: Health Policy I, the Rich Countries

Nov 17: Health Policy II, the Poor Countries

Scott Greer (forthcoming 2011) “Global Health Governance: Not Just for the Poor”.

Nov 22: Special Session on the US-EU Lisbon Summit

Readings for this session will be posted on Blackboard close to the event.

Nov 24: NO CLASS

Nov 29: Education Policy I, Schools


Dec 1: Education Policy II, Higher Education & Research


Dec 6: Measuring Success I


Dec 8: Measuring Success II

No readings.