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

**SPRING 2017**  
Tuesday, 4:15pm – 7:05pm, HU 115

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Office Hours: Tuesday after class, and by appointment.

**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.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**
*Through the policy capstone course, students will be able to:*

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of public policy issues and analytical tools;
2. Communicate complex ideas clearly and persuasively in written and oral forms;
3. Evaluate applied theoretical and empirical work in policy-relevant research;
4. Apply skills and knowledge acquired in the curriculum to analyze policy issues and make policy recommendations;
5. Demonstrate mastery of the above outcomes in the 48-hour project.

**READINGS & SUBSCRIPTIONS**
Course readings and case studies are available on the course’s **Blackboard** site.

Additionally, students are expected to **subscribe to the New York Times.** A digital subscription is available for $1/week here → [http://nyti.ms/23meE5a](http://nyti.ms/23meE5a). **Proof of subscription is due in class on January 31.** Student’s should read the *New York Times* on a daily basis and come prepared to discuss current events, especially in the policy space, during class each week.
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.

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
(adapted from the Undergraduate Bulletin: 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.”

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS**

**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://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography](http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography).
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).

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

CASE STUDY RESPONSE/REFLECTION PAPER(S) & PRESENTATIONS – The course included 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/reflection papers should be submitted (uploaded) through the course’s Blackboard learning management system by 4:15pm the day they are due.

POLICY CAPSTONE JOURNAL – As part of the course, you will be expected to keep a journal. The journal should be a reflective document that provides personal, thoughtful analysis of your individual participation/progress in the course, and your assessment of the interactions that may have occurred during the week.

The personal reflection and self-appraisal that is part of “journaling” will help you articulate what you learned as a public policy major and why you do the things you do—we call this “deep learning” since it comes about through your own self-analysis, rather than through lectures, memorization, or “book learning.” This thoughtful introspection can help you tell a potential employer, or a graduate school admissions officer, who you are and what talents and interests you possess.

You will submit weekly journal entries through Blackboard.

Remember that the more connections you make between what is going on in this capstone class to what you’ve learned in other courses, the better your entries will be and the easier they will be to write. Additionally, keep in mind the course student learning outcomes, and be sure to address how you are or are not achieving them.

It is very important that you be honest in your journal entries. If you have not spent any time or given any thought to this course during the week, then that is what you should record.

48-HOUR PROJECT
On Sunday night, May 7, you will be assigned a policy problem that must be completed by class on **Tuesday, May 9**. 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.

**Policy memos should be uploaded to Blackboard by 4:15pm on May 3rd.**

**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.

**Copies of the presentation should be uploaded to Blackboard by 4:15pm on Wednesday, May 3.**

**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>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Response (10 pts. each x 5)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Capstone Journal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</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.*

January 24     **Introduction**


**DUE: Annotated Bibliography**


**CASE: Contracting for Housing and Community Development in the City of New Prospect**

**DUE: Your contract and a brief (2-page) explanation of the basic principles behind your contract design.**

**March 7 CASE: Government/Nonprofit Contracting Exercise**

**DUE: Hearing Testimony**

**March 14 NO CLASS. CLASSES SUSPENDED.**

**CASE:** Negotiated Rulemaking Exercise: Woodstove New Source Performance Standard – Part I

March 28  **CASE:** Negotiated Rulemaking Exercise: Woodstove New Source Performance Standard – Part II

**DUE:** *Case Reflection*

April 4   **CASE:** United or Divided States? U.S.-Mexico Border Simulation – Part I

April 11  **NO CLASS. CLASSES SUSPENDED.**

April 18  **CASE:** United or Divided States? U.S.-Mexico Border Simulation – Part II

**DUE:** *Case Reflection*

April 25  **CASE:** Wolf Politics – Part I

May 2    **CASE:** Wolf Politics – Part II

**DUE:** *Hearing Testimony*

May 7    **48-Hour Project Assigned**

May 9    **48-Hour Project Due & In-class Presentations**