

POS/PAD 140 – Introduction to Public Policy
SW2, June 26-August 4, 2017
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Course Summary

This course introduces students to the policy making process. As a student in this course, you will gain a greater appreciation for the complexity of policymaking, the vast number of actors involved in policy making, and the factors that make policies more or less successful. Upon completing this course, you will have a working knowledge of the policy making process, the roles of different actors, be able to explain and utilize policy evaluation tools, and speak knowledgeably about a policy topic of your choice. Throughout the course, we will ask questions such as: Where do ideas for policies come from in the first place? Why do some ideas get attention while other problems are ignored? What does it take to get a policy formulated, enacted, and successfully implemented? What are the roles of the executive, legislature, courts, interest groups, business, the news media, and other actors in the policy process? Why do some policies, even after extensive research and analysis, seem so irrational and haphazard?

There are *no prerequisites* for this course. The course is a requirement for students in Rockefeller College's Public Policy program, and is also considered a Social Science course under the General Education requirements.

Course Goals

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- **Explain** various public policy theories and **relate** them to real world policy
- **Explain** the policy process and **apply** it to a current public policy
- **Explain** key public policy terms and concepts of the policy process
- **Speak Knowledgeably** about a self-selected public policy topic
- **Improve** understanding of public policy issues
- **Explain** how public policy is created
- **Explain and utilize** policy evaluation tools
- **Explain** how to evaluate a public policy from all stages of the policy process

Required Materials

Textbook: Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives by Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong, 5th edition ISBN 978-1-4833-4578-9

Computer with up-to-date software

Microsoft Office – Word, Excel, and Powerpoint

Course Expectations

This course is online, but it is not self-paced. There are deadlines and the materials and activities for each week will be made available every Friday. Given that this course is only 6 weeks, that does not mean that there is only 6 week's worth of work that you would get in a regular face-to-face course; this course is accelerated, so think of each week in this course being equal to two weeks in a regular course.

I expect that you will be logging into this course at least 5 days a week. Depending on how quickly you work, I expect that you will probably work about 3-5 hours each day between writing posts (equivalent to class discussion), writing papers, and reading and reacting to your classmates posts/comments. If you are present much less than that, you will not do well in this course. It takes time to write your own posts and complete the activities, read your classmates posts, compose answers and engage, and the more of this you do the more you will learn and take away from this course.

You will also need to manage your time. At the beginning of each week's module, you will see a list of due dates. It is your responsibility to ensure you meet those deadlines; I will be able to see if you submit something late and you will then be penalized as laid out in the late policy.

Each post you make must be well written and proofread. You must use proper grammar and punctuation. This is part of your grade so if I find that you are using slang, have a large number of spelling or grammatical errors, or are not writing coherently, it will be reflected in your grade. If you continue to make the same mistakes after I have given you feedback on how to correct those mistakes, it will affect your grade. I highly suggest that you write out any post you want to make in Word first so that if Blackboard has an error and your post does not go through, you do not have to retype everything.

You must also have a back-up plan. "My computer has a virus," "My computer crashed," "My Internet is down," or any other similar computer/Internet related problem is not an excuse to miss a deadline, fail to participate in a discussion, or not be able to engage in the course in general. Be sure you have a back-up plan or two, such as going to the public library or a friend/family member's house.

Blackboard Access

When accessing this course, be sure to go to Blackboard.albany.edu. This is the direct access to Blackboard, which will ensure you can gain access even if MyUAlbany is down or having problems.

Be aware, that there are some scheduled Blackboard outages (times you will be unable to access the course). Please plan accordingly. More information can be found on the Systems status and Scheduled Maintenance Website:

<https://wiki.albany.edu/display/itssystemstatus/Systems+Status+and+Scheduled+Maintenance>

- July 8, 2017 6am-1pm

Assignments & Grading

Due Dates, Instructions, & Submissions

All assignments are due by 11:59pm on the date they are due. You will find instructions for all policy papers and your policy memo under: Course Content: Assignments. A Safe Assign Submissions link is available within the Module for the week that the assignment is due. **All submissions for policy papers and policy memo must be in either PDF or Word format.** It cannot be a Mac Pages document because Blackboard will not be able to read it properly. If you upload an unreadable format that I cannot grade, it will be considered late and you will have to

resubmit the document. You are given an unlimited number of submission attempts for each assignment in case an error occurs or you have uploaded the wrong document. However, keep in mind **I will grade your last attempted upload. All discussion and activity posts need to be written in the space provided on Blackboard; do not attach a file for any discussion posts or activities (unless specified in the instructions).**

Discussion Boards & Activities (Attendance & Class Participation) (50%)

- Every week we will have multiple discussion boards and activities. You are required to engage in every one of them.
- **Discussions** simulate class discussion on our course topics for the week. You are required to post an answer to a prompt related to the readings that I will provide **and** interact at least two times (2x) with your classmates within the discussion. **I strongly encourage you to comment on comments within the discussion posts to engage more in a discussion than just everyone commenting on the main post.** The posts are due every Monday and Thursday by 11:59pm so that your classmates will have time to read and respond to them by Wednesday and Saturday, respectively, by 11:59pm.
- **Activities** are mini assignments/papers related to the course topics for the week. These are designed to help you apply the readings from that week to real world situations. They are supposed to get you thinking like a person making and/or evaluating public policy. You will be required to post your activity work by 11:59pm the date the activity post is due and then interact at least three times (3x) with your classmates within the activity. **I strongly encourage you to comment on comments within the activity to engage more in a discussion than just everyone commenting on the main post.**
- You will have to post before you can see anyone else's posts in any discussion or activity. Once you have posted, you cannot edit your response so review it carefully before posting. After you post, you will need to interact with your classmates posts as explained above. The more you interact, the more you will get out of this course. Think of these discussion boards as class discussion.
- For both Discussions and Activities mundane or simple responses such as "I agree when you said xyz" or "I really liked this point you made: (explains point)" do not qualify as interactions. This does not show me that you understand your classmates post or that you understand the readings. **When you interact with your classmates, your posts must add to the discussion; they must be original.** Feel free to build off of one another, but never simply say you agree or why you agree without adding something new.

Quizzes (10%)

- You will have 12, ten question quizzes throughout the course. Your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped, so your overall quiz grade will be calculated based upon your 10 best scores.
- Each quiz will be accessible for 48 hours, which will be listed on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus, but once you start the quiz you will only have 15 minutes to complete it. You are only given one attempt at the quiz and if you go over the 15 minutes, your quiz will automatically submit the answers for the questions you have already answered.
- Be sure you have completed all of the readings for the week before you take the quiz; any information in the required readings could be a question.

Policy Papers (15%)

- You are required to write four policy papers during the first half of this course and one final reflection policy paper during the last week.
- The first four will help you prepare to write your policy memo. If you do a good job with these papers, writing your memo should be fairly easy. All of these papers will be using the same policy issue that you choose for your policy memo.
- The final reflection policy paper is a critical self-evaluation of your learning during this course.
- The topics of the policy papers and the due dates can be found in the Assignments Folder.

Policy Memo (25%)

- This paper will be a 4-5 page memo about any public policy issue you choose using at least 5 legitimate sources outside of class materials (not encyclopedias or wikipedia).
- This paper is a policy analysis examining a policy issue and applying the stages of the policy process. Details about this assignment can be found in the Assignments Folder.

Grading – How I Will Evaluate Your Work

Discussion Boards

- Your initial posts, in response to the prompt I provide, are evaluated based upon your demonstration of knowledge from the readings. Can you demonstrate an understanding and/or application of the concepts? Are your arguments well informed by the readings? You will only have one attempt to answer the prompt and you will not be able to see or interact with your classmates posts until you post. You can save and go back. When you cite a concept from the readings, you must use the APSA citation format.
- Your responses to your classmates posts are evaluated based upon not only whether you interact with posts, but the quality. Are you asking insightful, informed questions or making informed comments? OR are you just commenting that you agree (this is not satisfactory to “count” as an interaction and will hurt your grade). You must engage with the material and your classmates’ comments and posts in order to receive credit for this portion of the course. **When you interact with your classmates, your posts must add to the discussion; they must be original.** Feel free to build off of one another, but never simply say you agree or why you agree without adding something new.
- Your posts and responses will be graded using the rubric posted on Blackboard under Course Content.

Quizzes

- All quizzes are multiple choice.
- There is only 1 correct answer to each question so you either get full or no credit for each question.

Policy Papers

- These papers are graded on an A-F scale. The requirements you must meet in order to get an A, B, C, etc. on each assignment are fully detailed in the Assignments Folder on

Blackboard. You will receive an F if you do not turn in the assignment or do not follow any of the instructions/answer the questions asked in the assignment; you can also get an F if you submit your work late (see late policy).

- All papers must include in-text citations and a works cited page (not included in the page count); **if either of these are missing you will receive a 0 for the assignment.**

Policy Memo

- This memo is graded on an A-F scale. The requirements you must meet in order to get an A, B, C, etc. on this assignment is fully detailed in the Assignments Folder on Blackboard. You will receive an F if you do not turn in the assignment or do not follow any of the instructions/answer the questions asked in the assignment; you can also get an F if you submit your work late (see late policy).
- Your memo must include in-text citations and a works cited page (not included in the page count); **if either of these are missing you will receive a 0 for the assignment.**

Extra Credit

- Do not expect or plan on extra credit. I will only provide extra credit (which will often be more work than the initial assignment) if I find that a majority of the class has had problems with or struggled on a particular assignment. No individual extra credit will be given.
- If I do give you the opportunity for extra credit, **it cannot be used to replace a 0.**
- *I will not grant extra credit if someone asks;* I will only give extra credit on my own evaluation of how the class is doing overall. Do your classmates a favor, and do not ask me for extra credit or an assignment to pull up your grade, because that will mean I will not offer any.

Other Important Information

Communication

- There are two primary forms of communication that we will use in this course.
- The first is the “Ask a Question” discussion board.
 - In the folder for each week, you will find a link to a discussion board called “Ask a Question.” where you can ask questions about the material. This is analogous to raising your hand in class. **This is where you should post if you have questions regarding the class material or a course concept.**
 - Before you ask a question, please review the other questions to see if yours has already been asked. I, or a classmate will respond to your question. When you do ask a question, be specific so I understand what you are asking about; don’t just say “When we can submit that assignment;” I don’t know what “that assignment” is.
 - If you e-mail me a question about course content, I will ask you to post on “Ask a Question” so that all of your classmates can see my answer as well.
- The other form of communication is UAlbany e-mail. Any and all communications and announcements I send out about this course will go to your UAlbany e-mail, so be sure you are checking it regularly.

- If you e-mail me or post on the “Ask a Question” discussion board, **please except that it could take up to 24 hours to get a response**, though it may often be quicker. I am not always at my computer or able to respond right when you send an e-mail; teaching this course is not my fulltime job. **Please note that if you e-mail me after about 6pm on most days, you will not get a response until the next day. Therefore, I advise you not to wait until the night an assignment is due to ask questions.**
- Keep this old adage in mind “A lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.” I will not frantically answer everyone’s e-mails about an assignment due in 4 hours because you waited until the last minute.

Classmate Chat

This is a discussion board I set up for you to communicate with your classmates as you might before/after class, in the dorms, or in the library

(Virtual) Office Hours

These office hours are two separate 2-hour blocks during the week that I will guarantee I will be at my computer ready to answer your questions regarding course material or assignments. I will be answering questions throughout the week, but during these office hours you will get real time answers to your questions on the discussion board or through e-mail. These times will be established using your feedback as to when would be most helpful, which will be done within the first two days of the course. I will do my best to set hours that are convenient for most people, but I cannot guarantee your preference will be those chosen; I have to go with what works best for a majority of people.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted up to 48 hours after the due date. Any assignment submitted between 1 and 24 hours after the due date will be docked one letter grade, and any assignment received between 25 and 48 hours after the due date will be docked two letter grades. Any assignment received more than 48 hours after a due date will be given a 0 and you will not receive feedback. **The time stamp of submission on Blackboard is what I will use to determine if your assignment is late. If something is due by 11:59pm on Wednesday, and you submitted at 12:00am on Thursday, it will be docked one letter grade.**

Technological Problems

Problems with...

Login to your ISP (Internet Service Provider); connecting to websites; launching web browser software (Internet Explorer, Firefox).

Connecting to the UAlbany BLS website; login to BLS website and accessing your course(s); interacting or participating in course activities, submission of assignment or file attachments in course.

Who You should contact...

Your ISP (Internet Service Provider)

The ITS Help Desk
go to the ITS Help Request Form
(<http://www.albany.edu/its/help>)
call (518) 442-3700

Please note that your instructor (me) is not on this list. If you send inquiries to me about these technical problems, I will refer you to the resources listed.

Citations and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is “an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author” (plagiarism, *Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.* <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/plagiarism>). The university's policy on academic integrity is available at: http://www.albany.edu/reading/academic_integrity.php.

You must site your sources. When you paraphrase or directly quote a source in your narrative, you must list the author and the year in which it was published, as well as the page number it appeared on, in your text (Slye 2014, 15).

On a separate page, you will need to include a bibliography done in American Political Science Association (APSA) Style. Use the APSA sheet posted on blackboard.

Policy on Accommodating Disabilities

Policy Statement

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (BA-120, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

How to find out more

The University provides a great deal of information on the services it offers to disabled students which can be found on the [Disability Resource Center](#) page.

Contact information

Carolyn Malloch, Director of Disabled Student Services

cmalloch@albany.edu

BA-120

Phone: (518) 442-5490

Fax: (518) 442-5589

TTY: (518) 442-3366

Course Schedule

The schedule for the course is on the following page. It is a chart of what is due when so you can easily see how your week looks at a glance. You will see the pattern of the weeks is the same throughout of when things are due and available. The only exception to this “normal” pattern is week 5, and that is because I want you to have the information from the activity before you participate in the group discussion on education and environmental policy.

Week	Day of Week	Date	Readings	Discussion Posts	Discussion Responses	Activity	Activity Responses	Quizzes	Papers	Other
1: What is Public Policy and the Policy Process Model; Agenda Setting and Problem Definition	Monday	6/26/17	Furlong: Chapter 1 & 3; Kingdon (1995); Stone (1989)	Public Policy				Quiz 2 Available 12:01am		Ice Breaker Module (including syllabus quiz)
	Tuesday	6/27/17				Policy Process Model		Quiz 2 Due 11:59pm		
	Wednesday	6/28/17			Public Policy					
	Thursday	6/29/17		Problem Definition						
	Friday	6/30/17					Policy Process Model	Quiz 3 Available 12:01am		
	Saturday	7/1/17			Problem Definition			Quiz 3 Due 11:59pm		
	Sunday	7/2/17	Furlong: Chapter 5 & 6							
2: Policy Formation, Alternatives, and Evaluation	Monday	7/3/17		Policy Formation and Evaluation		Problems and Alternatives		Quiz 4 Available 12:01am	Policy Paper 1: Problem Definition	
	Tuesday	7/4/17						Quiz 4 Due 11:59pm		
	Wednesday	7/5/17			Policy Formation and Evaluation					
	Thursday	7/6/17		Policy Alternatives		Solving Public Problems				
	Friday	7/7/17						Quiz 5 Available 12:01am	Policy Paper 2: Agenda Setting	
	Saturday	7/8/17			Policy Alternatives		Solving Public Problems	Quiz 5 Due 11:59pm		
	Sunday	7/9/17	Furlong Chapters 4 & 12; Meltsner; Wldavsky; Simon Ch. 8							
3: Policy Analysis/Evaluation and Foreign Policy & Homeland Security	Monday	7/10/17		Policy Analysis				Quiz 6 Available 12:01am		
	Tuesday	7/11/17				Policy Analysis and Evaluation		Quiz 6 Due 11:59pm		
	Wednesday	7/12/17			Policy Analysis				Policy Paper 3: Policy Formulation & Alternatives	
	Thursday	7/13/17		Foreign Policy & Homeland Security		Foreign Policy & Homeland Security	Policy Analysis and Evaluation			
	Friday	7/14/17						Quiz 7 Available 12:01am		
	Saturday	7/15/17			Foreign Policy & Homeland Security		Foreign Policy & Homeland Security	Quiz 7 Due 11:59pm		
	Sunday	7/16/17								

Week	Day of Week	Date	Readings	Discussion Posts	Discussion Responses	Activity	Activity Responses	Quizzes	Papers	Other
4: Institutions & Policy Policy and Abortion Policy	Sunday	7/16/17	Furlong Chapter 2; A History of Key Abortion Rulings in the US; 2016 Who Decides Report; Answorth & Hall (2011) Chapter 4 & 7							
	Monday	7/17/17		Institutions and Policy				Quiz 8 Available 12:01am		
	Tuesday	7/18/17				Abortion Policy		Quiz 8 Due 11:59pm		
	Wednesday	7/19/17			Institutions and Policy				Policy Paper 4: Policy Analysis	
	Thursday	7/20/17		Abortion Policy						
	Friday	7/21/17						Quiz 9 Available 12:01am	Draft Memo (optional) for feedback	
	Saturday	7/22/17			Abortion Policy		Abortion Policy	Quiz 9 Due 11:59pm		
5: Education and Environmental/ Energy Policy	Sunday	7/23/17	Furlong Chapters 10, 11, 14, & 16							
	Monday	7/24/17				Education and Environmental Policy		Quiz 10 Available 12:01am		
	Tuesday	7/25/17						Quiz 10 Due 11:59pm		
	Wednesday	7/26/17		Education Policy			Education and Environmental Policy			
	Thursday	7/27/17		Environmental Policy						
	Friday	7/28/17			Education Policy			Quiz 11 Available 12:01am		
	Saturday	7/29/17			Environmental Policy			Quiz 11 Due 11:59pm		
6: Wrap-up	Sunday	7/30/17	Furlong Chapter 13					Quiz 12 Available 12:01am		
	Monday	7/31/17		Wrap-up				Quiz 12 Due 11:59pm		
	Tuesday	8/1/17				Final				
	Wednesday	8/2/17			Wrap-up				Final Policy Memo	
	Thursday	8/3/17					Final			
Friday	8/4/17							Policy Paper 5: Final Reflection		