

An Introduction to Public Policy

POLI 211

FALL 2019

MAYBANK 316

9:00AM - 9:50AM MWF

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00pm - 3:00pm
and by appointment

Course Description

Our responsibility is one of decision—for to govern is to choose - John F. Kennedy

As stated by President Kennedy, making choices is at the heart of governing. How do policymakers make choices regarding public policy? This course will address this question by examining the policymaking process in the United States.

Throughout this course we will explore the historical and social context in which policymaking occurs; how problems reach the agendas of policymakers and how policies are formed to address those problems; the adoption of specific policy alternatives; how policies are implemented; and, finally, how public policies are evaluated.

Course Catalog: This course examines the cultural, economic, and institutional contexts that shape U.S. public policy. The course examines the processes by which policy problems are addressed and alternate solutions are adopted. Implications for solving public problems and resolving political disagreements in a manner consistent with democratic ideas are considered.

This course will be *lecture* and *discussion* based. Being able to adequately participate requires you to come to class prepared by having done the assigned readings prior to class. In addition, you should be prepared to participate in class by asking questions and making informed comments that add to the class discussion. **I may call on you to answer a question or discuss your policy issue.**

All phones, tablets, and laptops must remain put away unless you are asked to use them for class purposes. *Notes should be taken by hand, with pen and paper. You learn better that way.* I recommend taking notes using the [Cornell Method](#). *If you want to use a laptop for class, you need to write a short justification explaining why and email it to me.* Also, lecture slides will **not** be made available outside of class.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The goals for this course are to:

- Understand the public policy process in the US

- Apply various public policy models to real world policy issues
- Analyze the merits of public policy debates
- Analyze the merits of alternative policy solutions to public problems

General Social Science Education Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should be able to apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions. This will be assessed in the final exam.

Required Materials

The following materials are **required**.

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Thomas A. 2016. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making* 4th Edition. **Be sure you have the 4th edition.**
 - Additional readings listed in the schedule will be available on [OAKS](#).
- *Poll Everywhere:* You are required to set-up an account and register your phone with Poll Everywhere.
 - I will send a link to register for Poll Everywhere to your CofC email
 - This is a link to register on the course OAKS page
 - *There is no cost to use Poll Everywhere for this class*
 - I encourage you to review the materials [here](#) and [here](#)

Course Prerequisites

POLI 101 or permission of instructor

Course Requirements and Grading

Performance in this course will be evaluated on the basis of in-class quiz questions, four issues papers, a policy memo, and two exams. Points will be distributed as follows:

Assignment	Possible Points
Quiz Questions	250 points total
Mid-Term Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Issue Papers	(4 at 100 pts each) 400 points total
Policy Memo	50 points
Total	900 points

Assignments

All due dates for assignments are on the following schedule.

Quiz Questions: There will be 1 to 2 quiz questions given during each class period and the questions will be answered using Poll Everywhere on your phone. *You must be present in class to be able to answer the questions.* These questions will cover material from the readings and/or class discussion. Each question will be worth 5 points and can not be made up if you miss class. However, I will add up to 25 points to your quiz questions grade at the end of the course.

Mid-term: The mid-term exam will be given on **October 11** and will be **taken in OAKS**. All material from the readings, lectures, and in-class discussions are fair game for the mid-term exam. The exam will be multiple choice, short answer, and short essay.

Final Exam: **The final exam period is Monday, December 9** from **8:00am to 11:00am** and it will also be **taken on OAKS**. The final will NOT be comprehensive and all material from the readings, lectures, and in-class discussions *since the mid-term* are fair game. The exam will be multiple choice, short answer, and short essay.

Issue Papers: You will pick a problem or policy issue of interest to you and you will write **four** short, 4 to 5 page, papers about various aspects of the issue. These aspects include the nature of the problem; current and past policies to address the problem; and several alternative approaches to the problem. Details for each issue paper are posted on OAKS. **Issue papers must be turned in through the dropbox on OAKS.**

Policy Memo: For the policy memo assignment, you will write a short, 2 page, memo about your policy problem to a specific decision maker. In the memo you will summarize your issue papers and make a recommendation to the decision maker regarding the policy problem you chose. **The policy memo must be turned in through the dropbox on OAKS.**

Late Work Policy Late work will be penalized 10% each day (24 hr period) it is late, up to 3 days. After 3 days the assignment will not be accepted. For example, if an assignment is due Tuesday at 12:15pm, it is late as of 12:16pm and you lose 10%, after Wednesday at 12:16pm you lose another 10%, after Thursday at 12:15pm another 10%, and no work will be accepted after Friday at 12:15pm. *No late work will accepted 72 hrs after the assignment due date and time. No make-up work is possible.*

Attendance Policy Attendance will not be taken, however, a lack of attendance will result in missed quiz questions.

Grading Scale

There are **900** possible points for this course. Grades will be allocated based on your earned points and calculated as a percentage of **900**. A: 94 to 100%; A-: 90 to 93%; B+: 87 to 89%; B: 83 to 86%; B-: 80 to 82%; C+: 77 to 79%; C: 73 to 76%; C-: 70 to 72%; D+: 67 to 69%; D: 63 to 67%; D-: 60 to 62%; F: 59% and below

Course Schedule

Subject To Change. Changes will be announced in class.

Topics, Readings, Assignment Due Dates, and Exam Dates

Assigned readings come from the **Birkland** book and other readings mentioned below will be available on **OAKS**, under Content -> Readings, OR through the links provided.

Birkland: Birkland, Thomas A. 2016. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*

Aug 19-Aug 23: Course Introduction and Overview

- *Readings:*
 - [Policy in 500 Words: what is public policy and why does it matter?](#)

Aug 26-Aug 30: Policy and Policymaking

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 1
 - Birkland, Chapter 2 to page 30
- NO CLASS Aug 30

Sept 2-Sept 6: The Context of Policymaking

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 2
 - Birkland, Chapter 3

Sept 9-Sept 13: Policy Types

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 7
- *Assignments:*
 - **Issue paper 1 DUE: Sept 13**

Sept 16-Sept 20: Institutions

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 4

Sept 23-Sept 27: Actors and Subsystems

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 5

Sept 30-Oct 4: Agenda Setting

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 6
- *Assignments:*
 - **Issue paper 2 DUE: Oct 4**

Oct 7-Oct 11: Policy Formulation

- *Readings:*
 - Anderson: *The Formulation of Policy Proposals*, on [OAKS](#)
- **MID-TERM EXAM: Oct 11**

Oct 14-Oct 18: Decision-Making

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 8
- **FALL BREAK: Oct 14-15**

Oct 21-Oct 25: Policy Analysis

- *Readings:*
 - [Can technocracy be saved? An interview with Cass Sunstein](#)

Oct 28-Nov 1: Policy Design

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 9
- *Assignments:*
 - **Issue paper 3 DUE: Nov 1**

Nov 4-Nov 8: Policy Implementation

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland, Chapter 10

Nov 11-Nov 15: Public Budgeting

- *Readings:*
 - Anderson: *Budgeting and Public Policy*, on [OAKS](#)

Nov 18-Nov 22: Policy Evaluation

- *Readings:*
 - Anderson: *Policy Impact, Evaluation, and Change*, on [OAKS](#)
- *Assignments:*
 - **Issue paper 4 DUE: Nov 22**

Nov 25-Nov 29: Policy Issues

- **THANKSGIVING BREAK:** Nov 27-29

Dec 2-Dec 6: Conclusion

- *Assignments:*
 - **Policy memo DUE: Dec 2**

FINAL EXAM IS MONDAY DECEMBER 9

Important Information

Honor Code and Academic Integrity

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration – working together without permission – is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the [Student Handbook](#)

Students with Disabilities

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the [Center for Disability Services](#) located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me at least one week before any accommodation is needed.

Financial Challenges

If a student has difficulty affording groceries or getting sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, please contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to assist with identifying available resources.

Counseling Center

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating

and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Services are available, and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at the [Counseling Center](#).

Center for Student Learning

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL [website](#) or call (843) 953-5635.

Religious Holiday Policy

It is the policy of the College to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me immediately if you will need to miss class any time during this semester.

Weather

If the College of Charleston closes and members of the community are evacuated due to inclement weather, students are responsible for taking course materials with them in order to continue with course assignments consistent with instructions provided by faculty. In cases of extended periods of institution-wide closure where students have relocated, instructors may articulate a plan that allows for supplemental academic engagement despite these circumstances.