

Public Policy Making: An Introduction
Political Science 2070
Spring 2017

Dr. Hogan
TTH 10:30-11:50 a.m.
210 Williams

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental elements of public policymaking in the United States. Attention is given to the various steps of the policy process, the institutions and actors involved, and the conditions that facilitate or impede policy adoption and implementation. Emphasis is also given to policy evaluation, the metrics used in assessment, and the techniques for determining whether policies have their intended effects. Attention is devoted to a wide variety of policies on the national, state and local levels.

Much of our focus will be on specific policy areas, and for each we are interested in answering several key questions: (1) What is the specific problem or condition that is believed to require government action? (2) What are some of the potential policy solutions? Can we list some of the major controversies surrounding these policies (the pros and cons of each)? (3) Who are the major institutional actors and other pertinent players with a stake in the outcome (political leaders, political parties, interest groups, etc.)? If the issue is being covered by the media, how is it being framed for the public? (4) What are the steps in adopting and implementing the new policy? (5) What evidence do we have that an adopted policy works as intended? Have there been any unintended or unanticipated consequences? Ultimately, does the policy result in a positive or negative outcome for society? Who is most benefited (or harmed) by the policy outcome?

An overarching theme for many of our discussions is whether and how much public sentiment matters for the types of policies that are adopted and implemented. To some extent this is an assessment of how “democratic” the U.S. political system is. Do the opinions of average citizens have an influence, or is it the case that the opinions of some citizens matter more than others? Do citizens have enough information to make informed judgements across a range of policy areas? Ultimately, would policies be improved if public opinion mattered more (or less) in the policymaking process?

Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university’s definition of work required for each credit hour: “not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester.” Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom (for this class it means reading, studying, and working on the course assignments).

Required Reading Materials

Two books are available for purchase in the bookstore (please make certain to purchase the correct editions):

- *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives* (2015) by Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong, 5th edition (Sage, CQ Press).
- *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* (2016) by CQ Researcher, 17th edition (Sage, CQ Press).

In addition there are several Moodle Readings listed on the syllabus. These readings can be downloaded from the course Moodle site.

Student Evaluations and Policies

Grading

The final grade for this course will be determined by a student’s performance in the following areas:

Participation	10%
Policy Report and Presentation	15%
Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	25%
Final Exam	30%
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TOTAL	100%

Letter grades are assigned as follows based on a student's final numerical average:

F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
<60	60-62	63-66	67-69	70-72	73-76	77-79	80-82	83-86	87-89	90-92	93-96	97 ≥

Participation

Classes are generally conducted using a lecture-discussion format so it is necessary to keep up with the readings and to come prepared for class. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do so, it is necessary to complete the readings in advance and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Your job is to come prepared to talk about the day's readings. It is not my responsibility to merely highlight those aspects of the readings that you need to know for the exams. If I feel that you are not doing the readings, I will not discuss them (although you will be responsible for the material on the exams). Also, if possible, please keep up with current political developments since these will often be used as examples in our discussions.

Several times during the semester I will ask you to provide written comments about a topic, answer a brief question, take a quiz, or participate in a class exercise. Your performance on these activities will be counted as your participation grade. There will be several opportunities throughout the semester and your grade is determined by your successful completion of each. If you satisfactorily complete all of them, you will receive 100% for your overall participation, complete 90% and your grade is 90, 80% is a grade of 80, etc. Note for quizzes and some activities a grade is given, so to "satisfactorily complete" the activity is to correctly answer the questions asked (for example, if you get half the questions correct, your grade on that one activity would be 50%).

Policy Report and Presentation

You are expected to complete a policy report in which you identify and write a 3-page paper on an assigned policy area. Students will make brief presentations to the class (in March) and the written report is due on Thursday, April 6. Further details will be provided in a separate handout during the second full week of classes.

Exams

There are two in-term exams and a final (dates are listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions. Note that makeup exams are only administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please make the necessary plans well in advance of the exam dates.

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Classroom Rules

Please be respectful to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in the class. Please make every effort not to be late. Be seated and ready to begin at the appropriate time and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Absolutely no audio or video recording devices are allowed to be used unless special permission is granted. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography or videography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violators of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students. These restrictions are in place to ensure the integrity of testing materials and to protect student privacy.

You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

Late Assignments and Missed Work

In an effort to provide a level playing field, I take deadlines very seriously and hold everyone to an identical standard. Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official university-sponsored events, etc.). A penalty for handing in the paper late is assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points (5 points for missing the deadline, and 5 points for each 24-hour period thereafter). Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or

papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return to the university, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on this course's Moodle site where they must be submitted along with any other accompanying documentation (a physician's note, etc.).

Graded Work

I will make grades available on Moodle as soon as your assignments are graded. Note that your individual participation grades are NOT displayed on Moodle, however, by the last week of classes I will post your overall participation grade. I will return your paper and your exams to you in class. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance. Please note, however, I will not estimate your current grade for you (the percentage that each grade counts toward your final average is provided earlier in the syllabus). Also, I do not e-mail grades.

Special Needs

For students who have special needs or who require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made. Please note, if you have a disabling condition that prevents you from completing any requirement of the course, it must be documented by Disabilities Services which is responsible for sending me a report regarding appropriate accommodations. In other words, I will NOT accept a licensed medical practitioner's note (physician, surgeon, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) for a disability that requests exemptions to course requirements. Such requests must be made through Disabilities Services.

Course Schedule

- January 12** ***Introduction to Course***
- No reading assignment.
- January 17** ***What is Public Policy and How Do We Study It?***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 1).
 - Moodle Reading #1: Wehner, Peter. 2016. "In Defense of Politics, Now More Than Ever," *New York Times*, Oct. 29.
 - Moodle Reading #2: Stokes, Patrick. 2012. "No, You're Not Entitled to Your Opinion," *The Conversation*, October 4.
- January 19** ***Context of Policymaking: Federalism and Separation of Powers***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (pp. 34-58 of Chapter 2).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 3: "Marijuana Industry").
 - Moodle Reading #3: Moncrief, Gary, and Peverill Squire. 2013. "Making a Case for States," Chapter 1 in *Why States Matter: An Introduction to State Politics*, Landham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- January 24** ***Government Institutions and Policy Actors***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (pp. 59-72 of Chapter 2).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 10: "Reforming Juvenile Justice").
 - Moodle Reading #4: Domonsoski, Camila. 2016. "Students Have 'Dismaying' Inability to Tell Fake News from Real, Study Finds," *National Public Radio*, November 23.
 - Moodle Reading #5: "Identifying Expertise" (pp. 129-151 in *A Field Guide to Lies* by Daniel J. Levitin, 2016).
- January 26** ***Theories of Public Policymaking***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (74-101 of Chapter 3).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 16: "Police Tactics").
 - Moodle Reading #6: Page, Benjamin I., Larry M. Bartels, and Jason Seawright. 2013. "Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans," *Perspectives on Politics*, March: 21-73.
- January 31** ***Mechanisms of Public Policy***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (pp. 101-111 of Chapter 3).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 2: "Pesticide Controversies" and Chapter 6: "Housing Discrimination").
- February 2** **Exam #1**
- February 7** ***Analyzing Public Policies***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 4).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 1: Air Pollution and Climate Change" and Chapter 11: "Racial Conflict").
 - Moodle Reading #7: "Logical Fallacies" (pp. 198-210 in *A Field Guide to Lies* by Daniel J. Levitin, 2016).

- February 9 ***Defining the Problem and Devising Solutions***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapters 5 and 6).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 12: “Prisoners and Mental Illness”).
 - Moodle Reading #8: “Overlook, Undervalued Alternative Explanations” (pp. 152-167 in *A Field Guide to Lies* by Daniel J. Levitin, 2016).
- February 14 ***Economic and Budgetary Policies***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 7).
 - Moodle Reading #9: Casselman, Ben. 2016. “A President’s Economic Decisions Matter . . . Eventually,” *Vox* July.
- February 16 ***Economic and Budgetary Policies Continued***
- Moodle Reading #10: Peters, B. Guy. 2016. “Tax Policy.”
 - Moodle Reading #11: Huang, Chye-Ching, and Chloe Cho. 2016. “Ten Facts You Should Know About the Federal Estate Tax,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, D.C.
- February 21 ***Business and Labor Policies***
- Moodle Reading #12: McBride, James. 2016. “The Trans-Pacific Partnership and U.S. Trade Policy,” Council on Foreign Relations.
 - Moodle Reading #13: Will, George F. 2016. “A Plan to Make America 1953 Again,” *Washington Post*, December.
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 4: “Unions at a Crossroads”).
- February 23 ***Regulating Interest Group Activities***
- Moodle Reading #14: Kusnetz, Nicholas. 2013. “Revolving Door Swings Freely in America’s Statehouses,” Center for Public Integrity.
 - Moodle Reading #15: Lipton, Eric. 2016. “With Trump’s Election, a Bonanza for Washington Lobbyists,” *New York Times*, November.
 - Moodle Reading #16: Riley, Bryan. 2014. “U.S. Trade Policy Gouges American Sugar Consumers,” *Background*, Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation.
- February 28 ***Mardi Gras Holiday***
- March 2 ***Interest Groups in the Policymaking Process***
- No reading assignment.
- March 7 ***Health Care Policies***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 8).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 13: “Reforming Veterans’ Health Care”).
- March 9 ***Education Policies***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 10).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 5: “Free Speech on Campus” and Chapter 9: “Campus Sexual Assault”).
- March 14 **Exam #2**
- March 16 ***Environmental and Energy Policies***
- No reading assignment.
- March 21 ***Environmental and Energy Policies Continued***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 11).
- March 23 ***Social Security Policies***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (pp. 302-318 of Chapter 9).
- *** Policy Presentations: Set #1 *****
- March 28 ***Social Safety Net Policies***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (319-338 of Chapter 9).
- *** Policy Presentations: Set #2 ****

- March 30 ***Social Safety Net Policies Continued***
- Moodle Reading #17: Semuels, Alana. 2016. “The End of Welfare as We Know It,” *The Atlantic*, April 1.
- *** Policy Presentations: Set #3 *****
- April 4 ***Legal Reform***
- Moodle Reading #18: Nixon, Joseph. 2013. “Ten Years of Tort Reform in Texas: A Review,” *Backgrounder*, Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation.
 - Moodle Reading #19: Potter, Wendell. 2011. “Analysis: The Mythical Benefits of Tort Reform in Texas,” Center for Public Integrity.
- April 6 ***Legal Reform Continued***
- No reading assignment.
- ***** Policy Papers Due at the Beginning of Class *******
- April 11 Spring Break
- April 13 Spring Break
- April 18 ***Social Values Policies***
- Moodle Reading #20: Peters, B. Guy. 2016. “Social Values and Public Policy.”
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 7: “Religious Freedom” and Chapter 8: “Transgender Rights”).
- April 20 ***Foreign Policies and Homeland Security***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 12).
 - Text: *CQ Researcher* (Chapter 14: “Immigrant Detention” and Chapter 15: “Intelligence Reform”).
- April 25 ***Military Policies***
- No reading assignment.
- April 27 ***Conclusions and Review***
- Text: Kraft and Furlong (Chapter 13).
- May 3 **FINAL EXAM** in this classroom on Wednesday from 3:00-5:00 pm.