

POLI 350 - SPRING 2006
THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS IN THE U. S.

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Tues./Thurs. 1:00- 2:15 PM, Sondheim 202

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 10:30 –11:30 noon; 7:00--7:30 PM;

Wednesdays. 1:00 - 2:30PM; Thursdays 2:00 –3:00 and; and by appt.

Course Description:

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to the stages, participants, context, and some recent substantive issues and outcomes of the American public policy process. It will focus on past and present domestic public policymaking at the (U.S.) national level. The course begins with an introduction to the stages and contexts (institutional, political and economic) of the policy process. The policy stages include: problem definition, agenda setting, policy formulation, enactment, implementation, and evaluation. The second part of the course examines five substantive policy arenas (energy, crime, welfare, health, and education) employing the framework of the policy cycle examined in part one. The final part of the course focuses on contemporary legal, constitutional, and social equality issues affecting public policymaking. In addition, students will write a paper on a contemporary policy issue currently on the institutional agenda.

Requirements:

Class Participation	10%
Policy/Issue Paper	20%
Exam 1	35%
Exam 2	35%
	100%

Class Participation:

Although the class will be primarily lecture format, each session there will be class discussions on the assigned reading, as well as student contribution on policy issue topics. Class participation is important to the learning process and is strongly encouraged. Since the quality of your comments and observations will be evaluated it is essential that you read the assigned materials prior to class meetings. You need not be concerned in class discussions about right versus wrong answers, but in putting forth thoughtful and informed responses. Students are responsible for all information presented in class.

Exams:

There will be two exams. Exams will combine essay and short answer/definitional questions. The exams are designed to gauge understanding of the readings, lectures, and class discussions.

Policy/Issue Paper:

Your analysis (8-10 double-spaced typed pages) of a current problem/issue/proposal is an important component of course goals. Illustratively, analysis of some of the domestic policy issues facing the

109th Congress can be found at the Heritage Foundation <http://www.heritage.org> (a conservative ideology think tank), but will be analyzed differently by The Brookings Institute (a more liberal ideology research organization) at <http://www.brookings.org/>. You are free to choose topics based on your interests - with the permission of the instructor. Potential topics include issues like the impact of the euro on the American economy, the positives or negatives of emissions trading, issues of marriage promotion in welfare reform, alternative sources of energy, health care for the uninsured, Social Security reform, gay marriage, and failures of the Superfund).

The paper is due on May 4. No paper will be accepted late without a grade deduction. In addition to the 8-10 page version submitted to the instructor, all students must submit a one-page outline/proposal of the issue paper on February 21. These proposals will be copied by the instructor and shared with the class. A policy issue paper is not a research paper in the traditional sense. You will present information on, analyze, and respond to information on a policy issue, rather than simply repeat or summarize facts. For course purposes, a policy issue is defined as one where there is conflict about the nature of the problem and the range and type of possible solutions. Different stakeholders may perceive the problem and alternative solutions differently.

Your papers should address the following points as appropriate.

1. Clearly define the problem or issue being addressed;
2. Give some factual data on the scope and severity of the problem;
3. Identify stakeholders/participants/interest groups and their disagreements;
4. State what goals are being sought and what is currently being done, and with what effectiveness, to address the problem;
5. What new policy alternatives are being/should be sought?

Depending on the nature and breadth of the issue you choose, you will focus on one or some of the above points more than others. One rough rule of thumb that might guide your writing is that the paper should be about one-half factual content and one-half analysis/opinion.

There are numerous web sites that you may find helpful in completing the written requirements of the course. The Political Science Department web site (<http://www.umbc.edu/poli/links.htm>) has useful research links. Style guides for several common formats for citing sources can be accessed through the A.O. Kuhn Library, "Citing Sources" <http://aok2.lib.umbc.edu/reference/BI/styleguides.php> (Note: This website includes a link to a guide for citing internet sources)

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, *but is not limited to*, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Senate Statement at <http://umbc.edu/provost/integrity/overview.html> or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory. Below is the UMBC Statement on Academic Integrity.

Statement of Values for Student Academic Integrity at UMBC

Academic integrity is an important value at UMBC. By enrolling in a course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in the scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and

behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Rigorous standards allow UMBC students, faculty, and administrators, as well as scholars and employers in the larger community, to trust that the work that students submit is the fruit of their own learning and academic effort.

The purposes of higher education are the learning students and faculty undertake, the knowledge and thinking skills developed, and the enhancement of personal qualities that enable students to be strong contributing members of society. In a competitive world, it is essential that all members of the UMBC community uphold a standard that places the integrity of each student's honestly earned achievements above higher grades or easier work dishonestly sought.

All members of the UMBC community are expected to make a commitment to academic honesty in their own actions and with others. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include suspension or dismissal. Following are examples of academic misconduct that are not tolerated at UMBC:

Cheating: Knowingly using or attempting to use unauthorized material, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Fabrication: Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism: Knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, including works of art and computer-generated information/images.

Students should consult UMBC's Student Academic Conduct Policy for information on policy and procedures for upholding UMBC's high standards for academic integrity. Student who have questions or concerns are encouraged to talk with a member of the faculty or administration for assistance. For those not familiar with the definition of plagiarism, these sites should be helpful:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_quotprsum.html , <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/> and http://web.princeton.edu/sites/writing/writing_center/wcwritingres.htm.

Text and Readings:

Clarke Cochran, et al. An Introduction to American Public Policy 8th ed., Wadsworth, 2006. (indicated by Cochran in the assignments).

Supplementary readings on the syllabus are on the course Blackboard site (BB) or include relevant web-site addresses.

COURSE TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

I. THE POLICY PROCESS, PUBLIC POLICY, AND THE CONTEXT OF POLICYMAKING

January 31 and February 2: **Overview of the Policy Process**

The Context of Policy-Making and Public Policy Issues

Cochran, Chapters 1 and 14.

Kingdon's Three Streams (BB – Topic I)

Derivation of the Policy Agenda (BB – Topic I)

February 7, 9: **Contexts of Public Policy**

Cochran, Ch.2

“The Index of Economic Freedom” – Heritage Foundation (BB – External Links)
 “World’s Smallest Political Quiz” - (BB – Topic I)
 “Laffer/Supply Side Curve” - (BB – External Links)
 U. S. Constitution – (BB – External Links) and <http://closeup.org/const.htm>

February 14, 16: **Government-Business Relationships**

Cochran, Ch. 3

American Brands PPI – (BB – Topic 1)

Brian Riedl, “The Senate Attempts to Prematurely Extend Bloated Farm Bill through 2011” at <http://heritage.org/Research/Budget/wm899a.cfm>

February 22, 23, and 28: **Taxes, Spending, and Budgeting**

Cochran, Ch.4;

For a Brief of the Federal Budget Process see “Introduction to the Federal Budget Process” by Martha Coven and Richard Kogan. This paper can be found at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities website, <http://www.cbpp.org/3-7-03bud.htm> or (BB)

Visit Congressional Budget Office (www.cbo.gov), AARP (www.aarp.org) and the Concord Coalition (www.concordcoalition.org) web sites for contrasting views on federal entitlements and national debt as problems.

Paper Proposal due on February 21

II. SUBSTANTIVE POLICY AREAS

March 2, 7, and 9 **Crime and Justice Policy**

Cochran, Ch.6;

“Cocaine, Marijuana, and Heroin: The war on drugs may be a disaster, but do we really want a legalized peace?” by Robert MacCoun and Peter Reuter. This paper can be found at the American Prospect website, <http://www.prospect.org/web/page.wv?section=root&name=ViewPrint&articleId=6288>

March 14: EXAM I

March 16, 28, 30: **Energy/Environmental Policies**

Cochran, Ch. 5;

“Giving Hybrid Vehicles a Break.” The article is located at the Progressive Policy website, http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?cp=1&knlgAreaID=116&subsecid=900039&contentid=252950

“Kyoto Lite: A Potential Deal Breaker in the Senate Energy Bill” by Ben Lieberman, WebMemo #768, June 20, 2005 at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/EnergyandEnvironment/wm768.cfm>

SPRING BREAK – MARCH 20-24

April 4, 6: **Education Policy**

Cochran, Ch.9

"School Vouchers," by Debra Coffey and Steven Fitfield. at the following website:

www.rdc.udel.edu/policy_briefs/v14_April.pdf#search='Education%20Policy%20Brief%3A%20School%20Vouchers' - also a pdf file on BB.

Guest Lecturer on “No Child Left Behind,” on April 6.

April 11, 13, 18: **Health Policy**

Cochran, Ch. 8

“Number of American’s Without Insurance Reaches Highest Level on Record.” This article is found at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities website, www.cbpp.org/8-26-04health.htm#_ftn5

Possible Guest Lecturer re: CHIP or racial disparities in health.

April 20, 25, 27: **Welfare Policy**

Cochran, Ch.7;

2004 Poverty Guidelines (BB – Topic II)

“Healthy Marriages” – Mathematica Report (BB –Topic II)

“Should the Government Promote Marriage” by Andrew J. Cherlin. This article is found at http://www.contextsmagazine.org/content_sample_v2-4.php.

Role Play – Welfare Scenarios

Possible Guest Lecturer re: Marriage Promotion

III. CONTEMPORARY LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES IN POLICYMAKING

May 2, 4: **Legal and Social Equality**

Cochran, Ch. 10; Handout

“The Affirmative Action Debate” by William A. Galston. This article can be found at <http://www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/1QQ.HTM>

Peter Schmidt, “New Pressure Put on Colleges to End Legacies in Admissions.” at <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v50/i21/21a00101.htm>

REQUIRED ISSUE/POLICY PAPER IS DUE May 4

May 9, 11, 16: **Private Morality and Public Policy**

Cochran, Ch. 13;

Lithwick, “Why Can Shopping Malls Limit Free Speech?” at <http://www.slate.com/id/2079885/>

May **EXAM 2/Final Exam** scheduled from PM to PM.