

**PSCI 20300 The Politics of Public Policy
Spring 2022**

Location: Kauke 039

Time: T*Th 9:30-10:50am

Instructor: Dr. Avi Muñoz

Email: amunoz@wooster.edu

Office: Kauke 101

Office Hours: W 8-11am, or by appointment

Course Overview

Since March of 2020, the policymaking process (and its failures) have been on full display as the US and other countries struggle to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the pandemic, significant policy decisions are being debated in a variety of areas, including but not limited to climate and the environment, immigration, voting rights, and education.

While it is easy to read news coverage of some of these policy debates, what is presented is often a superficial discussion of the issue at hand. More important, but also more time-consuming to explore, are questions concerning the various steps of the policy process: Who makes decisions about what policies are important, and need to be enacted in the United States? How do they make those decisions, and craft the resulting policies? How do those decisions affect future policymaking? How are policies evaluated, and what kinds of decisions result from those evaluations?

This course attempts to provide some answers to these questions by introducing students to the ways in which public policy is made and carried out in the United States. The first part of the course is dedicated to understanding the stages of the policy process and the various actors who participate in policymaking. The second part of the course considers several theories that explain how these actors navigate the various stages of the policy process.

The goal of this course is to familiarize students with critical knowledge and key concepts in the study of public policy, so that they may become both critical thinkers about contemporary public policy issues in the United States and effective communicators through both writing and public speaking. The writing assignments for this course, described in more detail below, have been designed with these objectives in mind.

Classroom Expectations

Attendance will be taken for each class session, and you are expected to attend every class. Regular attendance will help ensure that you do not fall behind and will provide you with a regular time and place to discuss any questions you may have about the course readings and lecture material. While attendance itself is not a part of your grade, participation does count and is hard to achieve if you are not in class. That being said, I understand the attendance pressures created by the pandemic; if you need to miss class, *please communicate this to me as soon as possible* so I can make sure that your participation grade is not negatively affected.

While in class, you are expected to be an active participant. This means you are expected to have completed the assigned readings by the start of class, and that you are ready to engage in discussion about those readings or any other topics that arise during class.

As with any political science course, we will likely have discussions that touch on your personal political beliefs in a variety of ways. While there is room for disagreement in our discussions of public policy and politics, there is no room for hostility or disrespect. In our discussions, I expect everyone to respect that not everyone thinks or feels the same about politics, and to engage in good-faith discussion and debate when appropriate. Failure to do so—e.g. engaging in racist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory speech, insulting each other, demeaning each other or one's beliefs, etc.—will not be tolerated, and may lead to dismissal from the class.

Required Books

There is one required book for this course, available at the bookstore and online:

Birkland, Thomas A. 2020. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. 5th Edition. Routledge.

Please make sure to get the 5th edition of Birkland. Earlier versions of the book do not account for recent policy developments, or for the emergence of newer theories of policy making that we will discuss in class. All other readings will be made available on Moodle.

Assignments & Grading

The following will make up your course grade:

- Participation – 15%
- Policy Analyses – 30%
 - o Analysis #1 – 5%
 - o Analysis #2 – 10%
 - o Analysis #3 – 15%
- Group Podcast Project – 25%
- Policy Position Paper & presentation – 30%

Policy analyses: These are short essays (3-4 double-spaced pages) that assess the political prospects of recent policy proposals. Your focus here is not a detailed analysis of each policy proposal, but rather a concise discussion of the proposed policy, which political constituencies it appeals to (if any), and the likelihood that the proposals will be implemented in the current political context. More information on each policy analysis will be discussed in more detail later in the semester.

Group Podcast Project: In a small group, you will be responsible for developing and recording a 10-15 minute podcast about a public policy issue of your choice. A podcast is an episodic audio program like a radio show in digital form. In this case, your group will only record one episode, though you might imagine that it is one in a series of episodes exploring themes in US public policy. You will receive a handout with more information on this project, including deadlines and expectations, in the second week of the semester.

Policy position paper: In this paper (8-10 pages), you are required to select a policy problem and present one perspective or approach for solving the problem, drawing on our in-class discussions about theories of policymaking and navigating the various stages of the policy process. The purpose

of the paper is to convince the reader that you have a compelling case for your stated position and/or policy recommendation. The final draft of the paper is due by our assigned final exam period, and you will present a summary of the policy problem and your position/recommendation to the class at that time. The topic for this paper is your choice, but it must be **pre-approved by me by Thursday, March 10.**

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction & the Policy Process

- Tuesday 1/18
 - o Introductions
 - o Syllabus review
- Thursday 1/20
 - o Birkland – Chapter 1

Week 2: Politics in Public Policy

- Tuesday 1/25
 - o Birkland – Chapter 2
- Thursday 1/27
 - o Birkland – Chapter 3
 - o Federalist Paper No. 10
 - o Hacker, Jacob S., and Paul Pierson. 2014. “After the Master Theory: Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis.” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 643-62.

Week 3: Power in Politics & Public Policy

- Tuesday 2/1
 - o Lukes, Steven. 2005. *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition. Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 2
- Thursday 2/3
 - o Piven, Frances Fox. 2006. *Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America*. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 2

Week 4: The Role of Institutions

- Tuesday 2/8
 - o Birkland – Chapter 4
 - o Millhisser, Ian. 2020. “America’s anti-democratic Senate, by the numbers.” Vox. November 6. < <https://www.vox.com/2020/11/6/21550979/senate-malapportionment-20-million-democrats-republicans-supreme-court>>
- Thursday 2/10
 - o ***Analysis #1 ASSIGNED***
 - o Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 2009. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd Edition. University of Chicago press. Chapter 2
 - o Steinmo, Sven, and Jon Watts. 1995. “It’s the Institutions Stupid! Why Comprehensive National Health Insurance Always Fails in America.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 20(2): 329-372.

Week 5: Interest Groups & the Bureaucracy

- Tuesday 2/15

- Birkland – Chapter 5 (section on interest groups ONLY)
- Hojnacki, Marie, and David C. Kimball. 1998. “Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress.” *American Political Science Review* 92(4): 775-790.
- Thursday 2/17
 - Birkland – Chapter 4 (review section on Executive/bureaucracy)
 - Soss, Joe, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford F. Schram. 2011. “The Organization of Discipline: From Performance Management to Perversity and Punishment.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21(Suppl. 2): i203-i232.

Week 6: Federalism, Diffusion, and Policy Feedback

- Tuesday 2/22
 - ***Analysis #1 DUE***
 - Bednar, Jenna. 2020. “Of course Trump’s authority isn’t ‘total.’ Here are 3 myths about how federalism works.” *The Washington Post*. April 17. <
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/04/17/course-trumps-authority-isnt-total-here-are-3-myths-about-how-federalism-works/>>
 - Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. 2008. “The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 840-857.
 - Grigsby, Sheila et al. 2020. “Resistance to Racial Equity in U.S. Federalism and Its Impact on Fragmented Regions.” *American Review of Public Administration* 50(6-7): 658-667.
- Thursday 2/24
 - ***Analysis #2 ASSIGNED***
 - Michener, Jamila. 2019. “Policy Feedback in a Racialized Polity.” *Policy Studies Journal* 47(2): 423-450.

Week 7: Agenda-Setting & Framing

- Tuesday 3/1
 - Birkland – Chapter 6
 - Kingdon, John W. 1993. “How Do Issues Get on Public Policy Agendas?” In *Sociology and the Public Agenda*, ed. William Julius Wilson. Sage – pp. 40-50.
- Thursday 3/3
 - Conrad, Peter, and Kristin K. Barker. 2010. “The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(Suppl): S67-S79.
 - Gilens, Martin. 1995. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5

Week 8: Policy Design & Implementation

- Tuesday 3/8
 - ***Analysis #2 DUE***
 - Birkland – Chapter 7 (SKIM)
 - Olson, Mancur. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press. [Selection TBD]
- Thursday 3/10
 - Birkland – Chapter 9
 - Birkland – Chapter 10 (section on implementation ONLY)

SPRING BREAK (MARCH 14-27)

Week 9: Multiple Streams Framework

- Tuesday 3/29
 - o ***Analysis #3 ASSIGNED***
 - o Birkland – Chapter 11 (section on MSF)
 - o De Wals, Philippe, Maria-Eugenia Espinoza-Moya, and Daniel Béland. 2019. “Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Framework and the Analysis of Decision-Making Processes Regarding Publicly-Funded Immunization Programs.” *Expert Review of Vaccines* 18(6): 575-585.
- Thursday 3/31
 - o Blankenau, Joe. 2001. “The Fate of National Health Insurance in Canada and the United States: A Multiple Streams Explanation.” *Policy Studies Journal* 29(1):38-55
 - o Lieberman, Joyce M. 2002. “Three Streams and Four Policy Entrepreneurs Converge: A Policy Window Opens.” *Education and Urban Society* 34(4): 438-450.

Week 10: Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

- Tuesday 4/5
 - o Birkland – Chapter 11 (section on PET)
 - o Givel, Michael. 2006. “Punctuated Equilibrium in Limbo: The Tobacco Lobby and U.S. State Policymaking from 1990 to 2003.” *Policy Studies Journal* 34(3): 405-418.
- Thursday 4/7
 - o Breunig, Christian, and Chris Koski. 2006. “Punctuated Equilibria and Budgets in the American States.” *Policy Studies Journal* 34(3): 363-379.
 - o Baumgartner, Frank R. 2006. “Punctuated Equilibrium Theory and Environmental Policy.” In *Punctuated Equilibrium and the Dynamics of U.S. Environmental Policy*, ed. Robert Repetto. Yale University Press – pp. 24-46

Week 11: The Advocacy Coalition Framework

- Tuesday 4/12
 - o ***Analysis #3 DUE***
 - o Birkland – Chapter 11 (section on ACF)
 - o Weible, Christopher M. 2007. “An Advocacy Coalition Framework Approach to Stakeholder Analysis: Understanding the Political Context of California Marine Protected Area Policy.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 17(1): 95-117.
- Thursday 4/14
 - o Keating, Christine (Cricket). 2018. “The Politics of Everyday Coalition Building.” *New Political Science* 40(1): 177-183.
 - o Tattersall, Amanda. 2010. *Power in Coalition: Strategies for Strong Unions and Social Change*. Cornell University Press. Chapter 6 (Conclusion)

Week 12: Narrative Policy Framework

- Tuesday 4/19
 - o Birkland – Chapter 11 (section on NPF)
 - o Jones, Michael D., and Mark K. McBeth. 2010. “A Narrative Policy Framework: Clear Enough to Be Wrong?” *The Policy Studies Journal* 38(2): 329-353.

- Shanahan, Elizabeth A., Mark K. McBeth, and Paul L. Hathaway. 2011. "Narrative Policy Framework: The Influence of Media Narratives on Public Opinion." *Politics & Policy* 39(3): 373-400. [SKIM]
- Thursday 4/21
 - Crow, Deserai A., et al. 2017. "A Narrative Policy Framework Analysis of Wildfire Policy Discussions in Two Colorado Communities." *Politics & Policy* 45(4): 626-656.

Week 13: Policy Evaluation

- Tuesday 4/26
 - ***Group Podcast Project DUE***
 - Birkland – Chapter 10 (sections on failure & learning)
 - McConnell, Allan. 2015. "What is policy failure? A primer to help navigate the maze." *Public Policy and Administration* 30(3-4): 221-242.
- Thursday 4/28
 - In-Class Debate: which policies have failed?

Week 14: Podcast Discussions

- Tuesday 5/3
- Thursday 5/5

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Tuesday, May 10, 12-2:30pm

- Position paper DUE
- Position paper presentations

Academic Honesty & Code of Academic Integrity

The academic program at the College seeks to promote the intellectual development of each student and the realization of that individual's potential for creative thinking, learning, and understanding. In achieving this, each student must learn to act rigorously, independently, and imaginatively.

The College's understanding and expectations in regard to issues of academic honesty are fully articulated in the Code of Academic Integrity as published in The Scot's Key and form an essential part of the implicit contract between the student and the College. The Code provides framework at Wooster to help students develop and exhibit honesty in their academic work. You are expected to know and abide by these rules.

Dishonesty in any of your academic work is a serious breach of the Code of Academic Integrity and is ground for serious penalties. Such violations include turning in another person's work as your own, copying from any source without proper citation, violating expectations for a group project, submitting an assignment produced for a course to a second course without the authorization of all the instructors, and dishonesty in connection with your academic work. You will be held responsible for your actions. Particular attention should be directed to the appropriate use of materials available online. Whether intentional or not, improper use of materials is a violation of academic honesty. If you are unsure as to what is permissible, please contact your course instructor.

The Academic Resource Center

Academic Support, Disabilities, and English Language Learning
 Contact: Amber Larson, alarson@wooster.edu, (330)263-2595, [ARC Website](#)

The Academic Resource Center, which is in APEX (Gault library) offers a variety of academic support services, programs and 1:1 meetings available to all students. Popular areas of support include time management techniques, class preparation tips and test taking strategies. In addition, the Academic Resource Center coordinates peer-tutoring for several academic departments. Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment.

The Academic Resource Center also coordinates accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, students should contact the Academic Resource Center to make arrangements for securing appropriate accommodations. Although the Academic Resource Center will notify professors of students with documented disabilities and the approved accommodations, students are encouraged to speak with professors during the first week of each semester. If a student does not request accommodations or does not provide documentation to the Academic Resource Center, faculty are under no obligation to provide accommodations.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please visit the Academic Resource Center's webpage: <https://inside.wooster.edu/arc/>

Inclusive Learning Statement

Your success in this course is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your academic performance or impact your learning in particular portions of the class, please let me know as soon as possible. You do not need to share specifics, but together we can develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I encourage you to visit the Academic Resource Center to determine how you could improve your learning as well. If you need official accommodations, the ARC can work with you to make sure your needs are met. There are also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center, Math Center, STEM Success Initiative, and APEX.

It is also important that we all be respectful of everyone's privacy around health concerns, vaccination status, and any accommodations that are necessary in the classroom. It is not appropriate to question why someone requests physical distancing, chooses to wear a mask, or requires any other accommodations. As part of our participation together in this class, we commit to showing respect to each other as individuals, to working together to create a learning environment that fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion to all members, and to understanding that our differences are also strengths. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated, and please contact me—via email, office hours, or after class—if you have any concerns or questions.

Names, Pronouns, and Pronunciations

All people have the right to be addressed and referred to as they prefer. I will do my best to address and refer to all students by the names and pronouns that they share in class, regardless of what is listed on the roster, and I support classmates in doing so as well. Please share the name you prefer to be called and pronouns you wish to use in this class with me via classroom introductions or privately.

If you are interested in changing your chosen name and/or including your pronoun(s) in The College of Wooster system, [you can find additional information here](#). What appears in The College of Wooster system is what will display in all platforms across Microsoft Teams. At present, there is no alternative way to change your name or to add pronouns in Teams, but you can add a background that includes these for any video platform (see [instructions for Microsoft Teams here](#)).

I encourage everyone in this classroom to create a space of mutual respect and support by also giving each other some grace around pronouns, pronunciation of names, etc., if or when we make mistakes. This is not at all to absolve anyone of responsibility for using correct pronouns, names, and pronunciations. But I find it useful to acknowledge that even with the best of intentions, sometimes we can all still make mistakes.

Title IX Reporting Policy Regarding Sexual Misconduct, Harassment, Relationship Violence, and Stalking

Contact: Lori Makin-Byrd, lmakin-byrd@wooster.edu, (330) 263-2017, [Title IX website](#)

The College of Wooster is committed to fostering a campus community based on respect and nonviolence. To this end, we recognize that all Wooster community members are responsible for ensuring that our community is free from discrimination, gender bias, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. In accordance with Title IX, Wooster is legally obligated to provide supportive options for all reports of sexual harassment and sexual assault that occur on our campus. Faculty who become aware of an incident of sexual violence, including harassment, rape, sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking, are mandated reporters at the College and are required to notify Wooster's Title IX Coordinator. The purpose of this disclosure is to ensure that students are made aware of their reporting options and resources for support. For more information about your rights and reporting options at Wooster, including confidential and anonymous reporting options, please visit <https://inside.wooster.edu/title-ix/>

Discriminatory or Bias-Related Harassment Reporting Policy

Contact: Kayla Campbell, kcampbell@wooster.edu; or visit the [Bias Reporting website](#)

The College of Wooster is committed to promoting its mission of inclusivity and equity in all aspects of the educational enterprise. This commitment extends to all rights, privileges, programs and activities, including housing, employment, admissions, financial assistance, and educational and athletic programs at the College. The College's Bias Incident Reporting Process is designed to effectively respond to bias concerns raised by faculty, students, staff, alumni and visitors to the College. If you or someone you know are the victims of bias, you can:

- [File a report online](#) (where you may choose to identify yourself or not)
- Contact Campus Safety: 2590 (from campus phone) or 330-263-2590
- Call the Anonymous Tip Line: 2337 (from campus phone) or 330-263-2337
- Contact the Dean of Students Office: 2545 (from a campus phone) or 330-263-2545
- Contact the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer representative for students: Kayla Campbell, kcampbell@wooster.edu, 330-263-2607

Well-Being at Wooster

Contact (24/7): (330) 263-2319, or visit the [Wellness Center website](#)

The College of Wooster is committed to supporting the wellbeing of our students. During the course of their academic careers, students experience challenges that may interfere with their learning & health (both physical and mental), including but not limited to: strained relationships, adjusting to a new environment, chronic worrying, persistent sadness or loss of interest in enjoyable

activities, family conflict, grief and loss, domestic violence, unwanted sexual experiences, difficulty concentrating, drug/alcohol problems, significant changes in eating and sleeping patterns, microaggressions, challenges with organization, procrastination and/or lack of motivation. Counseling Services at the Longbrake Student Wellness Center is a free and confidential resource providing short-term counseling and connections to community agencies for students needing longer term or specialized resources. You can make an appointment by calling 330.263.2319 between 8:30am-4:30pm during weekdays or by emailing Lori Stine (lstine@wooster.edu). You can also find helpful resources on the Counseling Services website at <https://inside.wooster.edu/health/counseling/>.

Students also have free access to TimelyCare, a telehealth service providing scheduled medical and counseling appointments as well as 24/7 crisis consultation with licensed professionals. Students use their Wooster email to establish an account at [TimelyCare: Telehealth for Scots](#). TimelyCare also provides students access to nutritionists and health coaches about issues of sleep and exercise, and psychiatry (with a referral from doctor or counselor).

If you or a friend is in crisis, please call Campus Safety at 330-287-3333 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) or connect with the Crisis Text Line by Texting “4HOPE” to 741-741.

For financial concerns: Dean of Students Office, dos@wooster.edu, (330) 263-2545, [DoS website](#)

For safety concerns: Campus Safety 330-263-2590 or cov-security@wooster.edu, [Campus Safety website](#). In the care of an emergency, call: 330-287-3333