

PSCI 246: Introduction to Public Policy Spring 2020

Location: 308 Tomson Hall
Time: MWF 11:50am-12:45pm

Professor: Avram Muñoz
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Office: 422 Holland Hall
Office Hours: MW 1pm-3pm, or by appointment

Course Overview

We live in a time where significant policy decisions are being debated and major changes are being implemented, ranging from issues like combating climate change to significantly reforming immigration policy. But, 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, regardless of the issue area? 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. After students attain this understanding of the key players in public policymaking and how/why they undertake certain actions, we transition to discussions of specific policy domains. Within these discussions we will focus on historical trends in US policy and where we are today, as well as how we think these policy domains may evolve in the future.

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. In fulfillment of the studies in human behavior and society (HBS) requirement, the course will also develop students' ability to analyze contemporary social issues with appropriate theories, concepts, and empirical evidence.

Required Books

There are two required books for the course, both available for purchase at the bookstore:

- 1) Christopher M. Weible and Paul A. Sabatier. 2017. *Theories of the Policy Process, 4th Edition*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (Abbreviated below as TPP)
- 2) CQ Press. 2020. *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy: Selections from CQ Researcher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. (Abbreviated below as CQ)

All other readings will be made available on Moodle.

Course Requirements & Graded Assignments

The following will make up your course grade:

- Attendance & Participation – 15%
- Policy Analyses – 35%
 - o Analysis #1 – 10%
 - o Analysis #2 – 10%
 - o Analysis #3 – 15%
- Policy Position Paper – 35%
- Position Paper Presentation – 15%

Policy analyses: These are short essays (approximately 600 words, or two double-spaced pages) that assess the political prospects of recent policy proposals regarding health care, education, and gun control. Your focus here is not a detailed analysis of each 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.

Policy position paper & presentation: In this paper (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 on the last day of class (May 13), and you will present a summary of the policy problem and your position/recommendation to the class on the scheduled final exam day for the course. The topic for this paper is your choice, but it must be related to the course and be **pre-approved by me by Friday, March 13.**

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

- February 7
 - o No assigned readings

Week 2: Elements of Public Policy

- February 10
 - o James E. Anderson. 2015. *Public Policymaking: An Introduction (8th Edition)* – Chapter 1
- February 12
 - o James E. Anderson. 2015. *Public Policymaking* – Chapter 2
- February 14
 - o Federalist Paper No. 10
 - o Jack L. Walker. 1983. “The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America.” *American Political Science Review* 77(2): 390-406.
 - o Marie Hojnacki & David C. Kimball. 1998. “Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress.” *American Political Science Review* 92(4): 775-790.

Week 3: Stages of the Policy Process

- February 17
 - o James E. Anderson. 2015. *Public Policymaking* – Chapter 3
 - o Ruth Bloch Rubin. 2017. *Building the Bloc: Intraparty Organization in the U.S. Congress*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press – Chapter 9

- Susan Webb Hammond, Daniel P. Mulhollan, & Arthur G. Stevens Jr. 1985. “Informal Congressional Caucuses and Agenda Setting.” *Western Political Quarterly* 38(4): 583-605.
- February 19
 - James E. Anderson. 2015. *Public Policymaking* – Chapter 4
 - Kristina C. Miler. 2010. *Constituency Representation in Congress: The View from Capitol Hill*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press – Chapter 4
- February 21
 - James E. Anderson. 2015. *Public Policymaking* – Chapter 6
 - Charles Bullock III, Charles Lamb, and Eric Wilk. 2018. “Cooperative Federalism and Fair Housing Enforcement.” *Social Science Quarterly* 99(2): 728-743.
 - Pietro S. Nivola. 2005. “Why Federalism Matters.” Brookings. October 1. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-federalism-matters/>

Week 4: Multiple Streams Framework

- February 24
 - TPP, Chapter 1
- February 26
 - Joe Blankenau. 2001. “The Fate of National Health Insurance in Canada and the United States: A Multiple Streams Explanation.” *Policy Studies Journal* 29(1):38-55
- February 28
 - Joyce M. Lieberman. 2002. “Three Streams and Four Policy Entrepreneurs Converge: A Policy Window Opens.” *Education and Urban Society* 34(4): 438-450.
 - Nikolaos Zahariadis & Theofanis Exadaktylos. 2016. “Policies that Succeed and Programs that Fail: Ambiguity, Conflict, and Crisis in Greek Higher Education.” *Policy Studies Journal* 44(1): 59-82.

Week 5: Punctuated Equilibrium

- March 2
 - TPP, Chapter 2
- March 4
 - Michael Givel. 2006. “Punctuated Equilibrium in Limbo: The Tobacco Lobby and U.S. State Policymaking from 1990 to 2003.” *Policy Studies Journal* 34(3): 405-418.
 - Christian Breunig & Chris Koski. 2006. “Punctuated Equilibria and Budgets in the American States.” *Policy Studies Journal* 34(3): 363-379.
- March 6
 - Frank R. Baumgartner. 2006. “Punctuated Equilibrium Theory and Environmental Policy.” In *Punctuated Equilibrium and the Dynamics of U.S. Environmental Policy*, ed. Robert Repetto. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press – pp. 24-46

Week 6: Policy Diffusion

- March 9
 - TPP, Chapter 7
- March 11
 - Charles R. Shipan & Craig Volden. 2008. “The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 840-857.
- March 13

- Craig Volden. 2017. “Policy Diffusion in Polarized Times: The Case of the Affordable Care Act.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 42(2): 363-375.
- Andrew Karch & Aaron Rosenthal. 2017. “Framing, Engagement, and Policy Change: Lessons for the ACA.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 42(2): 341-362.

Week 7: Policy Feedback

- March 16
 - TPP, Chapter 3
- March 18
 - Richard C. Fording & Dana J. Patton. 2019. “Medicaid Expansion and the Political Fate of the Governors Who Support It.” *Policy Studies Journal* 47(2): 274-299.
 - Daniel Béland, Philip Rocco, and Alex Waddan. 2019. “Policy Feedback and the Politics of the Affordable Care Act.” *Policy Studies Journal* 47(2): 395-422.
- March 20
 - Jamila Michener. 2019. “Policy Feedback in a Racialized Polity.” *Policy Studies Journal* 47(2): 423-450.

SPRING BREAK (MARCH 21-29)

Week 8: Health Care Policy

- March 30
 - Sven Steinmo 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.
- April 1
 - Lawrence R. Jacobs. 2010. “What Health Reform Teaches Us about American Politics.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43(4): 619-623.
 - Jacob S. Hacker. 2010. “The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Reform Happened.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8(3): 861-876.
- April 3 – POLICY ANALYSIS #1 DUE
 - *National Federation of Independent Businesses v. Sebelius* (syllabus only)
 - Jonathan Oberlander. 2014. “Voucherizing Medicare.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 39(2): 467-482.

Week 9: Immigration Policy

- April 6
 - Center for Immigration Studies – “Historical Overview of Immigration Policy.” <https://cis.org/Historical-Overview-Immigration-Policy>
 - Lina Newton. 2008. *Illegal, Alien, or Immigrant? The Politics of Immigration Reform*. New York, NY: New York University Press – Chapter 2
- April 8
 - Colleen Henry. 2009. “The Political Science of Immigration Policies.” *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 19(6): 690-701.
 - USCIS, “Public Charge Fact Sheet.” <https://www.uscis.gov/news/fact-sheets/public-charge-fact-sheet>
 - Michael D. Shear, Miriam Jordan, and Caitlin Dickerson. 2019. “Trump’s Policy Could Alter the Face of the American Immigrant.” *New York Times*, August 14. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/14/us/immigration-public-charge-welfare.html>

- Justin Gest. 2019. “The Moneyball Fix for Immigration Policy.” Politico, May 29. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/05/29/moneyball-fix-immigration-policy-226988>
- April 10 – NO CLASS

Week 10: Education Policy

- April 13
 - David Tyack and Larry Cuban. 1995. *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 1-39.
 - CQ, Chapter 12
- April 15
 - Diane Ravitch. 2010. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*. New York, NY: Basic Books – pp. 15-30 & 149-167.
 - U.S. Department of Education Fact Sheet: *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*
- April 17 – POLICY ANALYSIS #2 DUE
 - Peter C. Weitzel and Christopher A. Lubienski. 2010. “Grading Charter Schools: Access, Innovation, and Competition.” In *The Charter School Experiment: Expectations, Evidence, and Implications*, eds. Christopher A. Lubienski and Peter C. Weitzel. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 15-31.
 - Marytza A. Gawlik. 2016. “The U.S. Charter School Landscape: Extant Literature, Gaps in Research, and Implications for the U.S. Educational System.” *Global Education Review* 3(2): 50-83.
 - Kenneth K. Wong. 2017. “Redefining the federal role in public education: The 1st quarter of the Trump ‘insurgent’ presidency.” Brookings. March 27. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/03/27/redefining-the-federal-role-in-public-education-the-1st-quarter-of-the-trump-insurgent-presidency/>

Week 11: Gun Control Policy

- April 20
 - CQ, Chapter 7
- April 22
 - Carroll Doherty. 2015. “A public opinion trend that matters: Priorities for gun policy.” Pew Research Center, January 9. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/01/09/a-public-opinion-trend-that-matters-priorities-for-gun-policy/>
 - J. Baxter Oliphant. 2017. “Bipartisan support for some gun proposals, stark partisan divisions on many others.” Pew Research Center, June 23. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/23/bipartisan-support-for-some-gun-proposals-stark-partisan-divisions-on-many-others/>
 - J. Baxter Oliphant & John Gramlich. 2017. “Supporters of stricter gun laws are less likely to contact elected officials.” Pew Research Center, October 12. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/10/12/supporters-of-stricter-gun-laws-are-less-likely-to-contact-elected-officials/>
 - Nate Cohn & Margot Sanger-Katz. 2019. “On Guns, Public Opinion and Public Policy Often Diverge.” *New York Times*, August 10. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/10/upshot/gun-control-polling-policies.html>
- April 24 – POLICY ANALYSIS #3 DUE

- “Gunned Down: The Power of the NRA” (in-class film)

Week 12: Environmental Policy

- April 27
 - CQ, Chapter 1
 - Elaine Kamarck. 2019. “The challenging politics of climate change.” Brookings, September 23. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-challenging-politics-of-climate-change/>
 - James W. Stoutenborough & Arnold Vedlitz. 2014. “The effect of perceived and assessed knowledge of climate change on public policy concerns: An empirical comparison.” *Environmental Science & Policy* 37: 23-33.
- April 29
 - David Wooley. 2018. “Clean Air: Unfinished Business.” In *Policy Notes*, ed. Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California – Berkeley. https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/page/David_Wooley_-_Policy_Notes_-_Fall_2018.pdf
 - Pew Research Center. 2017. “Public Divides Over Environmental Regulation and Energy Policy.” May 16. <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2017/05/16/public-divides-over-environmental-regulation-and-energy-policy/>
- May 1
 - Sarah Gibbens. 2019. “15 ways the Trump administration has changed environmental policies.” *National Geographic*, February 1. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/02/15-ways-trump-administration-impacted-environment/>
 - Scott Neuman & Colin Dwyer. 2020. “Trump Administration Cuts Back Federal Protections for Streams and Wetlands.” NPR, January 23. <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/23/798809951/trump-administration-is-rolling-back-obama-era-protections-for-smaller-waterways>

Week 13: Conspiracy Theories, Election Security, & Voting Rights

- May 4
 - CQ, Chapter 10
 - Joanne M. Miller, Kyle L. Saunders, and Christina E. Farhart. 2016. “Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning: The Moderating Roles of Political Knowledge and Trust.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 824-844.
- May 6
 - CQ, Chapter 8
 - Kim Zetter. 2018. “The Crisis of Election Security.” *The New York Times Magazine*, September 26. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/26/magazine/election-security-crisis-midterms.html>
 - Lawrence Norden. 2019. “How to Secure Elections for 2020 and Beyond.” Brennan Center for Justice, October 23. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-secure-elections-2020-and-beyond>
 - Zack Beauchamp. 2020. “The Democratic primary has a legitimacy problem.” Vox, February 4. <https://www.vox.com/2020/2/4/21122346/iowa-caucus-results-2020-legitimacy>
- May 8

- Sean McElwee. 2015. “Why Non-Voters Matter.” *The Atlantic*, September 15.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/why-non-voters-matter/405250/>
- Nolan D. McCaskill. 2020. “Democrats launch massive legal campaign on voting ahead of 2020.” Politico, February 6.
<https://www.politico.com/news.2020/02/06/democrats-voting-rights-2020-111716>

Week 14: Evaluating & Changing Public Policy

- May 11
 - James E. Anderson. 2015. *Public Policymaking* – Chapter 7
- May 13 – POLICY POSITION PAPER DUE
 - Allan McConnell. 2015. “What is policy failure? A primer to help navigate the maze.” *Public Policy and Administration* 30(3-4): 221-242.

FINAL PRESENTATIONS: Wednesday May 20, 2pm-4pm

Accommodations

I am committed to supporting the learning of all students in my class. If you have already registered with Disability and Access (DAC) and have your letter of accommodations, please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss, plan, and implement your accommodations in the course. If you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional), please contact Disability and Access staff at 507-786-3288 or by visiting wp.stolaf.edu/academic-support/dac.

Mental Health

I greatly value your experience in this class, and it is my duty to facilitate a safe, caring, and productive learning environment. I recognize that you may experience a range of emotional, physical, and/or psychological issues, both in and out of the classroom, that may distract you from your learning. If you are experiencing such issues, please do not hesitate to come see me—I am here to listen. We can also discuss what further resources might be available to you.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, the unacknowledged appropriation of another person’s words or ideas, is a serious academic offense. It is imperative that you hand in work that is your own, and that cites or gives credit to others whenever you draw from their work. Please see St. Olaf’s statements on academic integrity and plagiarism at: <http://wp.stolaf.edu/thebook/academic/integrity/>. See also the description of St. Olaf’s honor system at: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/honorcouncil/>.

Preferred Gender Pronoun

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Statement of Inclusivity

In keeping with St. Olaf College’s mission statement, this class strives to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be

respectful to all citizens in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

St. Olaf Pride Statement

As an Ole, I will practice: PASSION for learning and pursuit of vocation; RESPECT for the worth and dignity of all people; INTEGRITY at all times, in all circumstances; DEDICATION to a life of service; and ENGAGEMENT with my community and the world.