

PA 8300: Policy Design and Implementation

Spring 2021 Syllabus
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Time: Online

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Office: Off Campus
Office Hours: Virtual (Thursdays 3:30 - 6:00 PM) - Link in Canvas
and by appointment.

Course Description & Learning Objectives

This course is an introduction to public policy in the American democratic system. This course studies the formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation of public policy. Important topics covered include the basic features of American government, the causes and determinants of public policies, policy communities, obstacles to “successful” public programs, the tools of implementation, and the criteria for the assessment of a public program’s impact. Special emphasis is given to the role public administrators play within the policy process. The course is both theoretical and applied in its approach to the study of public policy in the U.S. We will study the logic of American policymaking through the lenses of American politics and American political institutions. Processes and theories will then be applied to historical and current issues in public policy. Much of the focus will be on the importance of the “politics” surrounding public policy. The design of the course is not meant to make students experts in any single policy area. The goal of this course is to introduce students to the theories and processes of policymaking within the U.S. and to have them apply that knowledge to substantive policy problems and issues.

The main learning objectives are for students to better understand the intricacies of public policymaking in the U.S. context and applicable policy theories. By the end of the course, students should be able to understand the main theories of public policy and how they apply to the political institutions and norms in the U.S. system. Through written and oral communication, students should be able to analyze policies from their inception to passage, understanding the political reasons behind adoptions and/or failures. They should also be able to critique previous, current, and future public policies for their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, they should be able to evaluate alternative courses of policy actions to policy problems.

Required Text

-Barrilleaux, Charles, Christopher Reenock, and Mark Souva. 2017. *Democratic Policymaking: An Analytic Approach*. Cambridge University Press. 7th ed.

Locations for readings not from the main textbook are indicated in the syllabus.

Course Requirements

1. Discussion Board (6 X 15 pts. = 90 pts.): Throughout the semester, there will be discussion board topics for you to respond. I will post a prompt for which you should respond in

about a paragraph. This will be worth 10 of the 15 points. The remaining 5 pts. will be based upon your response to a peer's comment in about a paragraph. Responses and comments are due by 11:59 PM on Saturdays. Responses should be thoughtful and will be graded upon quality of content and response.

2. Quizzes (5 X 30 pts. = 150 pts.): There will be 5 reading/lecture quizzes over the semester. Quizzes will be based upon the readings and lectures of their respective week. Questions will be multiple choice, T/F, and short answer. They will be timed, so once you start, you won't be able to save and come back at a later time. Make sure to have 30-45 minutes blocked out where you can take the quiz. You may use any course resource (lectures, readings, etc.) while taking the quiz. The only restriction is that you cannot use other humans to help you with the quiz. Quizzes can be accessed in the respective week's module.

3. Memos (3 X 60 pts. = 180 pts.): Three times throughout the semester, I will post a prompt for you to respond to in a well-written essay/memo. The prompt will address a policy problem/question. The memo should be 3-5 pages double-spaced and can be accessed in the respective week's module. I will provide rubrics with the prompts.

4. Policy Presentation (80 pts.): You should research a current public policy or a potential public policy facing the U.S. Given the previous and upcoming administrations (at the federal, state, and local levels), there are ample number of potential public policies to study. If you are doing a current policy, you should track its history through its current status. Where and by whom did it originate? What processes did it go through? What institutions? What political factors led to its passage? If you want to study a potential policy in the new administration, you should track how it can become policy from its inception (idea phase) to its passage. Where can it successfully pass? What steps must it go through? What political factors must be taken into consideration for it to become policy? You should then present your analysis in an 8-10 policy presentation using a visual aid like PowerPoint on VidGrid. I will provide a rubric for grading.

Grade Components

Discussion Board (6 X 15 pts.)	90
Quizzes (5 X 30 pts.)	150
Memos (3 X 60 pts.)	180
Presentation	80
Total	500

Grading Scale

A+	97% - 100% (483 - 500)
A	≥93% < 97% (463 - 482)
A-	≥90% < 93% (448 - 462)
B+	≥87% < 90% (433 - 447)
B	≥83% < 87% (413 - 432)
B-	≥80% < 83% (398 - 412)
C+	≥77% < 80% (383 - 397)

C	≥73% <77%	(363 - 382)
C-	≥70% <73%	(348 - 362)
D+	≥67% <70%	(333 - 347)
D	≥63% <67%	(313 - 332)
D-	≥60% <63%	(298 - 312)
F	<60%	(<298)

Round up from 0.5% has been included in the point spread above.

Course Expectations & Policies

Courtesy

Comments and language in class should be professional and courteous. Some of the topics we will be discussing/debating are sensitive in nature, with ideological divisions. Respectful disagreement is fine; insults are not, and will not be tolerated.

Diversity & Inclusiveness

There must be a clear respect for diversity maintained in the class. This includes respect for people related to gender, sexual orientation, religious identity, disability, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, culture and other differences (including political orientation). All of us have something to offer, and together, we can cultivate a classroom environment where individuals of varying opinions, experiences, and backgrounds are able to learn in a supportive and inclusive setting.

Late Work Policy & Make-Up Exams and Assignments

Since you have ample notice of the due dates of the assignments, and their requirements, no extensions will be given for assignments, unless there is approved medical, legal (jury duty), or university documentation. Materials turned in after the indicated due date and time will automatically receive a 10% deduction. Late work will receive an additional 15% deduction for each additional 24 hours that pass in which the assignment is not turned in.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be offered in this course.

Incompletes

Incompletes will only be given in the most extreme and extenuating circumstances.

Student Privacy

Per regulations outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I will not discuss your grades, class performance, or any issues dealing with your personal circumstances as they relate to this course with another party that cannot legally access your your collegiate records or legally obtain such information. I will not field phone calls from your parents concerning your performance or circumstances related to this course. Your performance may be discussed with other members of the faculty as it pertains to your progress in the program, consideration for awards/funding, and as it is relevant to other university and department-related considerations.

Student Disability Services

Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact ASC (Location: H&K 104, Phone: 402.554.2872, Email: unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu)

Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to adhere to all the rules, regulations, and standards set forth by the University of Nebraska at Omaha with regard to academic dishonesty (<http://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/academic-integrity.php>). This statement covers plagiarism (intentional or unintentional), cheating on examinations, using or stealing others' work, and so forth. The penalty for academic dishonesty could be a failing course grade and/or disciplinary actions.

Syllabus Change Policy

The contents of this course syllabus are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Course Schedule

Legend:

Read:

- BRS is the required textbook
- Internet links in syllabus are active links to click
- “Available in Canvas” readings located in respective week’s module
- “Via e-book” can be accessed through library - see Week 1 video for instructions

Watch: Video links located in respective week’s module

Participation: Discussion Board - see respective week’s module for link

Quiz: Can be accessed in respective week’s module

Memo: Can be accessed in respective week’s module

Week 1 (Jan. 10 - 16): Introduction

- Read: BRS. Introduction. pp. 1-8.
- Watch: Introduction to Class & Syllabus video.
- Participation: Respond to Discussion Board 1 by Jan. 16 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 2 (Jan. 17 - 23): Policy Typologies & Policy Models

- Read: BRS. Ch. 1. pp. 11-43
- Read: Welfare Policy. “The Hassle Factor.”
<https://reason.com/2000/12/01/the-hassle-factor/>
- Watch: Policy Typologies video.
- Participation: Respond to Discussion Board 2 by Jan. 23 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 3 (Jan. 24 - 30): Individual Behavior, Social Problems & Market Analysis

- Read: BRS. Ch. 2. pp. 57-78.
- Read: BRS. Ch. 3. pp. 80-111.
- Watch: Game Theory video.
- Watch: Basic Economics video.
- Quiz: Quiz 1 due by Jan. 30 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 4 (Jan. 31 - Feb. 6): Environmental Policy

- Read: BRS. Ch. 6. pp. 194-236.
- Read: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1992/01/the-butterfly-problem/305018/>
- Watch: Tragedy of the Commons video.
- Watch: Economics of Environmental Policy video.
- Watch: Cap & Trade Policy video.
- Quiz: Quiz 2 due by Feb. 6 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 5 (Feb. 7 - Feb. 13): Policymaking in Congress

- Read: Federalist #10. Available online at:

<https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/text-1-10#s-lg-box-wrapper-25493273>

-Read: Federalist #51. Available online at:

<https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/text-51-60#s-lg-box-wrapper-25493427>

-Watch: Understanding the Federalist Papers video.

-Watch: How a Bill Becomes Law video.

-Watch: Party Polarization and Policy Making video.

-Memo: Memo 1 Due by Feb. 13 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 6 (Feb. 14 - Feb. 20): Agenda Setting, Policy Streams, & Health Policy

-Read: Zahariadis, Nikolaos. 2014. "Ambiguity and Multiple Streams." Chapter from Paul A. Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible's *Theories of the Policy Process*. 3rd ed. pp. 25-50. Via e-book.

-Read: BRS. Ch. 7. pp. 240-269.

-Watch: Policy Streams and Obamacare video.

-Quiz: Quiz 3 due by Feb. 20 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 7 (Feb. 21 - Feb. 27): Punctuated Equilibrium & ACF

-Read: Smith, Kevin B., and Christopher W. Larimer. 2017. "Where Does Policy Come From?" Chapter from *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. 3rd ed. pp. 93-116. Available in Canvas.

-Read: BRS. Ch. 5. pp. 148-190.

-Watch: Punctuated Equilibrium and Budgeting video.

-Participation: Respond to Discussion 3 by Feb. 27 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 8 (Feb. 28 - Mar. 6): The Executive - Civil Rights & Immigration Policy

-Read: Stephanopoulos, George. 1999. *All Too Human: A Political Education*. pp. 121-134; 175-182. Available in Canvas.

-Read: BRS. Ch. 10. pp. 355-386.

-Read: BRS. Ch. 12. pp. 415-439.

-Watch: All Too Human video.

-Watch: President Trump immigration executive orders video.

-Quiz: Quiz 4 Due by Mar. 6 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 9 (Mar. 7 - Mar. 13): Policy Diffusion

-Read: Berry, Frances S., and William D. Berry. 2014. "Innovation and Diffusion Models in Policy Research." Chapter from Paul A. Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible's *Theories of the Policy Process*. 3rd ed. pp. 307-314; 330-336. Via e-book.

-Watch: Policy Diffusion video.

-Memo: Memo 2 due by Mar. 13 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 10: Spring Break

Week 11 (Mar. 21 - Mar. 27): Bureaucratic Role in Policy - Emergency Management

-Read: Gormley, William T., & Steven J. Balla. 2017. "The Politics of Disaster Management." Chapter from *Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance*. 4th ed. pp. 230-241. Via e-book.

-Read: BRS. Ch. 11. pp. 387-412.

-Watch: Government Failures with Hurricane Katrina video.

-Participation: Respond to Discussion Board 4 by Mar. 27 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 12 (Mar. 28 - Apr. 3): Bureaucracy & Education Policy

-Read: Gormley, William T., & Steven J. Balla. 2017. "Why Are Some Bureaucracies Better Than Others?" Chapter from *Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance*. 4th ed. pp. 280-294. Via e-book.

-Read: BRS. Ch. 8. pp. 273-315.

-Quiz: Quiz 5 due by Apr. 3 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 13 (Apr. 4 - Apr. 10): Women & Policymaking

-Read: Swers, Michele L. 2016. "Pursuing Women's Interests in Partisan Times: Explaining Gender Differences in Legislative Activity on Health, Education, and Women's Health Issues." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*. 37 (3): 249-273. Available in Canvas.

-Watch: Women & Policymaking video.

-Participation: Respond to Discussion Board 5 by Apr. 10 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 14 (Apr. 11 - Apr. 17): Local Policymaking

-Read: BRS. Ch. 9. pp. 316-322; 330-343.

-Watch: Local Elections & Policy video.

-Memo: Memo 3 due by Apr. 17 @ 11:59 PM.

Week 15 (Apr. 18 - Apr. 24): Presentation Prep

Week 16 (Apr. 25 - May 1): Presentations

-Presentation: Presentation Due by May 1 @ 11:59 PM

-Participation: Respond to another student's presentation (Discussion Board 6 by May 4 @ 11:59 PM

Week 17 (May 2 - May 6): Finals Week

Reserved for contingencies.