This course will introduce you to a broad range of issues faced by policymakers and planners in the U.S. and to the tools and frameworks used to understand those issues by researchers and public sector professionals. Throughout this course we will discuss current U.S. debates and controversies, particularly drawing on recent examples from environmental, health, and social issues.

This course is a required course for PPPM majors and minors. Students from other departments are welcome but priority registration is given to PPPM majors and minors.

**Prerequisite.** The course requires an understanding of basic microeconomics. As such, the prerequisite is Principles of Microeconomics (EC 201) or the equivalent. This is a strict prerequisite.

**Recommend background.** Although not formal prerequisites for this course, students will benefit from completing the PPPM undergraduate introductory sequence – Introduction to Public Policy (PPPM 201), Introduction to the Nonprofit Sector (PPPM 280) and Introduction to City Planning (PPPM 205) – and Quantitative Methods (PPPM 413), prior to taking this course.

PPPM currently plans to offer this course (PPPM 415) again in Fall 2016 and Winter 2017.

**Readings**

There is no required textbook for this class. Readings will be made available via the course Canvas site.

**Course Website**

The course website is located on the University of Oregon’s Canvas system ([https://canvas.uoregon.edu/](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/)). The class syllabus, announcements and other materials will be posted on the blackboard site. Please check the course website frequently for updates. In addition, make sure that you are receiving email to your ‘@uoregon.edu’ address. I will use this email address to communicate with you.

**Class Format and Participation**

This class will primarily consist of lectures, but questions and discussion of the issues are expected and welcomed. Students will be expected to come to class having completed the reading relevant to that class and be fully prepared to participate in discussion and learn from one another.
Exams

(1) **Three In-Class Exams** (25 percent of final grade each) – Thursdays of Weeks #3, #6 and #9.

These exams will focus on the material covered immediately prior to the exam. There will be no early or late in-class exams. If a student must miss an exam for an unavoidable reason (documented serious illness or family emergency), the missing exam score will be replaced by increasing the percentages assigned to the other exams for term. This must be arranged with the instructor prior to the scheduled exam time.

(2) **Final Exam** (25 percent of final grade): There will be a comprehensive 2-hour final exam during the regularly scheduled final exam time.

- There will be no early or late final exams. Failure to take the final exam for an unavoidable reason (serious illness or family emergency) will result in a grade of Incomplete. The reason for missing the exam must be documented prior to the scheduled exam time. Missing the final exam for any other reason will result in a grade of ‘F’. Travel plans do not qualify as a serious illness or emergency. University policy prohibits early final exams.

Grading

My goal in teaching this course is to provide readings, class lectures and discussions, and assignments that challenge you intellectually. You are expending a great deal of time, energy and money on your college education and you should expect that all of your courses challenge you. Accordingly, I will do my best to set the bar high and grade your work in a fair and rigorous manner. Grades in this course will be based on a total number of points associated with each assignment. The sum of all possible points is 100. Grades will be assigned in the following manner:

- 90 or higher A
- 80-89 B
- 70-79 C
- 60-69 D
- Less than 60 F

I may adjust grades upward from this distribution, depending on the distribution of scores in a particular class. In the past when I have taught this class, grades have been approximately distributed as follows: A’s 25%, B’s 50%, and C’s 20-25%. I provide this information to give you some indication of my historical grading practices. This distribution may or not apply to this course.

- **Appeals of graded assignments.** If you feel the need to appeal a graded assignment, you can do so by sending me an email with a description of the portion of the assignment you are appealing, the grade you received and most importantly the reason you think you deserve more credit. You may send this email following a 24-hour waiting period. This will give you time to consider your answer and to write a careful appeal indicating why you might deserve more credit. Do not send an email appeal until at least 24 hours have passed following the return of the graded assignment. I'll review your submission and reply with my decision within a one week. After my review, I may decide not to change your grade or I might adjust grade either upward or downward. For privacy reasons, I can only discuss your graded assignment in my office or via email. Please do not try to initiate a discussion about your assignment before or after class.
Documented Disabilities

Students who have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course should make arrangements to see the instructor as soon as possible. They should also request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying the disability and accommodations.

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. In this course, the penalty for cheating on an examination ranges from a score of zero on the exam to an assigned grade of ‘F’ in the class, depending on the severity of the offense. All acts of academic misconduct will be reported to UO administration.

Professional Practice

This course is a core course in the PPPM undergraduate pre-professional degree program. As such, students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times.

- Students should treat each other and the instructor with the professional courtesy and respect expected in a workplace.
- All communications relating to this course and all work turned in for this course should reflect professional standards in tone, presentation, formatting, spelling and so on.
- The classroom is a place of focused learning. This requires that students arrive on time, stay until the end of the class period, do not disrupt the class by leaving the room temporarily, and refrain from non-learning activities. Students will be asked not to use computers or smart phones during class. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class session.

The Tools of Policy Analysis versus Policy Advocacy – Classroom Discussion

In this course, we will discuss a variety of public policy issues. Such issues are controversial and many people frequently have deeply-held convictions regarding right and wrong policy approaches to particular problems. It is important to recognize and respect these values. Indeed, it is this type of commitment that draws many people to public service. However, it is equally important to understand that our approach in this course will be to take an evidence-based approach to the analysis of public policy. How individuals feel about the virtue of particular policies is not part of that framework. Additionally, citing anecdotal experiences is not helpful in developing an understanding of how public policy will affect the typical person. We will apply analytical tools to assess various public policy issues from the perspective of economic efficiency and distributional outcomes. In doing so, we will focus firstly on the theoretical and empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of public policy. I welcome discussion in this class that is respectful and focused on the analysis of public policy. Students may naturally find themselves thinking about and evaluating public policy issues based on what seems right or virtuous to them. However, I will try my best to keep the classroom discussion focused on the analytical framework and available evidence-base.

Letters of Reference

I receive many requests from students for letters of reference for scholarships, internships, graduate school admission or employment. I’m happy to consider writing such letters for students who are strong academic performers in one of my classes. If you receive a grade of “A”, feel free to ask me for a letter. If you receive a grade of “B”, perhaps another instructor would be better choice. If that’s not possible, I will consider your request.
To request a letter write me an email, indicating which class(es) you took from me and your course grade(s). In your email, include the following materials: an unofficial transcript, your statement of purpose for the particular application you are making (if applicable), your resume, and a link to the opportunity you are applying for (if available). Your email should also include the date when the letter is required, and plan on giving me at least one month (more if possible) to complete the letter. I will let you know within two days if I am able to write a letter for you.

Course Schedule and Readings

**Week #1**

**Introduction to Policy Analysis**
- Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 4 and 5.

**Economics Review: Supply and Demand**

**Week #2**

**Economics Review: Price Ceilings and Floors**

**Externalities and Environmental Policy**

**Week #3**

**Environmental Policy (cont’d)**
- Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 11.

* Thursday → Exam #1 (January 21th)*

**Week #4**

**Information Problems: Asymmetric Information, Risk and Uncertainty**

**Health Insurance and Reform in the U.S.**
- Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 8 ‘Health Care Policy’.

**Week #5**
Health Insurance and Reform (cont’d from previous week)

**Public Goods**

**Week #6**
Taxation – Equity and Efficiency
- Reading TBA.

❖ **Thursday → Exam #2 (February 11th)**

**Week #7**
Inequality and Well-Being

**Week #8**
Cost Benefit Analysis: Methods and Applications
- Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 6 ‘Assessing Policy Alternatives’.

**Week #9**
Political Economy and Government Failure

❖ **Thursday → Exam #3 (March 3rd)**

**Week #10**
Education Policy
- Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 10 ‘Education Policy’.
- Gruber, Chapter 11 ‘Education’.