Course Description

Public policy is what public officials within government, and by extension the citizens they represent, choose to do or not to do about public problems. Public policy decisions affect us at the national level (e.g., health care and national defense) and at the local and individual level (e.g., student housing construction, tuition rates).

In designing this introductory course, I want to expose you to both the environment within which policy is developed, by discussing the context and actors involved in the policy process, and examine the origin, implementation, and effect of specific policies influencing us on a regular basis.

Course Objectives

I have several objectives I want to achieve in this class.

1. Provide students with an opportunity to design elements of this class that best match their interests within public policy;
2. Expose you to the origins, impacts, and consequences (both intended and unintended) of some of the policies that affect us on a daily basis;
3. Give you a chance to learn more about a policy that interests you by providing you with a research opportunity;
4. Develop your ability to work in a team, an essential element of success in the professional world;
5. Observe and engage in the policy development process;
6. Learn about the PPPM major; and
7. Learn tips to be successful academically at the University of Oregon and beyond.

Course Structure

This course intends to expose students to the broad topic of public policy. Within the topic,
there is significant room for flexibility. I want to use this opportunity to engage you in the
topic by incorporating your interests and feedback in designing many of the elements of the
course.

We will spend time during our first course meeting in developing learning outcomes, class
activities, and developing assignments.

**Grading**

This class is offered on either a graded or pass/no pass basis. Your grade will be determined
based on the following:

1. Attendance and participation 15%
2. Policy presentation 20%
3. Blog posts 30%
4. Meeting paper 10%
5. Book exam / final paper 25%
**TOTAL** 100%

**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, supplemental readings, and other
materials will be posted on the Canvas site. Please check the course website frequently for
updates. In addition, make sure that the University registrar has your correct email address,
as I will use this email address to communicate with you.

**Course Materials**


Additional readings available at [http://canvas.uoregon.edu](http://canvas.uoregon.edu)

**Disabilities**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify
me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-
related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible
Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541.346.1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

**Late Assignment Policy**

If you are unable to make it to class on the day an assignment is due, you may email your
assignment to me prior to the class time and date that assignment is due. Late assignments
receive only partial credit. If an answer key is posted to the website, however, no late
homework assignments are accepted (no credit).
Incomplete Policy

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner and to turn in all materials at the designated time. In accordance with university regulations, an incomplete will only be given when “the quality of work is satisfactory but a minor yet essential requirement of the course has not been completed for reasons acceptable to the instructor.”

Academic Misconduct

You are expected at all times to do your own work. Copying content from other students and submitting it as your own work is grounds for failing the class. The University Student Conduct Code (available at http://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.

Plagiarism

Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by 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. For additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, visit: http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

Inclusion Statement

The School of Architecture and Allied Arts is a community that values inclusion. We are a committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact your instructor and/or department head. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. Find more information at their website at http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html or by phoning 541.346.2037.

Assignments

There is a variety of requirements for this class. Listed below are general descriptions of each class assignment; I will provide additional detail on each assignment as the term progresses.

Attendance and Participation

You registered for this class because you were interested in learning more about public policy, so the best way to accomplish that goal is to attend class. I will expect you to attend
each class. If you can’t attend class, you should coordinate with your classmates to ensure you get any pertinent notes. You can have one unexcused absence before it affects your grade in this class.

You will also be expected to participate in class by asking questions and engaging in the ensuing discussions.

**Policy Presentation**

As part of a team of 3-4, you will be responsible for all the elements of an in-class presentation (30 minutes) devoted to a significant policy topic. Your responsibilities will include:

- Identifying 7-10 readings on the topic
- Developing and submitting an annotated bibliography
- Identifying 1-2 readings for your classmates to provide the background needed for your class session
- Leading the class session, which might include developing a lecture, leading / facilitating a discussion in small groups, reporting out discussion outcomes, and inviting a guest speaker. If you choose to invite a guest speaker, let me know right away so I can help and adjust class time.

I will serve as your group’s advisor, and can help develop your in-class activities.

**Blog Posts**

You’ll be expected to create a blog post each week, starting at the end of the second week of class. We’ll develop the prompt in class – it could be based on a question that comes up in class, the week’s readings, or something that I provide. Writing a reaction post on your blog will help synthesize your thoughts and review what you learned the past week.

Your posts should be 400-500 words in length. That is the equivalent of 2-3 pages double-spaced. They are due each Sunday at midnight and are worth five points each. Late posts, or posts that have spelling or grammatical errors (those red and green lines that appear on screen are there for a reason!) will receive lower grades. (For more details on grading, see the rubric at the end of this syllabus).

**Attend Meeting**

Public policies are discussed on a regular basis in a variety of government settings, including at the state, county, city, and special district level. I want you to identify and attend a meeting of a government body (e.g., city council, planning commission, utility or school board, etc.) and report on a policy under consideration. After you attend the meeting, I want you to submit an approximately three-page paper that addresses (among other things) the following topics:

- Policy background
- Interest groups, official and unofficial actors
- Proposed/potential consequences
• Your observations on public engagement (or the lack thereof)

Your paper will be due on Sunday, March 6 (end of week 9).

**Book Exam / Final Paper**

You have two options for completing this class element:

1. We will discuss only a few of the many policies that affect us at the national, state, and local levels. I want you to choose a policy that interests you and write a 5-7 page paper that addresses the following:
   - Policy background
   - Interest groups, official and unofficial actors
   - Proposed/potential consequences
   - The impact this policy has (or may have) on you

   This paper will be due at the time scheduled for our final examination.

2. We will be spending weeks 2-5 discussing the class textbook. Students who choose this option will complete an exam covering the content of the book and related classroom discussion. This exam will be scheduled during week 6.

   *Any student who chooses to complete both options will be able to drop the lower of their two grades.*

**Extra Credit**

One element of success in college is building relationships with faculty. For students that may not have any faculty members (yet) who know them well enough to write letters of recommendation when the need arises, or who may be intimidated by visiting a faculty office, I welcome anyone to stop by my office to chat. The goal of this meeting is **not** to talk about class content (although we can if you want), but to give you a chance to overcome any reticence you may have, and to start a relationship with at least one faculty member at the UO. I will offer extra credit to anyone who comes by to chat. If you come by before 10am, I'll be happy to go across the street to the EMU and buy you a cup of coffee.

**Schedule and Readings**

The following schedule may be adjusted as we move through the term, depending on student’s interests and the length of time we discuss particular issues.

I may also invite guest speakers to speak to the class as well, depending on the topics students select.

The reading list will be supplemented as the term progresses. Please check the Canvas site weekly to see the additional readings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings from Birkland</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>Introduction to this class I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>Introduction to this class II</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>Introduction to The Policy Process</td>
<td>Chapter 1-3</td>
<td>Post 1 due (Sun)</td>
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<td>1/14</td>
<td>Elements of the Policy-Making System</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Historical and Structural Contexts of Public Policy Making</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>Official and Unofficial Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy</td>
<td>Chapter 4-5</td>
<td>Post 2 due (Sun)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/26</td>
<td>Agenda Setting, Power, and Interest Groups</td>
<td>Chapter 6-7</td>
<td>Post 3 due (Sun)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>Policies and Policy Types</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>Policy Design, Policy Tools, and Decisions</td>
<td>Chapter 8-9</td>
<td>Post 4 due (Sun)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>Policy Implementation, Failure, and Learning</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>Climate Change</td>
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<td>Post 5 due (Sun)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>Criminal Justice System and Reform</td>
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<td>Book exam (TBA)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Health Care / Guns and School Shootings</td>
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<td>Post 6 due (Sun)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/18</td>
<td>Immigration / Minimum Wage / Middle Class</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2/23</td>
<td>Local Urban Development, International Urban Development, and</td>
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<td>Post 7 due (Sun)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>Global Overpopulation, Housing / Homelessness</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Foster Care System, K-12 Education</td>
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<td>Post 8 due (Sun)</td>
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<td>3/3</td>
<td>Refugees, Social Injustice</td>
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<td>Meeting paper</td>
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<td>due (Sun)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>GMOs, Tax Reform and Big Banks, Wilderness Conservation</td>
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<td>Post 9 due (Sun)</td>
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<td>3/10</td>
<td>Guest speakers (TBA) Class evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final paper due</td>
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FINALS 3/14 Scheduled Final Exam time: Monday, March 14 – 8:00 am

1 See Canvas for additional readings as the term progresses.

**Blog Postings Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content and Creativity</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 or 2</td>
<td>1 or 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postings provide comprehensive insight, understanding, and reflective thought about the topic.</td>
<td>Postings provide moderate insight, understanding and reflective thought about the topic.</td>
<td>Postings provide minimal insight, understanding and reflective thought about the topic.</td>
<td>Postings show no evidence of insight, understanding or reflective thought about the topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postings present a focused and cohesive viewpoint substantiated by effective supporting examples.</td>
<td>Postings present a specific viewpoint that is substantiated by supporting examples.</td>
<td>Postings present a specific viewpoint but lack supporting examples.</td>
<td>Postings present no specific viewpoint and no supporting examples are provided.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postings are creatively and fluently written to stimulate dialogue and commentary.</td>
<td>Postings are generally well written with some attempts made to stimulate dialogue and commentary.</td>
<td>Postings are brief and unimaginative, and reflect minimal effort to connect with audience.</td>
<td>Postings are written in a half-hearted, disjointed manner that reflects no awareness of effective communication.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mechanics</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Writes with no errors in grammar,</td>
<td>Writes with minor editing errors in</td>
<td>Writes with major errors in grammar,</td>
<td>Writes with numerous major errors in grammar,</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELEMENT</td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Partially Proficient</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 or 2</td>
<td>1 or 0</td>
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<td>capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
<td>grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.</td>
<td>capitalization, punctuation and spelling. (3 or more errors)</td>
<td>capitalization, punctuation and spelling. (More than 5 errors)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Acknowledges any image and multimedia sources with captions or annotations.</td>
<td>Acknowledges most image and multimedia sources with captions or annotations.</td>
<td>Acknowledges only a few sources and uses incomplete captions or annotations.</td>
<td>Fails to acknowledge any image or multimedia sources, either with a caption or an annotation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>