

IDS 4930/PUP3002: Current Controversies in Public Policy

Fall 2023

August 23 - December 6, 2023
Anderson 34
M, W, F, Period 3: 9:35AM - 10:25AM

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Cornacchione
Office Location: 234 Pugh Hall
Office Hours: M/W 2:00-3:30PM (in person); OR by appointment through Calendly: calendly.com/tcornacchione
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Course Description

Prerequisite: None; but introduction to American Government or Introduction to Comparative Politics is strongly suggested.

Overview: How do we approach and solve pressing problems that impact the public good? How do policy makers across the globe learn from one another? This course will explore major public policy challenges faced by all governments. Students will approach the challenges of governing through the lens of public policy solutions. Students will engage with the scholarly approach to policy analysis, explore a public policy topic of interest, assess attempted policy solutions, and design their final project around policy solutions or scholarly inquest.

Course Objectives: The goal is for students to explore several political puzzles that are of particular relevance to the study of public policy, and to create students who are well-versed in the ever-growing literature on public policy and agenda setting. Some of the concepts presented in the readings and in lecture will be straightforward, while others may take a reasonable amount of effort to understand. In some of the scholarly articles you will read, the methods used may be entirely new to you. I do not expect you to familiarize yourself or understand all the methodological tools used in the readings. It is my hope that through readings and lectures, you will have the tools necessary to evaluate the arguments. After you leave the class at the end of the semester, the material will give you a much deeper understanding of developments in the study of public policy.

Readings

There are no required textbooks for this course. Texts will consist of scholarly articles, current news articles, policy papers, and online resources. These will appear in the online Canvas course shell. Scholarly articles are listed in the course schedule below, under the weeks for which they are assigned. All scholarly articles can be accessed through the UF Libraries website, if you need help navigating the library website, tutorials are available here. From your computer, you will need to be on the UF VPN Network.

Suggested Texts: These works represent quality research in the field of comparative public policy and agenda setting. These readings are NOT required, but they are recommended to enhance your understanding of course material. If you find yourself wanting to know more – these are a great place to start.

Baumgartner, F.R., Breunig, C. and Grossman, E., 2019. *Comparative policy agendas: Theory, tools, data* (p. 424). Oxford University Press. *[PDF available free](#) online *We will use selected chapters (available on Canvas)

Kraft, M.E. and Furlong, S.R., 2019. *Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives*. Cq Press.

Weible, Christopher M., ed. *Theories of the policy process*. Taylor & Francis, 2023.

Grading Policy

Your grade in this class will be based on four components: attendance, participation, leading one class discussion, and a research paper. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas. Late Assignments and Make-up Exams/Quizzes will not be accepted without a university-approved excuse and instructor approval. Every component is worth 100 points, the weight of each is listed below:

Attendance/Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Group Policy Discussion Project	20%
Policy Project	50%

Attendance: I will take attendance randomly 5 times throughout the semester. This will be done via quiz on the lecture that day to check your understanding and is graded on completion. If you are present, you will get a 100, if you are absent, you will receive a zero. In an extreme circumstance, I reserve the right to waive attendance; but I will only do so if provided documentation of a university-approved excuse (military service, documented illness, jury duty, university-approved activity, etc.). I will drop the lowest attendance grade (everyone gets one freebie). Attendance is worth 10% of your final grade.

Midterm Exam: Your midterm exam will be held in class and will be essay format. The exam will ask you to address two out of three questions. These questions will present important policy questions and will address concepts covered in class, readings, guest lectures, etc. Quality answers to the exam questions will reflect your knowledge and understanding of course materials. I will provide the potential exam questions 1 week before the exam (on Canvas). **You will be required to purchase a "blue book" (essay test book). These are available from the UF Bookstore for \$1/book. They are also available on Amazon for \$15 for a pack of 50 (perhaps you can overcome a collective action problem, and save ~50¢). The exam is scheduled October 4, 2023.**

Policy Discussions: during each module, student groups will lead the class in a discussion of the policy topic. Groups will be determined by the instructor based on student interest. Student groups will discuss one particular aspect of the broader policy area (for example, if dealing with health policy, maybe the group focuses on Medicaid expansion). The group will lead the class in an overview of the policy area, standard solutions to the policy problem, and propose their best policy solution/proposal for the topic. on designated discussion days, and students will be expected to carry the conversation. Additional details are available on Canvas. The assignment is worth 20% of the Final Grade.

Final Project: the semester culminates in the completion of a final project. Students will have two options, as outlined below. Students will be drafting their projects throughout the semester. Each component part of the project will be worth 5% of the final grade, and the final product will be worth 25% of the final grade, with the final project worth a total of 50% of the final grade. Option 1 is a research design. This option represents a more classic academic project where students will pose a research question, hypotheses, and a data collection design plan. The project must be couched in existing academic literature. Option 2 an applied research project, where students will select a policy issue and propose a policy solution. Students must select a policy solution and target a particular policymaking body. Additional details for each option are available on Canvas.

- Draft Components:
 - Policy/Topic selection and justification
 - Annotated bibliography
 - Section 1 draft (option 1: intro & literature review; option 2: issue review)
 - Section 2 draft (option 1: theory & hypotheses; option 2: findings draft)
 - Section 3 draft (option 1: design draft; option 2: analysis & recommendations draft)

- Final Product:

Option 1: Research Design

Introduction

Literature Review and Theory

Hypotheses

Design

Conclusion

References

Option 2: Policy Analysis

Introduction/Executive Summary

Issue Review/Background

Findings

Analysis & Recommendations

Conclusion

References

- Topic Selection - justification: **September 8 @ 11:59 PM**
- Annotated Bibliography: **September 29 @ 11:59 PM**
- Section 1 Draft: **October 13 @ 11:59 PM (Intro/Lit; Intro/Issue Review)**
- Section 2 Draft: **October 30 @ 11:59 PM (Theory/Hypothesis; Case Justification)**
- Section 3 Draft: **November 17 @ 11:59 PM (Design; Analysis)**

Your complete draft will be due **Wednesday, December 13 @12:00PM** via Canvas, or in-person to my office. The paper should include all parts listed above (and outlined in the final paper instruction guide). Your final paper should incorporate feedback from your previous drafts. Grades will be based on substance and style. Use proper grammar, appropriate language, and proofread and spell-check your paper!

Extra Credit: Typically, I am not a fan of extra credit. If you make a concerted effort throughout the semester, you should not need extra credit. HOWEVER, there may be occasions when I will offer extra credit to the ENTIRE class to attend a guest lecture, view a program, etc. I will not offer individual extra credit.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will only be accepted with instructor approval and may be subject to a 1-letter grade deduction per day late, up to a maximum of three days late. After the assignment is 3 days late, I will no longer accept it.

Grading Scale

I adhere to the University letter-to-grade conversion chart for all exams, papers, assignments, quizzes, and final grades.

93 or above=A	90-92=A-	87-89=B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-	77-79=C+
73-76=C	70-72=C-	67-69=D+	63+-66=D	60-62=D-	0-59=F

Grade Changes: I am certainly open to and actively encourage you to challenge me both in class as well on disputed test questions/essay points – sometimes, I make mistakes and sometimes, it is possible that more than one answer or perspective is correct. If you present an empirically-defensible case as to why your answer/assumptions are also correct (for which I originally took off points), I will gladly give back partial or full credit, depending on the quality of your argument. Please do so during office hours, or during a scheduled appointment.

At the end of the semester, there are inexorably a handful of students who send me a late-night email requesting (and sometimes incoherently demanding) that I raise their final grade, whether from a D+ to a C-, or a B+ to an A- or anywhere in between. Two remarks on this rather bold and questionable strategy:

1. I try to be charitable in terms of the grading scheme already – completion grades for attendance, and the draft components of your paper (35% of your final grade) provide a substantial “cushion.”
2. Secondly, the “But I NEED a/an (insert grade here)”, or “can you *just* raise my grade x-number of points” arguments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of grades. Implicit in this statement is the assumption that grades are capriciously handed out on the instructor’s whim or fancy and are not based on the student’s demonstrated mastery of the material. Grades reflect your mastery of the course material. There are many things YOU can do to enhance your mastery of the material, and consequently, your grade.
 - Attend class regularly - if I see you frequently and know your name - I’ll be more inclined to magically transform a B+ to an A-...
 - Be present – pay attention in class and participate.
 - Read materials - seriously I don’t assign them for my health!
 - Ask questions – either in class or during office hours or over email
 - Do not procrastinate on assignments.

I will not respond to emails asking for extra points, or for grades to be bumped up. If a student wishes to dispute a grade on an assignment or test, the student must request an appointment or come during office hours and present a compelling case as to why extra points should be awarded.

Email Policy

Please include your first and last name and course information in the subject line of your email. When I receive your email, I will make every effort to respond in a timely manner, usually within 48 hours. Though you may receive a reply sooner than that, you should not expect an immediate response. Please treat all email correspondence with your instructor as you would treat any other professional exchange. Accordingly, I expect emails to be respectful and polite, to use correct grammar and complete sentences. I reserve the right to summarily delete rude, disrespectful, and/or poorly written emails without reply. Please note that I have structured the course and office hours to best assist you in mastering the materials. Please utilize office hours, in-class time, and your syllabus to answer any doubts you may have. Finally, I will contact you via your UF designated email address via Canvas, so please see to it that your account is set such that you are able to receive these communications.

Technology Policy

The use of technology in the classroom can be a wonderful way to directly engage with materials. From time to time, I may utilize YouTube clips and social media because it can be a fun way to keep us all motivated and engaged with the real world of politics. That said, cell phones and laptops are generally a distraction and detrimental to the classroom experience. They have the potential to take students “away” from the lecture and impede active engagement with their peers. While I do permit the use of laptops and tablets for notetaking, I encourage you to give your eyes a rest and take notes with paper and pen. Given the time and effort I invest in course planning, I am hard pressed to see a reason why you would need to be on your phone during class. Please turn your phones off or on vibrate.

Academic Honor Policy

UF students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. Requirements, expectations, and violations can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>.

It is your responsibility to know university policies and procedures, and to hold yourself to the highest standards.

Academic Accommodations

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University of Florida policy, students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: 1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Resource Center; and 2. Bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. The syllabus and other materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to UF students with disabilities, contact the:

Disability Resource Center

001 Reid Hall

DRC@ufsa.ufl.edu

352-392-8565

disability.ufl.edu

Other Helpful Links

UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

UF Writing Center: <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Final (and perhaps reiterative) Notes on Course Protocol:

- Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to all of us who made it a priority to get to class time and be here. Please enter and exit the classroom quietly within minimal interruptions and take a seat close to the door.
- Please keep private conversations private. Discussions with your neighbor are distracting for me as well as other students. If you have a thought on course material or a question, speak up! Please feel free to share your thoughts on the lecture topic with all of us.
- I reserve the right to dismiss individual students from the classroom for disruptive behavior, and report them to the Dean of Students
- I do not tolerate academic dishonesty in *any* form and will pursue the full penalties for violations thereof. For your reference, the University of Florida Academic Honor Policy is listed above. Write your own mediocre work, don't pass off something you think is better as your own.

Syllabus Change Policy Except for changes that substantially affect the parameters of evaluation, including grading and the scheduling of the final exam, this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. I will provide you with advance notice in class and via your university registered email contact.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading(s)
Part I		
Introduction to Social Science Research, Policy Agendas, and Policy Makers		
	Week 1: August 23 & 25	
August 23	Syllabus and Introduction	None
August 25	Policy Studies and Punctuated Equilibrium Theory	True et al (2007)
	Week 2: August 28 - Sept. 1	
August 28	Comparative Public Policy Approaches	Bevan and Jennings (2019)
August 30	Academic v. Applied Research	No Readings - Prepare questions for Guest Speaker ***Guest Speaker from OPPAGA***
Sept. 1	Policy Agendas - Policy Makers' priorities	Jones & Baumgartner (2004)
	Week 3: Sept 6 & 8	
September 4	NO CLASS	LABOR DAY
September 6	U.S. Agendas	Barberá et al (2019)
September 8	Comparative Agendas	Traber et al (2021)
Part II		
Health Care and Social Welfare		
	Week 4: September 11-15	
September 11	Poverty, Inequality, and Benefits	Bartels (2006); Hoynes & Rothstein (2019)
September 13	Social Welfare Discussion	Group 1 Presents
September 15	Aging and Retirement	Morkaim and Pollack (2013); Dieleman et al (2020)
	Week 5: September 18-22	
September 18	Reproduction	Steinfeld et al (2023)
September 20	Health Inequities	NCSL "Lowering Rx Drug Costs" (2022); Brown et al (2019)
September 22	Health Discussion 1	Group 2 Presents
	Week 6: September 25 - 29	
September 25	Pandemics and Crises	Altiparmakis et al (2021)
September 27	Health Research and Innovation	DiClemente et al (2019); Daza et al (2022) <i>*Exam Questions available on Canvas*</i>
September 29	Health Discussion 2	Group 3 Presents
Part III		
National Security and Defense		
	Week 7: October 2 & October 4	
October 2	Review for Midterm Exam	No Readings - Open question time
October 4	MIDTERM EXAM	<i>Be there or be square</i>

October 6	NO CLASS	HOMEcomings
	Week 8: October 9 - 13	
October 9	State of the world/International Orgs.	De Vries et al (2021)
October 11	Trade and Relationships	Irwin (2020)
October 13	National Security Discussion 1	Group 4 Presents
	Week 9: October 16 - 20	
October 16	Domestic and International Terrorism	Mitts (2022)
October 18	Immigration	NCSL (2020) DACA Brief
October 20	National Security Discussion 2	Group 5 Presents
Part IV	Crime and Justice	
	Week 10: October 23 - 27	
October 23	Perceptions of Crime	Singer et al (2019) https://ncsl-podcasts.simplecast.com/episodes/grappling-with-juvenile-justice-oas-episode-183
October 25	Punishment	NCSL Juvenile Life without Parole (2023) NCSL Brain Development and Juvenile Justice (2023) Kalmanson (2023) ***Guest Speaker***
October 27	Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Recidivism	NCSL Criminal Records and ReEntry Toolkit (2023) *Explore any three of the links
	Week 11: October 30 - November 3	
October 30	Human Trafficking	OPPAGA Report on Sexual Exploitation (2022)
November 1	Crime and Justice Discussion 1	Group 6 Presents
November 3	Gun Control	NCSL Stand Your Ground Laws (2023); Barry et al (2022)
	Week 12: November 6 & November 8	
November 6	Prison Reform	NCSL "Women in Jails" (2022)
November 8	Crime and Justice Discussion 2	Group 7 Presents
November 10	NO CLASS	VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY
Part V	Environment and Sustainability	
	Week 13: November 13 - 17	
November 13	Infrastructure	Borenstein & Kellogg (2021); Thacker et al (2019)
November 15	Climate Change	Druckman & McGrath (2019)
November 17	Environmental Discussion	Group 8 Presents
	Week 14: November 20	
November 20	Water	Pauli (2020); Vollmer & Harrison (2021)

November 22	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS
November 24	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS
Part VI	AI and Technology	
	Week 15: November 27 - December 1	
November 27	What is AI?	AI Decision Making
November 29	Technology and Policy	Grietens (2020)
December 1	AI/Tech Discussion	<i>Group 9 Presents</i>
	Week 16: December 4 & 6	
December 4	PEER REVIEW DAY	Attendance Day - bring materials for review
December 6	NO CLASS	WORK ON PAPERS_ EXTENDED OFFICE HOURS
December 8	NO CLASS	READING DAYS

Final Paper Project Due Wednesday, December 13 @12:00PM via Canvas