

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY
Political Science 2U03 – PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
Course Outline
Winter 2018

Instructor: Greg Flynn

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Office: KTH 543

Office Hours: Thursday 3:00 – 5:00

Class Meetings

Lectures

Monday & Wednesday 10:30 – 11:20

Location: LRW 1055

I. Introduction

The choices that governments make in relation to the public goods and services provided to the public have an impact on all of a nation's citizens on a daily basis, often times without people even thinking about the decisions governments have made. In this context, public policy decisions have the ability to disproportionately benefit some groups and disadvantage others. In addition, governments are invariably judged by the electorate on the success or failures of their policies and political parties are measured, in part, on the policy choices they offer during the course of election campaigns. In short, public policy decisions are at the heart of politics in democratic states and form the basis of decisions about the quality of governance of a country.

II. Objectives

The course is intended to give students an introductory understanding of two separate, but inter-related sub-fields of political science – public policy and public administration. It will also provide students with a background in both fields to provide for a better understanding of more specific policy related issues in the other sub-fields, such as international relations, Canadian and comparative politics.

By the end of the course, it is anticipated that students will have a greater understanding of the policy-making process in democratic states and to be able to assess it at an introductory level from two different halves of the policy equation – inputs (policy) and outputs (administration). They will be able to describe the constituent elements of the policy cycle and identify the different types of policy actors in Canada and other democratic states as well as appreciate the complicated nature of identifying, detailing and resolving public policy problems. Students will also be able to analyze current political and public policy issues from different policy and administration related perspectives and appraise the validity and legitimacy of arguments

advanced in public by politicians and the media in relation to claims of policy successes or failures.

III. Required Texts

There are no required texts for this course.

The required readings for the course will be posted on Avenue to Learn. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the readings in advance of the week in which each topic will be addressed. As the course will employ a problem-based format, students will need to be fully prepared in order to have the optimum learning experience for those sessions.

The readings also form part of the examinable content for the course.

IV. Class Schedule

January 08, 2018 Public Policy –Concepts and Wicked Problems

Reading Howlett, Michael, M. Ramesh and Anthony Perl. 2009. *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles & Policy Subsystems*, 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, Introduction.

January 15, 2018 Policy Actors - Government

Reading Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. 2003. “Unraveling the Central State, But How? Types of Multi-Level Governance” *American Political Science Review* 97(2), 233-243.

January 22, 2018 Policy Actors – Non-Government

Reading Burstein, Paul and April Linton. 2002. “The Impact of Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movement Organizations on Public Policy: Some Recent Evidence and Theoretical Concerns” *Social Forces* 81(2), 381-408.

January 29, 2018 Problem Definition

Reading Rochefort, David A. and Roger W. Cobb. 1993. “Problem Definition, Agenda Access, and Policy Choice” *Policy Studies Journal* 21(1), 56-71.

Policy Map Due in Class on Monday January 29, 2018

February 05, 2018 Agenda Setting

Reading Jones, Bryan D. and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2004. "Representation and Agenda Setting" *Policy Studies Journal* 32(1), 1-24.

February 12, 2018 Venue Shifting

Reading Flynn, Greg. 2011. "Court Decisions, NIMBY Claims, and the Siting of Unwanted Facilities: Policy Frames and the Impact of Judicialization in Locating a Landfill for Toronto's Solid Waste" *Canadian Public Policy* 37(3), 381-393.

February 19, 2018 WINTER READING WEEK – NO CLASS

February 26, 2018 Evidence Based Policy Decisions

Reading Parsons, Wayne. 2002. "From muddling through to muddling up – evidence based policy making and the modernisation of British government" *Public Policy and Administration* 17(3), 43-60.

March 05, 2018 Policy Instruments I

Reading Salamon, Lester M. ed. 2002. *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance*. Oxford University Press, Introduction.

Briefing Note due in Class on March 05, 2018

March 12, 2018 Policy Instruments II

Reading Peters, Guy B. 2005. "The Problem of Policy Problems" *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 7(4), 349-370.

March 19, 2018 Policy Evaluation

Reading Wallner, Jennifer. 2008. "Legitimacy and Public Policy: Seeing Beyond Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Performance" *Policy Studies Journal* 36(3), 421-433.

March 26, 2018 Performance Measures

Reading de Lancer Julnes, Patria and Marc Holzer. 2001. "Promoting the Utilization of Performance Measures in Public Organizations: An Empirical Study of Factors Affecting Adoption and Implementation" *Public Administration Review* 61(6), 693-708.

April 02, 2018 Accountability Measures and Processes

Reading Bell, Jeffrey Graham. 2006. "Agents of Parliament: A New Branch of Government?" *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 29(1), 13-21.

Policy Instrument Advice Paper due in Class on April 02, 2018.

April 09, 2018 Exam Review and Preparation

V. Teaching Methods

The class is scheduled for two one-hour sessions per week plus a tutorial.

The first hour of each week will be conducted in an interactive lecture format by the instructor with students having the opportunity to ask questions concerning the information being provided to them.

The second hour of class each week will approach the lecture content from a problem based perspective. Students will review and explore the assigned problem in a small group format as a means of better understanding the relevant lecture content for the week.

The third hour of instruction in the course will be undertaken by way of tutorials. The tutorial discussions will focus on clarifying questions that arise out of the weekly reading as well as the lectures. In addition, the tutorials will serve as the opportunity for students to receive instruction and feedback on their assignments. Tutorials begin the week of January 15, 2018.

In addition to formal class time, students are invited to meet with the instructor and/or their TAs during regular office hours or by appointment to discuss course content or any other concerns.

VI. Evaluation

The following evaluations will determine the grade received by students.

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| 1. | Policy Map | 20% |
| 2. | Briefing Note | 20% |
| 3. | Performance Measure Advice | 20% |
| 4. | Final Examination | 40% |

Assignments should be provided to the instructor, either in class or during office hours. As a last resort, assignments can be submitted to the box outside of the political science office. Assignments will not be accepted that are slipped under the instructor's or any other door. Papers received by e-mail or fax will not be accepted without the prior express permission of the instructor on each assignment.

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Late Policy

Students should make all reasonable attempts to submit papers on the due date. In the event that a legitimate extension is required, students should speak to the instructor ***in advance*** of the due date to make the appropriate arrangements for such an extension. Requests for an extension submitted by e-mail will not be considered – you must speak to the instructor in person.

Examinations and/or assignments related to other courses do not constitute or qualify as exceptional circumstances or legitimate excuses.

Late papers will be penalized at the rate of five percentage points per working day for each day of delay, up to a maximum of one week, and entirely within the discretion of the instructor. After one week, the instructor may refuse to accept any late assignments in the absence of proper medical certification justifying an inability to fulfill academic requirements on a prolonged basis.

IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, A LATE ASSIGNMENT MUST BE SUBMITTED FOR GRADING PRIOR TO THE RETURN OF ASSIGNMENTS TO THE CLASS OR IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

In the event that students are unable to attend class or complete required assignments and have submitted the appropriate documentation to their faculty or received the approval of the instructor for the incomplete work, the instructor reserves the right re-allocate the missed grades to other assignments.

The completion of an MSAF form does not absolve a student from the requirement to complete an assignment. Should a student complete an MSAF form, they should speak with the instructor to make arrangements for a new due date or other arrangements at their first opportunity or upon their first return to class.

The instructor reserves the right to not provide any comments or feedback on papers submitted after the original deadline, whether an extension is granted or not.

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials earned are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

VII. Assignments

The first three assignments may be completed individually or in a group of two students. By submitting work with another student, both students accept and agree that the grade for the assignment will be shared by each student and that the assignment will be graded as a single document as a whole – individual contributions by each student will not be assessed individually. In addition, students agree and accept that all responsibility for the assignment, including both late submissions and academic dishonesty provisions, will be applied to both students in the event that there are any issues associated with the submission of the assignment.

1. Policy Map – due January 29, 2018 **20%**

Students will choose a policy problem that is of current relevance to a government in Canada and submit a “policy map” outlining all of the relevant government and non-government departments, actors and/or organizations within the policy subsystem who have an interest in the policy problem as well as identify their preferred policy options associated with their interests.

The policy map may consist of either a written summary of the various policy actors and their interests and positions or of a visual depiction of the policy subsystem accompanied with an explanation of the various policy interests and positions.

2. Briefing Note – due March 05, 2018 **20%**

Students will write a two to three page maximum briefing note on an issue of current relevance to a national/federal or provincial/state/regional government. The briefing note is expected to provide a synopsis of a complicated issue facing the government and present a range of options, including a recommendation for action. A more detailed format for the brief will be provided to students in class by the middle of January.

3. Policy Instrument Advice – due April 02, 2018 **20%**

Students will choose an issue of current relevance to a national/federal or provincial/state/regional government and identify and explain at least four different policy instruments or tools that could be used to address the problem as well as identifying ways or means of measuring whether the various instruments could accomplish the government’s policy goals. Students should include both the broad definition of the measures as well as specific data to support how to measure the success or failure of the policy option.

4. Final examination – April 2018 **40%**

The final exam will be based on all materials covered in the lectures and assigned readings throughout the course. The exam will provide an overall summary of the course for students and an opportunity to apply the material they have learned over the course of the term.

Statement on Electronic Resources

In this course we will be using AvenueToLearn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used.

Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2011, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.