



Course PSCI 3325, American Public Policy
Professor Robert Lowry
Term Fall 2013
Meetings Tuesday and Thursday 1-2:15 pm, CN 1.102

Professor's Contact Information

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General Course Information

Prerequisites	GOVT 2301/2302 or GOVT 2305/2306 or permission from the instructor.
Course Description	<p>This course examines the making of public policy in the United States. The course begins with an overview of the constitutional foundations of the U.S. political system and proceeds to a discussion of the public policy process, examining the stages of policymaking and theories of the policy process. These theories are discussed in the context of specific public policies and public policy controversies, including social welfare, defense, tax policy, and other important issues.</p>
Learning Objectives/Outcomes	<p>Upon completing this course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the justification for government action on public policy issues, and analyze the importance of major governmental institutions and processes.• Analyze the politics of public policy decision making and the pros and cons of different policy options.• Apply their understanding and analysis to a specific contemporary policy issue. <p>Students will also develop written communication skills through an iterative process in which students submit drafts of three parts of a term paper and then revise and resubmit the entire paper.</p>
Required Texts & Materials	<p>The following book is available in the bookstore and should be purchased:</p>

	<p>B. Guy Peters, <i>American Public Policy: Promise and Performance</i>. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 9th ed. 2013.</p> <p>Other required readings are listed at the end of the syllabus and referenced by number in the course schedule below.</p> <p>Additional readings relating to specific policy areas may be added to the syllabus. These will be announced in class and on eLearning.</p> <p>Finally, this course will require the use of a clicker. A clicker is an audience response device that resembles a small calculator. This allows you to provide real-time feedback to your instructor during class. Class summary results are displayed graphically, providing students and the instructor information on aggregate responses. You can purchase (and sell back) your clicker at the UTD bookstore.</p>
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Assignments & Academic Calendar

Date	Topic(s)	Assignment*
	I. Overview of Policy Making, Implementation, and Analysis	
Aug. 27	Course Introduction	
Aug. 29	What is public policy? Justifications for government coercion.	Peters chap. 1, [1]
Sept. 3	“ “ Writing research memos	
Sept. 5	Policymaking in American Government	Peters chap. 2
Sept. 10	Explaining policy choices	Peters chap. 3
Sept. 12	Is Washington broken?	[2] RESEARCH TOPICS DUE
Sept. 17	Agenda setting and public policy	Peters chap. 4
Sept. 19	Legitimizing policy choices	Peters chap. 5
Sept. 24	Policy Implementation	Peters chap. 6
Sept. 26	Budgeting	Peters chap. 7
Oct. 1	Program evaluation and policy change	Peters chap. 8
Oct. 3	Cost-benefit and ethical analysis	Peters chap. 17
Oct. 8	Review	
Oct. 10	MIDTERM EXAM	
	II. Substantive Policy Issues	
Oct. 15	Macroeconomic policy	Peters, chap. 9
Oct. 17	Government spending and fiscal politics	[3] DRAFT OF FIRST MEMO DUE
Oct. 22	Federal Tax Policy	Peters, chap. 10
Oct. 24	Regulating financial markets	[4]
Oct. 29	Health Care Policies	Peters, chap. 11
Oct. 31	Expanding Medicaid in Texas?	[5]
Nov. 5	Social Security and Welfare	Peters, chap. 12
Nov. 7	Immigration	[6]
Nov. 12	Education Policy	Peters, chap. 13 DRAFT OF SECOND MEMO DUE
Nov. 14	Energy and the Environment	Peters, chap. 14
Nov. 19	Climate change	[7]
Nov. 21	Defense and Law Enforcement	Peters, chap. 15

Nov. 26	NO CLASS – Fall break	
Nov. 28	NO CLASS- Thanksgiving	
Dec. 3	Privatizing the military	[8]
Dec. 5	Culture wars	Peters, chap. 16
Dec. 10	Review	FINAL MEMOS DUE
TBA	FINAL EXAM	

* Numbers in brackets refer to the Additional Readings at the end of the syllabus.

Course Policies

Grading Criteria	<p>This course satisfies the UTD Core Communications requirement, which requires that students “write, receive detailed feedback about, and revise at least 15 double-spaced pages.” (Undergraduate Catalog) This will be done by writing two memos on a policy controversy related to one of the topics on the syllabus for October 15-December 5. The first memo should address the substantive issues and proposed solutions. The second memo should address the politics of the policy decision. The policy controversy should be one that came to a formal decision (yea or nay) in a federal or state legislature or administrative agency or ballot initiative. See the notes on writing assignments for further details.</p> <p>A statement of your policy controversy is due in class <u>Thursday, September 12</u>. A draft of the substantive memo is due <u>Thursday, October 17</u>. A draft of the politics memo is due <u>Tuesday, November 12</u>. You will receive written feedback on both draft memos. Final memos are due in class <u>Tuesday, December 10</u>.</p> <p>Each draft memo must be a minimum of 6 pages double-spaced, 12-point font, plus any tables or graphs and a list of references. The final memos must have a combined length of at least 15 pages, plus tables, graphs and references.</p> <p>Additional information on writing research memos is posted on eLearning and will be discussed in class <u>Tuesday, September 3</u>.</p> <p>There will also be two exams on materials in the readings and class lectures and discussions. Exams will consist of short answer and essay questions. These will be on <u>Thursday, October 10</u> and at our designated time during <u>finals week</u> .</p> <p>Grades will be based on the following criteria:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Research topic statement</td><td>5 %</td></tr> <tr> <td>Midterm exam</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr> <td>Final exam</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Substantive memo draft</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr> <td>Politics memo draft</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr> <td>Final substantive memo</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr> <td>Final politics memo</td><td>10</td></tr> </table> <p>Note that if you do not hand in one or both draft memos, the corresponding memo(s) you submit at the end of the semester will be treated as “final” and worth a maximum of 10 % each.</p>	Research topic statement	5 %	Midterm exam	20	Final exam	25	Substantive memo draft	15	Politics memo draft	15	Final substantive memo	10	Final politics memo	10
Research topic statement	5 %														
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Politics memo draft	15														
Final substantive memo	10														
Final politics memo	10														
Late Work	<p>Make-up exams will be given in the event of a documented medical, family or work emergency. <u>No other excuses will be accepted</u>. Unexcused late memos will be penalized 20 % for each day they are late.</p>														

Class Attendance	We will not take regular attendance, but you are strongly encouraged to attend class <u>and take notes</u> . We will be covering material in class that supplements the assigned readings. This material may be on the exams. In addition, while I will post the outline from each class on eLearning I will not be posting detailed lecture notes, and don't bother asking for them.
University Policies	Additional UTD policies regarding student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, email use, withdrawing from class, grievance procedures, incomplete grades, disability services, religious holy days, and resources to help you succeed can be found at http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/ .

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Readings designated as **eLearning** will be posted there. All other readings can be found by searching the library's catalog by journal title and then browsing by date for the appropriate issue. Additional readings may be added during the semester. If so, they will be announced and links will be posted if necessary on **eLearning**.

- [1] Kenneth N. Bickers and John T. Williams, "Limitations of the Market" in *Public Policy Analysis: A Political Economy Approach*, 118-137. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company 2001. **eLearning**
- [2] Marcia Clemmitt, "Gridlock in Washington." *CQ Researcher* Vol. 20, Issue 17 (April 30, 2010).
- [3] Marcia Clemmitt, "Government Spending: Will Steep Cuts Hurt the Country?" *CQ Researcher* Vol. 23, Issue 25 (July 12, 2013).
- [4] Kenneth Jost, "Financial Misconduct: Is Government Action Tough Enough?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 22, Issue 3 (January 20, 2012).
- [5] Imrana Iqbal, "Medicaid: A Case Study." **eLearning**.
- [6] Kenneth Jost, "Immigration Conflict: Should States Crack Down on Unlawful Aliens?" *CQ Researcher* Vol. 22, Issue 10 (March 9, 2012).
- [7] Jennifer Weeks, "Climate Change: Will Governments Act to Curb Rising Temperatures?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 23, Issue 22 (June 14, 2013).
- [8] Marcia Clemmitt, "Privatizing the Military: Does the U.S. Overuse Private Contractors?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 22, Issue 25 (July 13, 2012).