

Syllabus – August 25, 2016



Course PSCI 3325, American Public Policy
Professor Robert Lowry
Term Fall 2016
Meetings Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-12:45 pm, GR 2.530

Professor's Contact Information

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General Course Information

Prerequisites	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> <p>This course satisfies the UTD Core Communications requirement for students who entered their degree program prior to Fall 2014.</p>

<p>Learning Objectives/Outcomes</p>	<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 public policy issue.
<p>Required Texts & Materials</p>	<p>The following book will be 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, 10th ed. 2015.</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>Students are not required to print material available electronically.</p>

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Date	Topic(s)	Reading and Assignments*
	I. Overview of Policy Making, Implementation, and Analysis	
Aug. 23	Course Introduction	
Aug. 25	What is public policy? Justifications for government coercion.	Peters chap. 1, [1]
Aug. 30	“ “ Writing research papers	“
Sept. 1	Doing research	
Sept. 6	Policymaking in American government	Peters chap. 2
Sept. 8	A runaway executive?	[2] Topic statement due
Sept. 13	Explaining policy choices	Peters chap. 3
Sept. 15	Agenda setting and public policy	Peters chap. 4
Sept. 20	Legitimizing policy choices	Peters chap. 5
Sept. 22	Policy Implementation	Peters chap. 6
Sept. 27	Budgeting	Peters chap. 7
Sept. 29	Program evaluation and policy change	Peters chap. 8
Oct. 4	Cost-benefit and ethical analysis	Peters chap. 17 Draft substantive paper due
Oct. 6	Review	
Oct. 11	FIRST EXAM	

	II. Substantive Policy Issues	
Oct. 13	Macroeconomic policy	Peters, chap. 9
Oct. 18	Middle class stagnation	[3]
Oct. 20	Federal tax policy	Peters, chap. 10
Oct. 25	Health care	Peters, chap. 11 Final substantive paper due
Oct. 27	Social security and welfare	Peters, chap. 12
Nov. 1	Education	Peters, chap. 13
Nov. 3	Energy and the environment	Peters, chap. 14
Nov. 8	Climate change	[4]
Nov. 10	Defense and law enforcement	Peters, chap. 15 Draft politics paper due
Nov. 15	International Trade	[5]
Nov. 17	Social values and public policy	Peters, chap. 16
Nov. 22	NO CLASS – Fall break	
Nov. 24	NO CLASS- Thanksgiving	
Nov. 29	Legalizing marijuana	[6]
Dec. 1	Review	
Dec. 6	SECOND EXAM	
Dec. 9		Final politics paper due, 5 pm

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

Course Policies

Grading Criteria	<p>All students must write two papers on a policy controversy related to one of the topics on the syllabus for October 13-November 29. The first paper will address the substantive issues and proposed solutions. The second paper will address the politics of the policy decision. See the notes on writing assignments for further details.</p> <p>You have the option of submitting draft versions of your papers and receiving written feedback. If you submit a draft, one third of your grade for the memo will be based on the draft and two thirds on the final version. If you do not submit a draft, your grade will be based only on the final version. I strongly encourage you to submit drafts for feedback – among other reasons, if you follow the feedback you are almost guaranteed to get a good grade on the final version!</p> <p>A statement of your policy controversy is due in class <u>Thursday, September 8</u>. The optional draft of the substantive paper is due <u>Tuesday, October 4</u>, and the final version is due <u>Tuesday, October 25</u>. The optional draft of the politics paper is due <u>Thursday, November 10</u>, and the final version is due <u>Friday, December 9 at 5 pm</u>.</p> <p>Each paper must be a minimum of six pages double-spaced, 12-point font, plus any tables or graphs and a list of references. The final versions must have a combined length of at least 15 pages exclusive of any tables, graphs and references.</p> <p>Additional information on writing research papers is posted on eLearning and will be discussed in class <u>Tuesday, August 30</u>.</p>
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	<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>Tuesday, October 11</u> and <u>Tuesday, December 6</u>.</p> <p>Course grades will be based on the following weights:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Research topic statement</td><td>5 %</td></tr> <tr> <td>First exam</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr> <td>Second exam</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Substantive memo</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr> <td>Politics memo</td><td>25</td></tr> </table> <p>The final grading scale will be no stricter than the conventional 90-80-70-60 cutoffs.</p>	Research topic statement	5 %	First exam	20	Second exam	25	Substantive memo	25	Politics memo	25
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First exam	20										
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Politics memo	25										
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 papers will be penalized 20 % for each day they are late, including weekends.</p>										
Class Attendance	<p>I will not take regular attendance, but you are strongly encouraged to attend class <u>and take notes</u>. I 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.</p>										
University Policies	<p>Additional UTD policies regarding student conduct and discipline, campus carry, 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/.</p>										

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] Christina L. Lyons, "Presidential Power: Has President Obama Overstepped His Authority?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 25, Issue 10 (March 6, 2015).

[3] Peter Katel, "Future of the Middle Class: Is the Outlook Getting Grimmer for Average Americans?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 26, Issue 14 (April 8, 2016).

[4] Jill U. Adams, "Air Pollution and Climate Change: Are Tougher Regulations Necessary?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 25, Issue 41 (Nov. 13, 2015).

[5] Brian Beary, "U.S. Trade Policy: Will Regional Trade Agreements Create American Jobs?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 23, Issue 32 (Sept. 13, 2013).

[6] William Wanlund, "Marijuana Industry: Will Growth Continue Despite the Challenges?" *CQ Researcher*, Vol. 25, Issue 37 (Oct. 16, 2015).