Course Description

This seminar-style course explores various theories of, and their applications in, the public policy-making process. The topics will include theories of agenda-setting, policy change, and policy stability.

Introduction

If there is one thing that can be agreed upon among policy scholars it is that American public-policy making is a complex enterprise. For years, scholars have struggled to develop theories so that public policymaking can be understood in simplified ways. This course is designed to explore these theories of public policymaking in detail and also to explore further the institutional, political, and scientific context of American public policymaking. At the end of this semester you will also be asked to submit your own research project that tests two theories of policy change.

This is a seminar-style course and will not involve formal classroom lectures. To this end, I will seek to maximize classroom discussion, teamwork, and student dissemination of material to the extent possible.

Required Text:


I will be making several readings and lectures available to you online.

Make sure that you budget for the creation of a large poster that will be used to fulfill the poster presentation requirement.

Grading:

You will be graded on

2. Peer Review Activity – 25 points.
3. Quizzes – 50 points.

   Session Long Seminar Paper:

Seminar Paper Theory Section and Independent/Dependent Variables – 15 points.
Seminar Paper Methodology Section – 15 points.
Seminar Paper Case Study and Analysis – 20 points.
Seminar Paper Poster Presentation – 30 points.
Final Seminar Paper – 100 points.

Percentage Grading Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-93</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
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<td>86-83</td>
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<td>79-77</td>
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<td>69-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>66-60</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>59 and below</td>
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Student Responsibilities:

1. Students are expected to read all assigned readings. Your participation in teams will be part of your grade.
2. Come to class. I’ve noticed through the years that students with the best attendance are the ones that receive the highest grades in the class.
3. Turn assignments in on time. Although I do accept late work, it will be reflected in the grade for the assignment (5% taken off if handed in after the time it is due but on the same day; 10% taken off thereafter for each day that the assignment is late with a maximum fifty percent reduction). I do not recognize funerals for friends or the illnesses of others as personal tragedies under the university’s attendance policy.
4. I also ask that you be very familiar with the terms of this syllabus. I’ve noticed that when students are not familiar with the policies that we have agreed to in this syllabus that I am the one who comes across as inflexible when, in truth, we both have an obligation to execute this agreement together.

Quizzes:

In each class period after the first Monday, I will distribute a quiz at the beginning of class that covers material from that day’s readings. Late arrivals do not receive a quiz if the rest of the class has already finished theirs. Each quiz is worth ten points. At the end of the semester, I will keep your five best quiz scores and drop the two lowest. When you miss classes, you will receive a zero on your quiz for the day (there are no make-ups allowed).

Seminar Paper:

For this project you will be asked to produce a Seminar Paper that will be used to test more than one theory of the policy process. The purpose of this assignment is to adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories or methodologies to substantial issues. After completing this assignment, you should also be able to make connections across the various theoretical perspectives we have covered in this course. The final component of this project will require a professional poster presentation that communicates the knowledge and demonstrates the skills you have gained during the semester. Instructions for the Seminar Paper are available in Sakai under the Resources tab. **Your Seminar Paper is due Friday, June 24 by email.**
Participation:

This course is described in the curriculum as a seminar-style course, which means that we will place a major emphasis on classroom discussion and debate versus class lecture. Everyone, therefore, is responsible for carefully reading the material before class so that we can maximize discussion in teams. Your participation grade will be based on your contribution to team-based discussions.

Computers:

Your computers, tablets, and cell phones should only be used to access the reading material while you are working together in teams.

Accommodations for Special Needs:

Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me as early in the semester as possible so that we may arrange reasonable accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with Disability Services for Students Office at 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098.

Academic Integrity:

All submitted work must be your own. If you consult other sources (class readings, articles or books from the library, articles available through internet databases, or websites) these MUST be properly documented, or you will be charged with plagiarism and will receive an F for the paper. In most cases, this may result in a failure of the course as well. In addition, the charge of academic dishonesty will go on your record in the Office of Student Life. If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, visit the URI Student Handbook, and UNIVERSITY MANUAL sections on Plagiarism and Cheating at http://www.uri.edu/facsen/8.20-8.27.html - cheating.

Any good writer’s handbook as well as reputable online resources will offer help on matters of plagiarism and instruct you on how to acknowledge source material. If you need more help understanding when to cite something or how to indicate your references I am available to answer these questions. I have also designed an assignment that will help you know when citations are expected to avoid plagiarism.

Academic Enhancement Center:

This is a challenging course. Success requires that you keep pace with the work, understand course concepts, and study effectively. The Academic Enhancement Center (http://www.uri.edu/aec/) is a great place to do this. At the AEC you can work alone or in groups, and tutors and professional learning specialists are available to help you to learn, manage your time and work, and study well. On the Kingston campus, it’s open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Fridays until 1 p.m. All services are free (the coffee is free as well!), and no appointment is needed. You can call for complete information at 874-2367, or just stop by the center on the fourth floor of Roosevelt Hall. In Providence, the Academic Skills Center (ASC) is at 239 Shepard Building, (401) 277-5221. Hours are posted each semester at http://www.uri.edu/prov/studentresources/help/academicskills.html. In addition, the Saturday Skills for Success program offers workshops and tutoring from 10 am -1pm during fall and spring semesters.
The Writing Center:

The Writing Center is for “all writers, all disciplines, at all levels, and all stages of writing.” If an instructor suggests that you go to the Writing Center, it is not a punishment, and does mean that you are a terrible writer. It means the instructor wants you to receive more individualized attention to your writing than s/he is able to provide, given the constraints of the class. It will only improve your grade. If possible, call ahead for an appointment (874-4690). Drop-in tutorials are often available. You may make repeat appointments, requesting the same tutor each time if you wish. See their Web Page: http://www.uri.edu/artsci/writing/center/index.shtml for tips on how to make the best of your Writing Center visit.

Standards of Behavior:

Students are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the published "Community Standards of Behavior: University Policies and Regulations” which can be accessed in the University Student Handbook. If you must come in late, please do not disrupt the class. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, or any electronic devices.

Religious Holidays:

It is the policy of the University of Rhode Island to accord students, on an individual basis, the opportunity to observe their traditional religious holidays. Students desiring to observe a holiday of special importance must provide written notification to each instructor.

Illness Due to Flu:

The nation is experiencing widespread influenza-like illness. If any of us develop flu-like symptoms, we are being advised to stay home until the fever has subsided for 24 hours. So, if you exhibit such symptoms, please do not come to class. Notify me at ajley@uri.edu of your status, and we will communicate through the medium we have established for the class. We will work together to ensure that course instruction and work is completed for the semester.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have posted simple methods to avoid transmission of illness. These include: covering your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing; frequent washing or sanitizing your hands; avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; and staying home when you are sick. For more information please view www.cdc.gov/flu. URI Health Services web page, www.health.uri.edu, will carry advice and local updates.

Syllabus Amendments:

In a course that examines current political events and controversies, I may need to make changes to this syllabus. Please pay attention to Sakai Announcements and Emails for any changes that may be made throughout the semester.
Course Outline


Week 1: The Scientific Context of American Public Policy

Readings:
Keller, Introduction & Chs. 1-2

Wednesday, May 25: Legislative and Administrative Policymaking in their Scientific Context
Readings:
Keller, Chs. 3-4 & Conclusion
Quiz #1
Research Question Due by email no later than 3pm.

Week 2: The Political and Historical Context of American Public Policy

Monday, May 30: No Class

Wednesday, June 1: The Historical and Political Context of American Policymaking
Readings:
Quiz #2
Klyza & Sousa, Chs. 1-5

Friday, June 3: States and other Approaches to American Policymaking
Readings:
Klyza & Sousa, Chs. 6-9
Quiz #3
Literature Review and Plagiarism Education Certificate Due in Class.

Part II: Theories and Study of Policy Change

Week 3: Theories of the Policy Process

Monday, June 6: Theories of the Policy Process
Readings:
Ley Theory Handout (available via Sakai)
Quiz #4

Wed, June 8: Case in Public Policy-Making: Love Canal
Readings:
Love Canal Case Study (available via Sakai)
Quiz #5
Theory & Methodology Section Due in Class.
Week 4: Case Studies of Policy-Making

Monday, June 13: Case Study in Public Policy-Making: Fracking
   Readings:
   Hydraulic Fracturing Case Study via Sakai
   Quiz #6

Wednesday June 15: Case Study in Public Policy-Making: Snowmobiles in Yellowstone
   Readings:
   National Park Service and Snowmobiles Case Study via Sakai
   Quiz #7
   Case Study, Analysis, and Rough Draft Due in Class.

Week 5: Peer Review and Poster Presentation Week

Monday, June 20: Poster Presentations
   Peer Feedback Due in Class.

Wednesday, June 22: Poster Presentations

Friday, June 24: Final Papers are Due
   Seminar Paper Due by email no later than 5pm.