

Political Science 310
AMERICAN PUBLIC POLICY
Spring 2017

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:00; and by appointment

Course Description

This course covers the basic policies and controversies in contemporary American public policy. We begin with how policy actors interact to create policy in the United States. Subsequently, we will cover major areas of policy debate. We will examine primarily longstanding areas of policy debates, but we will also pay attention to policy debates in the news.

Readings

Kraft and Furlong, *Public Policy*, 5th edition
The New York Times or *The Washington Post* on-line
NCSS Libraries On-line reserve (denoted by *)

Public Policy will serve as the primary text for this course. The lectures and the text are intended to complement one another. In order to get the most out of the lectures *it is important that you do the assigned reading prior to the appropriate class period*. The Reserve readings will provide greater detail in selected topics and serve as an important source for class discussion. You should read a national on-line newspaper daily to stay abreast of current events, especially those related to public policy.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to...

- 1) Understand the roles of various governmental and non-governmental actors in creating policy
- 2) Assess the effectiveness of policy using social science concepts
- 3) Apply knowledge of the policy process to contemporary policy debates
- 4) Understand the key issues in major areas of American public policy

Requirements and Grading

- Midterm I (20%), Midterm II (20%), and modestly-cumulative final exam (25%)
- Class Participation (15%)
- Paper assignment (20%)

Participation

Regular attendance of this class is essential for you to do well. Classroom attendance will be taken throughout the semester. Students are also expected to be attentive during lectures and to ask questions and contribute comments to class discussions. You should come to each class having read the required assignment and prepared to discuss and comment upon the issues raised by the readings. At the beginning of every class period, we will discuss current events, especially those relating to public policy. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* provide the most extensive and thorough coverage of political matters. Vox and Wonkblog are policy focused websites you should use regularly. If you want to receive an A for participation, you need to 1) have excellent attendance; 2) contribute regularly to class discussions, and; 3) clearly demonstrate knowledge of assigned readings and current events (including on in-class writing assignments).

Paper Assignment

Choose a policy area of national concern that interests you and investigate a proposal for policy reform within this area. You should choose a fairly narrow proposal for reform (e.g., clean air or clean water, not environmental policy; children's health, not health care policy; food stamps, not social welfare policy; school funding or teacher competency, not education policy) This should be a reform proposal-- not policy already in place. What are the basics of the proposed reform? What are the key issues involved? What are the costs and benefits of the proposed reform? What might be some unintended consequences of the reform? What are the prospects for this reform in becoming law? To the extent appropriate, use course material to help address these questions. Make sure you use reasonably objective sources to assess the potential efficacy of reforms and their costs and benefits. **8 pages maximum. Due April 25.**

You are responsible for the full details of the assignment available at <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS310/PaperInfo.htm>.

Late Policy

It is expected that exams will be taken and assignments turned in when they are scheduled on the syllabus. If you unable to take an exam or turn in an assignment at the assigned time for a valid reason, you **must** let the instructor know in advance in order take a make-up exam without a grade penalty. Assignments will be downgraded a letter grade for each day they are late. Papers are due at the *beginning* of class on the due date.

Class Website

The class website at <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS310> is an additional resource designed to assist you in the class. It will contain important announcements and archived lecture outlines as well as basic course information.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to complete their assignments with due regard to academic integrity. Students are expected to abide by the NCSU Honor Pledge: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment" and to familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of the student code of conduct (Sections 7-13). The student code of conduct is online at: http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/student_services/student_discipline/POL11.35.1.php. By signing all work submitted on paper, or by identifying themselves in work submitted electronically, students affirm that they neither gave nor received unauthorized aid. Collaboration on assignments among students may only occur when explicitly authorized by an instructor.

Plagiarism is "the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will at a minimum receive a 0 for the assignment and have their conduct reported to the office of student affairs. Depending on the severity of the infraction, it is possible that you will fail the course.

Disability

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. NCSU policy at: http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.1.php

Schedule of Topics and Assigned Readings

January 10	Course Introduction
January 12 – 17	The Context of Public Policy Kraft and Furlong, chapters 1, 4, 6 Klein, “How politics makes us stupid”* Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons”* Gurian-Sherman, “CAFO’s Uncovered”*
January 19 – 24	Government Institutions and Policy Making: Congress and the President Kraft and Furlong, chapter 2 Price, “Polarization in America”*
January 24 – 26	Government Institutions and Policy Making: The Courts, Interest Groups, and the Bureaucracy Schlosser, Chapter 9 from <i>Fast Food Nation</i> * Bernstein, “Long Live Kludge”*
January 31 – Feb 7	Economic Policy Kraft and Furlong, chapter 7 McArdle, “Trump Tax Cuts...”* Chang, “Trump’s tax plan...”* Campbell, “America the Undertaxed”* Glaser, “Wealth and Inequality”* Bartlett, “The Real Long-term budget challenge”* NPR, “Voters left and right are anti-free trade...”*
February 9	MIDTERM I
February 14 – 16	The Environment & Energy Kraft and Furlong, chapter 11 Funk and Kennedy, “The Politics of Climate”* Roberts, “Most people are wildly ...”*
February 21 – 28	Health Care Kraft and Furlong, chapter 8 PBS, “Sick Around the World”* Rosenthal, “The \$2.7 trillion Medical Bill”* Rosenthal, “American Way of Birth, costliest in the world”* Fuchs, “Why do other rich nations spend so much less...”* Klein, “Why an MRI costs \$1,080 in America and \$280 in France”* <i>Recommended:</i> NPR, “Why American health care is so pricey”* Gawande, “Overkill”* Anderson and Squires “Measuring the US Health Care System...”*

March 2, 14

Education

Kraft and Furlong, chapter 10
Ravitch, "Schools we can envy"*
Kahlenberg, "Want to fix Obama's bad education policy?"*
Nelson, "Everything you need to know about the Common Core"*
(full card stack)
Nelson, "Donald Trump's ambitious school voucher plan, explained" *
Nelson, "Why it's hard for the US to learn from other countries..."*

March 7 – 9

Spring Break

March 16 – 21

Social Welfare

Kraft and Furlong, chapter 9
Lam, "How can the U.S. Salvage Social Security"*

March 23

MIDTERM EXAM II

March 28

National Security

Kraft and Furlong, chapter 12
Feaver and Brands, "Stress-testing the foundations of America's..."*

March 30

Immigration

Jost, "Immigration Conflict"*
Harlon, "What it will take for President Trump to deport millions..." *
Davidson, "Debunking the myth of the job-stealing immigrant" *

April 4

Equality: Race and Gender

Katel, "Race Relations" *
Wanlund, "Race and Ethnicity"*
Kliff, "The truth about the gender wage gap" *

April 6 – 20

(No class April 13)

Criminal Justice Policy

Lind and Lopez, "16 theories for why crime plummeted in the US"*
Lopez, "America can end it's war on Drugs: Here's How"*
Economist, "Too many laws, too many prisoners"*
Lopez, "A researcher explains the sad truth: we know how..."*
Katel, "Death Penalty"*
David Grann, "Trial by Fire"*
Pfaff, "Imprisoned by Violence."
Recommended
Gopnik, "The Caging of America"*
Smith, "The Senator be embezzling"*
"Science versus: Guns"*

April 25 – 27

Paper due April 25

Social Issues: Religion, Morality, and Public Life

Jost, "LGBT Rights"*
The Economist, "Must religious bakers bake cakes for gay..."*
Baidi, "Abortion"*
Crockett, "Pro-choice advocates just won..."*
Crockett, "Roe v. Wade isn't doomed under Trump..."*

May 4, 1:00pm

FINAL EXAM