

Political Science 310
AMERICAN PUBLIC POLICY
Fall 2019

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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*, 6th edition

The New York Times or *The Washington Post* on-line

NCSU Libraries On-line reserve (* indicates required readings; ^ indicates recommended)

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%)
- Paper assignment (25%)
- On-line participation (10%)

Assignment Deadlines

Midterm 1: September 20 – 26, 2019

Midterm 2: October 25 – 31, 2019

Paper Assignment: November 26, 2019

Final: December 6 – 11, 2019

Exam Procedures

Exams are proctored by the NCSU Distance Education Proctoring Office in Venture IV, Suite 236, Centennial Campus Testing Center. Information is available at: https://online-distance.ncsu.edu/current_students/testing-services/testing-services-on-campus/

On-line participation

Just because this class does not take place in a classroom does not mean you get out of participating. This course will have a discussion forum set up on Moodle. Within this forum, the class will discuss policy-related current events as well as some of the more controversial aspects of the class material. These forums will be monitored by me for both the quantity and quality of your posts. To receive an A for participation, you will need to post at least two *quality* comments each week. At least one of these comments must be a response to a posting from another student or the instructor. You need to be *consistently* engaged in this forum. If you ignore it for several weeks, you *cannot* make up for missed time by being particularly active.

Current Political Events

You *will* be responsible for keeping abreast of current political events during the Fall 2019 semester. You should rely primarily upon the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* for this information. Additionally, Vox and Wonkblog are two excellent policy-oriented news sources you should regularly use. You will be responsible for knowing major policy-related current events on your assignments and exams.

Paper Assignment

Choose a domestic 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.**

You are responsible for the full details of the assignment available at <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS310Delta/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.

Class Website

The class website at <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/shgreene/PS310Delta> 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.

Contact Information

The university will provide me with an email address, correspondence address, and telephone number for you. It is your responsibility to see to it that the university has this correct information on file. Should it change during the semester, it is your responsibility to contact me in let me know. At times during the semester, announcements about the class will be made by email so you need to be sure that you are receiving email for this class.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to complete their assignments with due regard to academic integrity. In order to do so they should familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of the student code of conduct

(Sections 7-13). 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.

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

Additional Course policies

- 1) Submit hardcopies of assignments in the mail to Steven Greene, Department of Political Science, Box 8102, NCSU, Raleigh, NC 27695. For students on campus, papers can also be placed under my office door, 209C Caldwell Hall. Only under extenuating circumstances will I accept an electronic copy as your official submission. While I do require electronic copies, these are only to protect against plagiarism. I will grade and return to you the copy you turn in to me. Assignments will be considered turned in on the date of their postmark (or by 5pm if dropped off).
- 2) You are responsible for the safe arrival of your assignments. I will not acknowledge receipt immediately unless you explicitly ask me to via email. I will begin grading all assignments and tests the day after the due date deadline and generally have them in the mail by a week thereafter.
- 3) Exams are proctored by the NCSU Distance Education Proctoring Office in Venture IV, Suite 236, Centennial Campus Testing Center. Information is available at: https://online-distance.ncsu.edu/current_students/testing-services/testing-services-on-campus/ You will need to make sure to take your exams during the scheduled windows. I *will not* be sending out reminders about the exams. This is your responsibility.
- 4) If you need to request a remote proctor for your exams (students outside the local area only), you need to do so within the first week of class at: https://online-distance.ncsu.edu/current_students/testing-services/testing-services-remote/

Schedule of Topics and Assigned Readings

Lecture 1	Course Introduction
Lectures 2 – 4	The Context of Public Policy Kraft and Furlong, chapters 1, 3, 4, 6 Klein, “How politics makes us stupid”* Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons”* Gurian-Sherman, “CAFO’s Uncovered”* Planet Money, “Mr. Jones’ Act”*
Lectures 4 – 6	Government Institutions and Policy Making: Congress and the President Kraft and Furlong, chapter 2 Dickerson, “The Hardest Job in the World”* Drutman, “We need political parties...”*
Lectures 6 – 7	Government Institutions and Policy Making: The Courts, Interest Groups, and the Bureaucracy Schlosser, Chapter 9 from <i>Fast Food Nation</i> * Davidson, “Money, Power, and Deer Urine”* Talton, “Bad dog: When the regulatory watchdog gets captured...”* Matthews, “America under Brett Kavanaugh”* Mayyasi, “The Stanford Professor Who Fought the Tax Lobby”* Zengerle, “How the Trump Administration Is Remaking...”^
Lectures 7 – 9	Economic Policy Kraft and Furlong, chapter 7 Bartlett, “I helped create the GOP tax myth...”* Auerbach, “The federal budget outlook: Even crazier...”* Samuelson, “American’s aren’t taxed enough”* Long, “Why America’s return to \$1 trillion deficits is a big problem...”* Rampell, “Trump wants more tax cuts, and I agree. Sort of.”*
	MIDTERM I (Deadline September 26)
Lectures 10 – 11	The Environment & Energy Kraft and Furlong, chapter 11 Roberts, “What genuine, no-bs ambition on climate change...”* Leonhardt, “The Story of 2018 Was Climate Change”* Gillis, “Forget the Carbon Tax for Now”* Brenen and Saad, “Global Warming Concern Steady...”* Rizzo, “What’s actually in the ‘Green New Deal’ from Democrats?”* Kormann, “The False Choice between economic growth...”*
Lectures 12 – 14	Health Care Kraft and Furlong, chapter 8 Rosenthal, “The \$2.7 trillion Medical Bill”* Rosenthal, “American Way of Birth, costliest in the world”* Gross, “How U.S. Health Care Became Big Business”* Gaffney, “How Medical Bills Harm Us All”* Frakt and Carroll, “Why the U.S. Spends So Much More...”* Pollack, “Single-payer isn’t the only progressive option on health...”* PBS, “Sick Around the World”^

Lectures 15 – 17

Education

Kraft and Furlong, chapter 10
Nelson, “Why it’s hard for the US to learn from other countries...”^{*}
Strauss, “What ‘school choice’ means in the era of Trump and DeVos”^{*}
Partelow, “7 Great Education Policy Ideas...”^{*}
Bowen, “The student loan debt crisis is overblown...”^{*}

Lecture 17

Social Welfare

Kraft and Furlong, chapter 9
Lam, “How can the U.S. Salvage Social Security”^{*}
Weese, “This is your brain on poverty”^{*}
Chang, “Living in a poor neighborhood changes everything...”^{*}
Keiger, “Kathryn Edin reveals the lives of people who live on \$2 a day”^{*}

MIDTERM EXAM II (Deadline October 31)

Lecture 18

National Security

Kraft and Furlong, chapter 12
Parajon, “Snap Poll: What Experts Make of Trump’s Foreign Policy”^{*}
Goldgeir and Saunders, “The Unconstrained Presidency”^{*}

Lectures 19 – 20

Equality: Race and Gender

Coates, “Case for Reparations”^{*}
Kliff, “The truth about the gender wage gap”^{*}

Lectures 20 – 22

Immigration

Karaim, “Immigration Policy”^{*}
Lind, “The border is in crisis: here’s how it got this bad.”^{*}
Davidson, “Debunking the myth of the job-stealing immigrant”^{*}
Science vs. “Immigration”^{*}

Lectures 22 – 24

Criminal Justice Policy

Lind and Lopez, “16 theories for why crime plummeted in the US”^{*}
Lopez, “America can end its war on Drugs: Here’s How”^{*}
Lopez, “A researcher explains the sad truth: we know how...”^{*}
Lyons, “Death Penalty”^{*}
Pfaff, “Why today’s criminal justice reform efforts won’t end mass...”^{*}
Benforado, “The New Science Behind Our ‘Unfair’ Criminal Justice...”^{*}
Gimlet, “Science versus: Guns”[^]

Lectures 24 – 25

Social Issues: Religion, Morality, and Public Life

Jost, “LGBT Rights”^{*}
Vaida, “Abortion”^{*}
Kliff, “10 facts that explain how America regulates abortion”^{*}
North, “Abortion in America, explained in 10 facts”^{*}

FINAL EXAM (Deadline December 11)