

PUP 4002 Public Policy

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Olds

Meeting Time: Online asynchronous

Credit: 3 units, letter grade (including +/- modifiers)

Classroom: Canvas online learning management system

Office Hours: Mon and Tues 1:30-4:30 p.m. and via appointment

Office: SOC 390

Email: colds@usf.edu

Specific Goals of the Course

This course is designed to introduce students to the major actors, stages, and academic theories of public policymaking. In doing so, the course will show students how theoretical concepts of the policymaking process relate to substantive policy issues in contemporary society. This course will also explore the various approaches available to analyze or evaluate government policies. Useful skills that will serve you well in the future will be developed:

- the ability to think critically about differing viewpoints by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of evidence
- the ability to communicate your ideas in a clear way in audiovisual and written formats
- the ability to perform extended research of multiple sources to concisely summarize what is currently known about a topic

Course Objectives

As the instructor of this course, I expect that my students at the end of the course will:

1. Be able to understand the major theories of the policymaking process.
2. Be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of major theories of the policymaking process.
3. Be able to identify the major actors involved and their respective activities in the policymaking process.
4. Be able to identify the major stages of the policy process.
5. Be able to understand multiple approaches to analyzing government policy.
6. Be able to evaluate arguments made in substantive policy issue debates, and detail the strengths and weaknesses offered in the multiple arguments presented in these debates.
7. Be able to review, analyze, and connect preexisting research in a useful and coherent way.
8. Be able to express arguments rooted in substantive evidence.
9. Be able to respectfully and intelligently critique arguments made by others.
10. Be able to develop concise essays that are thorough, focused, and informative for readers.
11. Be able to use technology to visually and verbally communicate your ideas to others with precision and clarity.

USF Statement on Academic Accommodations for a Disability

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the Office of Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation.

Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact USF Student Disability Services as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

- ◇ Any handouts used in this course are copyrighted. Handouts means all materials generated for this class, which include, but are not limited to: syllabi, notes, lecture slides, essay prompts, and review sheets. This includes all materials that are posted on the web. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts unless the instructor expressly grants permission. In other words, do not post or distribute any content from this course on any website, or other potential venue.
- ◇ Lecture notes may not be sold.
- ◇ No form of academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will be tolerated. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have permission of that person. This includes copying material from books, reports, journals, pamphlets, handouts, other publications, web sites, etc., without giving appropriate credit for those ideas and/or without identifying material as quotations when taken directly from another source.
- ◇ Students should complete USF's on-line plagiarism tutorial, which may be found at: <http://davon.etg.usf.edu/share/plagiarism/>
- ◇ Violation of these rules, even if you unintentionally violate them, can result in disciplinary action including a grade penalty (an FF in the course), suspension, dismissal, and expulsion from USF. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, please consult the relevant sections of the USF student catalogs, and/or ask me for further explanation.

USF Statement on Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Canvas, email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Canvas site for each class for course specific communication, as well as the main USF website, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information.

Note: Examples of an emergency could be a hurricane, tornado, institution-wide power outage, etc.

Course Format

The course is focused heavily on student participation. Active learning is a major emphasis in my approach to teaching. A major portion of class is devoted to class discussion that will occur in the discussion forum section of the Canvas learning management system. A positive environment is a good learning environment, and is especially important in a course with little face-to-face interaction between students and the instructor. Students must show respect to their peers and the instructor at all times.

Since we will be engaging in discussion about controversial political topics through the online forum, you will in all likelihood encounter a statement you disagree with. Regardless, you must not belittle, shout down, insult, or mock another person for their position. Doing so can lead to a person's dismissal from the course. The goal of the course is not for you to spout off your ideological views about different public policy issues. The goal of the course is to encourage everyone to think about the strengths and weaknesses of theories used to describe the public policy process, and whether these theories are applicable to explain the proposals,

controversies, or legislation involving major public policy issues in the country. The focus of the discussion is on public policy in the United States.

Grades

Grades will be based on your performance in four assignments. Students can earn one hundred points in this course. Please note that this is a course where extra credit assignments are not made available. Your grades will reflect your performance on the four assigned tasks only. Please note that weekly participation in the course is essential, as a substantial portion of the grade is devoted to the quality and frequency of engagement in the discussion forum. Since the course is asynchronous, students are obviously expected to be diligent and exercise effective time management when completing tasks for the class. Every assignment is intended to demonstrate an individual student's mastery of the materials, so you are not allowed to collaborate on assignments or submit an assignment as a group.

Due to the nature of the class, late assignments are not accepted unless a note from an appropriate source confirms a university excused reason for the work needing to be submitted late.

Please note that in the first week of class, there is a syllabus quiz that requires completion, or you will be dropped from the course. No actual score is assigned to the syllabus quiz, so it does not factor into the one hundred point grade calculation.

All assignments are submitted over Canvas. Only submit assignments via email in those rare instances where Canvas is down and inaccessible. Turning in assignments after the due date and saying Canvas was down when you tried to turn it in is not acceptable.

Item #1: Class Discussion Participation (45 points total, 3 points each week of the semester)

Every class week, there are two discussion threads. Students are expected to participate in both threads. One thread will focus on a conceptual/theoretical question, and the other thread will be devoted to a specific issue controversy in contemporary politics. The key sources for the conceptual/theoretical discussion are usually the Birkland textbook and the lecture notes, while the key source for issue controversy thread is the CQ Researcher text.

At least two comments are expected in each thread every week. The first comment will be your response to the question asked in the thread, and the second comment will be your response to what someone else wrote. So each week, at minimum, you will write a total of four comments. Each comment should be long enough to elaborate a point, so four to seven sentences is appropriate. Each comment should be substantive, and be written with formal spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Up to three points can be earned each week for this assignment, with the number of points determined by whether each post makes a contribution to the overall discussion, engages with the course materials, and follows the formatting guidelines specified here.

Do not wait until the last minute to submit your contributions to the discussion, as that limits the ability for everyone to converse with each other. The weekly discussion threads will close at Sunday, 11:59 p.m. of every class week.

Item #2: Digital Presentation (20 points)

In this project, students will create a narrated Powerpoint presentation that describes in their own words each of the stages of the traditional policy process model (see the Birkland textbook on page 26 for a visual representation of this model). For each stage of the policy process model, you will provide an example of a policy issue you believe currently exhibits the qualities/characteristics of that specific stage. You should elaborate on why you believe the specific policy issue exhibits the qualities/characteristics of that specific stage. Each presentation should be informative and descriptive enough such that someone who has no prior knowledge at all of the stages of the traditional policy process model can learn from the material provided. The due date for the assignment is posted on the calendar of dates at the end of the syllabus.

All submissions must include your voice discussing the information on each slide. The presentation must include narration throughout the entire presentation. It is not enough to just submit traditional Powerpoint slides. It is also not acceptable to just read the text that is on the slide. You have to elaborate the points expressed on the slide. The text on the slides should not serve as the script of your narration.

The presentation should attempt to summarize each individual stage of the process model, as well as provide at least one contemporary policy issue example for each stage of the policy process model. You need to explain why the issue exhibits the qualities of the specific stage you describe. For instance, you could potentially explain how the Affordable Care Act is currently in the implementation stage of the process model. Current examples can be taken from newspaper or magazine articles found in the Lexis-Nexis database (which is available through the USF library).

The scoring of this assignment is based on the following (out of 20 points possible)

- 8 Points: The student presents a thorough and detailed summary of the stages of the policy process model that includes at least one contemporary policy issue example for each stage
- 8 Points: The student provides audio narration to the presentation that is understandable and enhances the understanding of the text offered in the slides
- 4 Points: The student provides slides that are visually easy to read and follow. The text avoids frequent spelling and grammatical errors

Item #3: Annotated Bibliography (20 points)

In this assignment, students will offer a summary of at minimum ten sources that all pertain to a topic in the public policy literature of interest to them. The sources you select must evaluate a research question by collecting and evaluating information relevant to the question. For each source, you must summarize the following components: research question, research theory, research hypothesis, research method, and research findings. For each section, the student must provide a brief summary in their own words. All sources must be academic peer-reviewed sources (academic journal articles, books, and book chapters).

For example, acceptable scholarly research sources include the following academic journals: *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *Review of Policy Research*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *Congress & the Presidency*, and *Political Research Quarterly*. In terms of books and book chapters, works from university presses (Cambridge University Press, Princeton University Press, Oxford University Press, University of California Press, etc.) are ideal. The following are NOT ALLOWED as scholarly research sources: blogs, websites, newspaper articles, popular novels, mainstream magazine articles, think tank reports, and interest group newsletters. The intention of this assignment is to summarize scholarly research, not to summarize examples written in non-academic outlets.

An example of the style of the annotated bibliography will be posted on Canvas.

Students must type the annotated bibliography in a word-processing computer program and follow specific formatting rules (12-pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, and one inch margins on all sides). Microsoft Word .doc files are preferred. Students will be expected to avoid frequent spelling and grammatical errors when writing their annotated bibliography. The student should cite all resources used when constructing these papers using guidelines presented in the American Political Science Association Style Manual. **Every annotated bibliography assignment must be checked for academic integrity by submitting the paper to TurnItIn's plagiarism monitor via Canvas.**

Some potential topics you might opt to select include the following:

- public policy diffusion
- morality policy
- punctuated equilibrium theory in public policy
- bureaucratic policy discretion

- interest group lobbying
- bounded rationality and incrementalism

The scoring of this assignment is based on the following (out of 20 points possible)

- 7 Points: The student collects at least ten relevant academic sources about a specific topic in the public policy literature
- 7 Points: The student provides a clear and informative summary in their own words of the five key research components for each source
- 3 Points: The student provides accurate APSA style format citations for each academic source
- 3 Points: The writing is easy to follow and avoids frequent spelling and grammatical errors

Item #4: Analytical Essays (15 points)

For this assignment, students will be presented with prompts that they have several days to complete. The essays are open note and open book, but you cannot collaborate with anyone in completing the responses. All papers must be typed in a word-processing computer program and follow specific formatting rules (12-pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, and one inch margins on all sides). Microsoft Word .doc files are preferred. Students will be expected to avoid frequent spelling and grammatical errors when writing their papers. The student should cite all resources used when constructing these papers using guidelines presented in the American Political Science Association Style Manual. **Every submission must be checked for academic integrity by submitting the assignment to TurnItIn's plagiarism monitor via Canvas.**

You will have one week to complete the prompts once the assignment is posted on Canvas. Refer to the class calendar at the end of the syllabus for distribution and due dates. Responses must take the form of a traditional essay, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Each prompt should be answered in separate essays.

Final grades are out of one hundred points possible-

Grade Score

- A+= 98.6-100
- A = 91.0-98.5
- A-= 90.0-90.9
- B+= 88.6-89.9
- B = 81.0-88.5
- B-= 80.0-80.9
- C+= 78.6-79.9
- C = 71.0-78.5
- C-= 70.0-70.9
- D+= 68.6-69.9
- D = 61.0-68.5
- D-= 60.0-60.9
- F = 59.9 or less
- FF= Academic dishonesty

Grade Appeals: If a student has an issue with the grade they earned for one of the assignments, the student must write a one-page explanation describing what aspect or aspects the evaluation missed. A twenty-four hour cooling off period is required, meaning you cannot submit an appeal within the first twenty-four hours after you receive an assignment grade. The written appeal can only be submitted between the second and third day after you receive an assignment back. Please note that if you submit a grade appeal, the work can potentially be scored lower than the initial grade if the second review of the assignment suggests there are additional issues or problems with the assignment. Appeals should be submitted via e-mail.

Course Materials

There are two texts that are required. These books are frequently discounted on online sites like Amazon.com. They can also be rented. All other assigned readings, such as academic journal articles and book chapters, will be posted on Canvas.

Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.

CQ Researcher. 2014. *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy*. 14th Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Reading Schedule

Week One - Introduction to the Class and Getting to Know Each Other

No readings

Week Two - Introducing the Policy Process

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 1. pg 3-24.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 2 - "Social Media and Politics." pg. 25-48.

Week Three - Elements of the Policymaking System

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 2. pg 25-42 (up to the 'Economic Environment' section).
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 6 - "Internet Regulation." pg. 121-145.

Week Four - Elements of the Policymaking System continued

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 2 continued. pg. 42-57.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 9 - "Future of Public Universities." pg. 197-224.

Week Five - Historical and Structural Contexts of Public Policymaking

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 3. pg. 58-71 (up to 'National Standards' section).
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 7 - "Youth Unemployment." pg. 147-171.

Week Six - Historical and Structural Contexts of Public Policymaking continued

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 3 continued. pg. 71-91.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 3 - "Farm Policy." pg. 49-72.

Week Seven - Official Actors and their Roles in Public Policy

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 4. pg. 92-115 (up to 'What Do Government Agencies Do?' section).
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 5 - "Genetically Modified Food." pg. 97-120.

Week Eight - Official Actors and their Roles in Public Policy continued

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 4 continued. pg. 116-129.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 4 - "U.S. Oil Independence." pg. 73-96.

Week Nine - Unofficial Actors and their Roles in Public Policy

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 5. pg. 130-167.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 8 - "Financial Misconduct." pg. 173-196.

Week Ten - Agenda Setting, Power, and Interest Groups

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 6. pg. 168-201.
- Downs, Anthony. 1972. "Up and Down with Ecology: The 'Issue-Attention Cycle.'" *Public Interest* 28: 38-50.
- Kingdon, John. 2002. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy*. Selected Portions. New York: Longman.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 10 - "Gun Control." pg. 225-248.

Week Eleven - Policies and Policy Types

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 7. pg. 202-227.
- Lowi, Theodore J. 1964. "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory." *World Politics* 16: 667-715.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 11 - "Immigration Conflict." pg. 249-272.

Week Twelve - Policy Design, Policy Tools, and Decisions

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 8. pg. 228-262.
- Lindblom, Charles E. 1959. "The Science of 'Muddling Through.'" *Public Administration Review* 19: 79-88.
- Schulman, Paul R. 1975. "Non-Incremental Policy Making: Notes Toward an Alternative Paradigm." *American Political Science Review* 69: 1354-1370.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 12 - "Gay Marriage Showdown." pg. 273-300.

Week Thirteen - Policy Implementation, Failure, and Learning

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 9. pg. 263-286.
- Sabatier, Paul A. 1986. "Top-Down and Bottom-up Approaches to Implementation Research: A Critical Analysis and Suggested Synthesis." *Journal of Public Policy* 6: 21-28.
- O'Toole, Laurence. 2000. "Research on Policy Implementation: Assessment and Prospects." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10: 263-288.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 13 - "Assessing the New Healthcare Law." pg. 301-324.

Week Fourteen - Science and Theory in the Study of Public Policy

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2011. Chapter 10. pg. 287-309.
- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 14 - "Preventing Disease." pg. 325-348.

Week Fifteen - Wrapping Things Up

- Burstein, Paul. 2003. "The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda." *Political Research Quarterly* 56: 29-40.

- CQ Researcher. 2014. Chapter 16 - "Privitizing the Military." pg. 377-400.

Class Calendar of Important Dates of Graded Assignments

- March 21 Item #2 Due at 11:59 p.m. on Canvas (Digital Presentation)
- April 18 Item #3 Due at 11:59 p.m. on Canvas (Annotated Bibliography)
- April 24 Item #4 Distributed on Canvas (Analytical Essays)
- May 1 Item #4 Due at 11:59 p.m. on Canvas (Analytical Essays)

Syllabus subject to change at instructor's discretion