

POSC 265/ENVA 305

Public Policy

Fall 2018

315 Siena Hall

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Office Hours: TR 9am – 11am; W 10am – 11am; by appointment

Course Description

Using a broad conception of public policy as actions to address problems faced by the public, this course examines the outputs and decision-making processes of government and non-profit organizations at the local, state and national levels. It will introduce students to foundational theories and concepts of public policy. In addition, students will study applied public policy analysis and evaluation, developing the skills necessary for careers in public policy, public administration, community development, and politics. (ATTR: ARTS, FSPS, HSMR)

Course Topic

This course is designed a survey of the field of public policy, with particular emphases on public policy evaluation, analysis, and the policy process. The course will cover both theoretical perspectives and practical skills relevant to careers in public policy, public administration, community development, and politics. The course material will not focus on any particular policy areas (e.g., health policy), though students will be immersed in a specific policy area of their choice through the course assignments. In addition, course assignments will integrate with the Community Policy Institute as a way to apply the lessons of the course to public policy in the Capital Region.

Learning Goals

Siena Mission and Learning Goals ([Siena Mission](#) and [Learning Goals](#))

1. Informed reasoning (Reason)
2. Effective communication (Rhetoric)
4. Regard for human solidarity and diversity (Regard)

* The best way to contact me is via email. If you call my office and I do not answer, leaving a voicemail message will not guarantee a timely response.

School of Liberal Arts Mission and Learning Goals ([Mission/Learning Goals](#))

1. Think critically by questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and articulating well-reasoned arguments.
2. Acquire specialized expertise and understanding in a specific discipline in the arts, humanities or social sciences, as well as intellectual breadth through study across disciplines and different modes of inquiry.
4. Develop the ability to write and speak confidently and effectively, including artistic forms of expression, and acquire appropriate quantitative and technological capabilities, including information literacy.
5. Conduct research or fieldwork that engages with diverse perspectives and employs diverse skill sets in order to examine individual and shared assumptions about themselves and the world.
6. Commit to the Franciscan and Catholic goals of social and environmental justice, and develop strategies to recognize and eliminate oppression and discrimination and to promote a just world and sustainable environment.

Political Science Mission and Learning Goals ([Mission/Learning Goals](#))

- A solid theoretical, empirical, and methodological foundation for future graduate study;
- A knowledge and awareness, as citizens, of the responsibility that membership within a democratic society entails;
- Sensitivity to the cultural and political diversity within the United States and the world community.

Course Learning Goals

The course has three primary learning objectives: knowledge of the field of public policy, applied analytical skills in policy evaluation, and knowledge of the public policy process.

At the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Understand the core concepts related to public policy in the U.S.;
2. Critically analyze and evaluate public policies and policy alternatives;
3. Understand the nature and complexity of the public policy process;
4. Demonstrate effective written and oral communication
5. Understand and utilize proper citation and bibliographic techniques, while avoiding plagiarism;
 - a. Use parenthetical in-text citations (author date) with a bibliography (see the [Chicago Quick Guide](#))

Required Texts

Kraft, Michael E. and Scott R. Furlong. 2018. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*, 6th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.*

* 5th edition is an acceptable substitute.

Stone, Deborah. 2012. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton.**

** 2nd edition is an acceptable substitute.

Suggested Reading

I strongly suggest that students keep up-to-date on the news, with a particular focus on Capital Region policy and politics. Here are some suggested news sites (links on Canvas):

- Albany Times Union – Capital Confidential
- The Washington Post
- The New York Times
- GovBeat
- FiveThirtyEight
- The Monkey Cage
- The Upshot

Course Assignments & Grading

Course Grading Components

Participation	5%
Issue Brief	10%
Policy Analysis Project:	
Policy Evaluation Draft	20%
Best Practices/Comparative Analysis Draft	10%
Full Policy Analysis & Presentation	20%
Tests	35%

Participation

Participation in the course counts for 5% of the course grade and includes attendance and the quality of students' participation in classroom discussions. Attending class is not enough to earn an A. Students should be thoroughly engaged with the material and the class. Students are expected to demonstrate this engagement by participating in discussions, asking questions, and alertly following the class dialogue. Though the bulk of class discussion will center on voluntary participation, I will "cold call" on students. All students should be prepared to answer basic questions about the readings and lecture material.

Attendance Policy

Following the [College Attendance Policy](#), class attendance is mandatory and will be monitored. Students are allowed two unexcused absences. For each additional absence, the participation grade will be reduced by a full letter grade (e.g., A to B or B- to C-).

Medical and other valid excuses must be supported with written documentation (e.g., a letter from your doctor) and should be submitted in a timely manner.

Written Assignments

All written assignments should be written in standard formatting (12 inch font, one inch margins, etc...). Page numbers are given as recommended targets and are not minimums or maximums. Given the importance of writing skills in the college, school, and departmental missions, the essays will be evaluated on both content and style. Essays with poor grammar, organization, and other writing mistakes will be graded down.

All assignments should include in-text, *parenthetical* citations of sources and a list of references at the end. *Do not use footnotes to cite your sources*. Citations and references should be presented in the *Chicago Style, author-date* format.

The written assignments will all be on the same general policy area, one of the six public policies relevant to the Capital Region community and the mission of the College, as identified by the Community Policy Institute:

- Education
- Health
- Housing & Homelessness
- Hunger & Food Security
- Justice & Community Safety
- Environment*

*Students enrolled in ENVA 305 must select environmental policies.

A list of more specific issues within these six general issue areas is available on the course blackboard page.

Issue Brief

This 3 page brief requires students to identify and assess a policy problem that is currently facing the Capital Region. It should be modeled on the CPI issue briefs, and include a description of the problem, the relevant stakeholders, previous and current policies, and possible policy alternatives. Students will be allowed to revise and resubmit the brief by the end of the semester. The revised brief may increase the grade of the assignment up to one letter grade (e.g., C+ to B+).

Due October 5.

Policy Analysis Project

Teams of 3-4 students will work on this project over the course of the semester. The project will culminate with an 8-10 page paper and presentation that analyzes one current public policy. It will include a policy evaluation section in which the effects of the policy are analyzed. It will also include a best practices/comparative analysis section in which the policy and its implementation are compared to alternative policies/practices. The project will conclude with policy recommendations. The project will be developed in three steps (see below).

For each step, each member of the group is required to submit a self and group evaluation. The evaluation should describe your own contribution to the assignment as well as your team members' contributions, and provide a letter grades (A, B, C, D, F). These evaluations will constitute 25% of each student's grade for each of the assignments.

Policy Evaluation Draft

This step requires the team to evaluate an existing public policy. The evaluation must include clear discussions of the problem(s), the goal(s), and criteria for evaluating outcomes. The paper will then provide *original* analysis of the effects of the policy. The evaluation paper should be roughly 5-6 pages in length.

Due November 2.

Best Practices Analysis

This 4-5 page assignment compares several policy alternatives currently being used by different governments (or organizations) to address the problem from the previous section in order to identify "best practices." The paper must compare and evaluate outcomes from at least two other policies (or implementation approaches). The paper will include detailed descriptions of each policy/implementation approach and then a comparative analysis.

Due November 19.

Presentation

The results of the project, including the policy evaluation, best practices/comparative analysis, and policy recommendations, will be described in a 10 minute presentation. Power Point or similar presentation software must be used. All members of the team must contribute to the oral presentation.

Due December 5.

Final Project Due December 14

Tests

The three tests will consist of short answer and essay questions. Each test may differ in length and the weight of the grade according to the amount of material covered.

Late Assignments & Missed Exams

Hard copies of all assignments are due in class the date listed on the syllabus.

Unless there are extreme and verifiable circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted. Similarly, make-up exams will not be offered unless a valid, written excuse is given beforehand.

Grading Scale

100-93	A	76-73	C
92-90	A-	72-70	C-
89-87	B+	69-67	D+
86-83	B	66-63	D
82-80	B-	62-60	D-
79-77	C+	<60	F

Student Expectations

Classroom Expectations

Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Late arrivals disrupt the class, so I reserve the right to refuse entrance to any students arriving more than 5 minutes late.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss that day's material. This means reading all the assigned material thoroughly. Students should take notes as they go through the readings and bring notes to class to help guide the discussion. Students are encouraged to ask any and all questions they have from the readings.

Students are expected to be respectful of one another. Cell phones must be turned off. *Laptops are not allowed*, unless the student has an accommodation from with the Office for Students with Disabilities. Students should be mindful of the diverse opinions of their classmates. As a political science course, we will likely discuss several contentious issues. Though you may not agree with everyone's opinions, it is important to keep all discussions civil and on-point. Remember that all discussion should be relevant to the course material. Do not use the class as a personal soap box to voice your opinions on political issues.

Students should be familiar with the syllabus and all the deadlines. Ignorance is not a valid excuse.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. According to the Siena College Academic Integrity Policy,

“Students who commit such acts expose themselves to punishments as severe as dishonorable dismissal from the College.

Academic dishonesty can take different forms, including, but not limited to: cheating [dishonesty in a test situation], plagiarism [dishonesty in the presentation of materials in a paper or report], and computer abuse.”

Students are expected to be familiar with the student guidelines on academic honesty, which can be found in the [Siena Life Student Handbook](#).

****Any instance of academic dishonesty will, at minimum, result in the failure of the assignment in question. More egregious cases will result in failing the course and will be reported to the College. ****

Inclusive Classroom

In our Franciscan community, diversity is an invitation to celebrate the uniqueness of each individual, as well as the cultural differences that enrich us all. In this course, I will do my best to ensure that students from all backgrounds and perspectives will be served equitably. The diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful and inclusive of the many identities of students in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the diversity and inclusiveness in this course are encouraged.

Siena College Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Siena College is committed to promoting a learning and working environment where discrimination and harassment is not tolerated. This policy shall apply regardless of race, color, religion, creed, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, veteran status, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, domestic violence victim status or other basis identified in federal or state law. Acts of discrimination and harassment, which are offenses directed against persons because of their identification with one of these categories, are prohibited under this policy.

For further information visit the [Title IX/Equal Employment Opportunity Office](#).

Incidents of discrimination or bias can be submitted through the [Bias Related Incident Form](#).

Accommodations Policy

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the [Office of Accessibility](#) and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.

Please let me know no later than the add/drop deadline if you will be seeking any special accommodations.

Emergency Preparedness Policy

- If the school closes for any reason we will continue our class via Blackboard. Remember to take your texts and a copy of the syllabus home with you and expect to continue with readings and assignments according to the course schedule; some assignments may be posted on Blackboard or sent to you via e-mail. If possible, online office hours will be established.
- Information regarding the status of the College's status and reopening schedule may be monitored on the Siena website.

If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, follow the College guidelines to stay at home and go to health services.

Course Schedule* & Reading Assignments

Dates	Topic	Readings
Sept. 5- 7	Introduction	Kraft & Furlong, Ch. 1-2
Sept. 10-12	Policy Problems	Stone, Part I Stone, Part III
Sept. 12-17	Policy Goals	Stone, Part II
Sept. 21-26	Policy Solutions & Alternatives	Kraft & Furlong, Ch. 5 Stone, Part IV
Sept. 28	<i>Test 1</i>	
Oct. 1-3	Policy Analysis	Kraft & Furlong, Ch. 4
Oct. 5	<i>Issue Brief Due</i> Policy Evaluation	Kraft & Furlong, p. 170-184
Oct. 8-15	Measurement & Data	Wheelan, Part I#
Oct. 17-19	Cost-Benefit Analysis	Kraft & Furlong, p. 184-195 Wheelan, Ch. 12#
Oct. 22-26	Program Evaluation	Wheelan, Ch. 13# Example Readings TBD#
Oct. 29	<i>Test 2</i>	
Oct. 31-Nov. 2	The Policy Process <i>Policy Evaluation Draft Due</i>	Kraft & Furlong, p.89-107
Nov. 5-9	Agenda Setting Implementation	Downs# Implementation Readings TBD#
Nov. 12-16	Theories of the Policy Process	Kraft & Furlong, p. 78-89 Sabatier Ch. 2-3#
Nov. 19	<i>Best Practices Analysis Due</i>	
Nov. 26-30	Theories of the Policy Process (Continued)	Sabatier Ch. 9#
Dec. 3-7	<i>Test 3</i> <i>Presentations</i>	
Dec. 14	<i>Final Project Due</i>	

***Disclaimer:** I reserve the right to assign additional readings and adjust the schedule. I will notify everyone via email about new readings and any schedule changes.

#all assigned readings outside the textbooks will be made available on Canvas.