SYLLABUS – FALL 2017
PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC POLICY/INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

CLASSROOM AND TIME: LOR 115 Mondays 3:55PM TO 6:55PM
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Alan D. Cander
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OFFICE HOURS: Wed 1PM TO 6PM
LOCATION: CSB 259

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Welcome to Principles of Public Policy! This course is designed as a primer on the “who, what, when, where, and why” of public policy in which we will explore the intersection of problems (issues), politics, and policy. A major goal of the course is to instill a basic knowledge of how public policies are formulated in the United States. We will focus on the roles of institutions, the actors involved, agenda setting, problem identification and definition, policy alternatives and why certain ones are chosen, and implementation and evaluation. Our main concern is broad tendencies in policy-making at the federal level and throughout the country. The course will guide you in finding answers to a number of key questions about public policy and public policy process as it exists in the United States. Among these questions are the following:

- What are the characteristics and forms of public policy?
- What determines whether a problem is ready to be addressed through policy proposals? What is the difference between a problem and a condition?
- How is policy made? What actors and institutions are involved? What is the role of the federal government and its branches and bureaucracies and agencies?
- What is the role of private entities in the policy process?
- What is the role of the media in the policy process?
- What is the role of the public? What is meant by national mood? What about elections and the policy process?
- What is the role of private interest groups in the policy process?
- What role do academia and the research community play?
- What is issue framing?
- How is policy implemented?
- How do theories explain – or fit into – the policy process and inform how it is evaluated?

Our exploration of public policymaking in the United States will be based on a combination of readings with case studies, lectures, class discussions, a guest speaker, and the class assignments. Our main text is a classic in the field and it contains cases studies that provide excellent examples of how governmental and nongovernmental professionals have addressed specific policy issues – with varying levels of success – and sometimes failure. The text is supplemented by a primer text on policy writing and by a few salient, peer-reviewed journal articles.
COURSE GOALS

- Gain an understanding of the policy making process and the people and groups (governmental and nongovernmental) involved.
- Gain an awareness of how emergent problems and the politics involved shape policy formation.
- Gain experience in analyzing, discussing, thinking critically about, writing about (through individual and group work), and presenting public policy issues.
- Encourage exploration of particular policy areas and careers in policy-making.

SAS CORE CURRICULUM LEARNING GOALS

Through this course, the student will be able to/have met the following SAS Core Curriculum Learning Goals:

Goal m: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization.

Goal t: Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

HOW YOUR GRADE WILL BE DETERMINED

15% Class Participation: Attending class, actively listening, actively engaging in class discussions, making a small presentation in front of the class on a policy-related news article, and participating in a Role-Playing State Budgeting Simulation

10% One Page Single-Spaced Memo #1 – Critique of a Public Policy Website of your choice

15% 1.5-Page Single-Spaced Memo #2 – Critique of a Specified Public Policy (to be handed out in class)

25% Midterm

25% Your Section of Your Group’s Report) (About 4 double-spaced pages per Group Member)

10% Your Portion of Your Group’s Policy Presentation (About 5 minutes per Group Member)

GRADING SCALE

A = 90-100  B+ = 85-89.99  B = 80-84.99  C+ = 75-79.99  C = 70-74.99  D = 60-69.99  F = 59.99 and below

IMPORTANT - ON GRADING AND WRITING:

This class is considered a writing class and I take that very seriously. You should too. You will be writing policy memoranda that require you to follow strict formats. I am explicit about those formats. Make sure you follow them.

Just because you followed the directions and format and did what you consider to be your best work on a written assignment, however, does not necessarily mean that you will earn an “A” grade. To earn an “A” grade you have to work hard to produce “A” quality work. Significant
errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, syntax, and related problems (generally three or more errors per page) demonstrably detract from the quality, content, clarity, and intelligibility of written assignments, including memos, papers, and PowerPoints. Students whose written assignments exhibit these problems therefore risk incurring significant grade deductions. In brief, I expect you to write and communicate at the college level in clear, concise language that uses an active voice. It is your responsibility to proofread and edit, or revise, your work before turning it in to ensure that you are doing that. That may mean rewriting it at least a couple of times. Writing is rewriting.

Similarly, you will immeasurably improve your chances of earning a high grade on a PowerPoint oral presentation by practicing it beforehand, including timing your practice presentation and making sure that your PowerPoint is legible, clear, and logical and uses good color and font choices.

An A is an excellent grade but a B+ is also a very, very good grade.

Unless there is a mathematical miscalculation I do not negotiate grades. If you find a mathematical miscalculation please make an appointment to see me during office hours or, if you cannot make office hours, at a mutually convenient time. I will not discuss grade miscalculations in the classroom.

I do not round up. An 89.9 is still a B+.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS
- All other required readings are on the class Sakai site.

GROUP REPORTS AND GROUP PRESENTATION
- Groups of 6 students will work together to put together a written Group Report (15-18 pages, double-spaced maximum) and Group Presentation on a major policy issue. The Group Reports shall contain 4 larger sections, which can have subsections, in the following order:
  1. Nature of the issue/problem and history of the issue/problem [history can include some early regulatory approaches to address the issue],
  2. How it has been addressed through more recent regulations and public policy initiatives (which may include laws and statutes), [can have subsections]
  3. Alternatives for addressing the issues – which you have researched and/or which you may come up with yourselves [can have subsections]
  4. Recommendations for addressing the issues based on a consideration of the aforementioned problems/history and alternatives
- Each group member will write one section or subsection of the Group Report (about 4 pages, double-spaced per group member) and each group member will present their section or subsection at the Group Presentation (5 minutes maximum per
person). Group Reports are due in hard copy AND on Sakai per the date indicated on the syllabus under the schedule of classes, readings, and assignments.

- Group Presentations must be in PowerPoint format. I try to be available for dry-runs.
- There are no group-wide grades. Each student receives a grade for their written component of the Group Report and a grade for their component of the Group PowerPoint Presentation.
- Past group reports and presentations have covered topics such as:
  - Casinos and economic development
  - Immigration Reform
  - Various public health issues
  - Alternative Energy
  - Gun Control
  - Genetically Engineered Foods
  - Prison Reform
  - Housing issues
- I will consider Groups of more than 4 students but that will require my approval and will necessitate appropriate and logical alterations to the sections covered in the Group Reports and Group Presentations.
- No single student will be permitted to function as their own, singular group/presenter – period. The group work is a required part of this class and everyone must participate fully.
- After the Midterm a number of classes will be devoted primarily to working with your Group and seeking my feedback as you go through the process. I expect you to attend these classes just as if I were lecturing. Failure to attend these classes will lead to a lower class participation grade.

**GROUP REPORT/GROUP PRESENTATION ETIQUETTE**

- You are expected to comport yourselves in a responsible, adult manner when working on the Group Report/GROUP Presentation.
- Please contact me ASAP if your Group is experiencing problems with students unwilling to share information or otherwise not pulling their weight - or micromanaging.

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
The midterm, which is the only examination in this class, will consist of a combination of multiple choice questions, short answer and fill-in-blank questions, and one or two essay-like questions. I strive to make my lectures clear and interesting, but if you do not do the readings you will not do well on the Midterm – period. Keep up with the readings! There is no Final Exam in this class.

**ATTENDANCE, CLASS PARTICIPATION, ABSENCE, LATE PAPERS, AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

- I take attendance by having you “sign in”. Lateness, especially if it is chronic, hurts your class participation grade.
- Class attendance and class participation counts for 15% of your grade and it means ACTIVE participation: attending class on time, actively listening, and actively engaging by responding to class discussions – providing reasoned opinions and comments, and answering questions and asking questions.
- As part of the class participation requirement, each student must present a single, brief (5 minute maximum) discussion of a policy issue gathered from a newspaper, a current events/policy journal or magazine, or a credible online source. We will aim
for 5 student presentations per class - low-tech and informal presentations. These presentations shall cover the following:

1. What problem/issue is identified or addressed?
2. What was the trigger? (Why is this problem/issue in the news?)
3. What solution or proposal for addressing the problem/issue is discussed?
4. Who are the major players? Are they from within government or are they nongovernmental?
5. What about the political stream? Is the approach to the problem partisan or bipartisan? In other words, are both Democrats and Republicans involved (bipartisan) in addressing the problem/issue or is only one party involved (partisan)?
6. Do you believe this problem/issue will stay in the news or fade and why?

- We will conduct a State Budget Simulation with role-playing. This is part of your class participation grade. Some students have told me this was the highlight of the semester.
- The only excused absences from class and for late papers and missing exams are legitimate illness or an actual family emergency, such as the severe illness or death of a family member. If you are legitimately sick and miss a class you must use the Rutgers University absence reporting website, which is located online at [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/). Any unexcused absences will negatively affect your class participation grade.
- Late assignments will be penalized half a letter grade for each day late and will not be accepted beyond one week past due. An assignment Thus, a paper that would have been a B+ will automatically be a B if turned in one day late and a C+ if turned in two days late. The only exceptions are your legitimate, documented illness or documented family emergency or death in the immediate family. If you must turn a paper or assignment in late for any of those legitimate reasons please email it to me as soon as possible with documentation justifying the lateness.
- Use of cell phones is NOT PERMITTED during lectures; you can use them during breaks. Please keep them silenced or turned off during lectures and class discussions. I usually provide one or two 5-minute breaks per class. You may not use laptops, IPads and other electronics during class lectures and discussions for anything other than taking notes or to look something up pertaining to our discussions - period. Abusing these classroom rules is rude and distracting to the other students. If you violate or abuse these rules you will be asked to leave the class and you will receive a zero grade for class participation for that day. We only meet once per week so that can really hurt your class participation grade.
- Eating and during small snacks is perfectly fine – but not full meals. Our classroom is not a dining hall.
- I encourage questions during class lectures and discussions. Do not be afraid to ask me to explain the material better and/or repeat a point you did not grasp. There is no such thing as a dumb question.

ALWAYS CHECK THE CLASS SAKAI SITE AND YOUR RUTGERS EMAIL
Class announcements and changes in schedule are on Sakai. Individual students are contacted, if necessary, via email.
**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
Plagiarism, cheating, and recycling your own older papers for this class are academic integrity violations and – at a minimum - will result in a grade of zero [0] for that assignment. I use “Turn it In” on Sakai. Please consult the Academic Integrity document on the Rutgers website at academicintegrity.rutgers.edu.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE/CELLPHONES/LAPTOPS/ELECTRONICS**
- Please keep all **CELL PHONES TURNED OFF OR SILENCED** during class. I usually provide one or two 5 to 10 minute breaks and you may quietly use your cell phones during that break period. If you need to speak to someone during the break via cell phone please do that in the hallway.
- You may only use Laptops and IPADS during class time for note-taking and to look up course related information. You may only use them for non-class related reasons during the breaks. Using electronics for non-class related reasons during class time is rude, distracting to the other students, and detracts from the learning environment. If I catch you doing so I will immediately ask you to stop.
- Eating and drinking small snacks is perfectly fine – but not full meals.

**CONTACTING ME**
If you are experiencing difficulties with school primarily because of legitimate, documentable personal or family problems or illness I strongly recommend that you contact me to discuss this as early as possible during the semester. The best way to reach me is to either speak to me before or after class or email me.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**
I am strongly committed to assisting students with legitimate accommodation needs per university policies. Students with legitimate needs should contact the Rutgers Department of Disabilities as soon as possible and bring the required documentation and papers for me to sign so that we can follow the rules and provide the necessary accommodations.

**GUEST SPEAKER**
We will likely have a guest speaker with experience in policy-making.

**EXTRA CREDIT**
There are no extra credit opportunities in this class.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**September 11**
- No assigned readings. Introduction to class and requirements
- Discussion begins on Kingdon, Chapter 1

**September 18**
- Required Readings: Kingdon: Chapters 1 and 2 and Smith: Preface, Introduction, Ch. 1
- Discussion of potential group projects
- 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

**September 25**
- Required Readings: Kingdon: Chapter 3 and Smith Ch. 2
• Continued discussion of potential group projects
• 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

**October 2**
• **Required Readings:** Kingdon: Chapter 4
• **Memo #1 Assignment – Critique of a Policy Website – handed out**
• **Finalize Group Project Topics and Assign Students to Groups**
• 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

**October 9**
• **Required Readings:** Kingdon: Chapter 5
• **Memo #1 Assignment due in class – Critique of a Policy Website**
• **Budget Simulation Material handed out and roles assigned – class broken up into role groups to discuss strategies**
• 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

**October 16**
• **Required Reading:** Kingdon, Chapter 6
• **Memo #2 Assignment handed out – Critique of an Actual Policy Proposal**
• **Budget Simulation “debate” between different groups**

**October 23**
• **Required Reading:** Kingdon, Chapter 7
• **Memo #2 Assignment due in class in hard copy – Critique of an Actual Policy Proposal**
• 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

**October 30**
• **Required Reading:** Kingdon, Chapter 8 and 9, Epilogue, Reddit on Obamacare
• 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources
• **Midterm Study Guide handed out**

**November 6**
• **In-Class Midterm**

**November 13**
• **Guest Speaker**
• **Work with your Group**
• 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

**November 20**
• **Work with your Group**
• 6 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

**November 27**
• **Work with your Group**
December 4
• All Group Reports due on Sakai by 3PM and in hard copy in class
• Group Presentations

December 11 – Last Day of Class
• Group Presentations
• Group Reports returned at end of class - graded