SYLLABUS: PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC POLICY FALL 2015

COURSE NUMBERS: 10:762:210:01/10:833:210:01
CLASSROOM AND TIME: Frelinghuysen A4 WED 9:50 AM TO 12:50 AM
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Alan D. Cander
alan.cander@rutgers.edu 848-932-2757
TEACHING ASSISTANT: Evan Casper-Futterman
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OFFICE HOURS/LOCATION: Tues 1 PM to 4 PM; Wed 3PM to 5 PM 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
Goal j: Identify and critically assess ethical issues in social science and history.
Goal m: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization.
Goal s1: Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
Goal t: Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.
Goal u: 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 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
5% One Page Representation List (based on the district where you live)
5% One Page Single-Spaced Memo #1 – Critique of a Public Policy Website of your choice
10% 1.5-Page Single-Spaced Memo #2 – Critique of a Specified Public Policy (to be handed out in class)
25% Midterm
20% Your Section of Your Group’s Report) (About 4 double-spaced pages per Group Member)
5% Your Portion of Your Group’s Policy Presentation (About 5 minutes per Group Member)
15% Final Policy Memo (Topic to be Announced)

GRADING SCALE
A = 90-100  B+ = 87-8  B = 80-86  C+ = 77-79  C= 70-76  D = 60-70  F = 59 and below

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS
- Additional selected readings which will be made available on the class Sakai site.
GROUP REPORT, GROUP PRESENTATION, AND INDIVIDUAL POLICY MEMOS

- Groups of 4 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 sections in this order:
  1. Nature of the issue/problem and history of the issue/problem,
  2. How it has been addressed through public policy initiatives (which may include laws and statutes),
  3. Alternatives for addressing the issues
  4. Recommendations for addressing the issues based on a consideration of the aforementioned problems/history and alternatives

- Each group member will write one section of the Group Report (about 4 pages, double-spaced per group member) and each group member will present 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.

- The Group Presentations work best as Group PowerPoints. I am available for dry-runs.

- 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

MIDTERM EXAMINATION
The Midterm will consist of short answer and essay questions.

ATTENDANCE, CLASS PARTICIPATION, ABSENCE, LATE PAPERS, MISSING AN EXAM

- I take attendance by having you “sign in”. Lateness hurts your class participation grade.
- Class attendance and class participation counts for 20% of your grade and it means ACTIVE participation: attending class on time, and responding to class discussions.
- 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 also conduct a State Budget Simulation with role-playing. This is part of your class participation grade.
- The only excused absences from class and for late papers and missing exams are legitimate illness or an actual family emergency, such as 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/. 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. 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.
- Students whose written assignments exhibit significant punctuation, grammar, spelling, syntax, or other errors (generally three or more errors per page) risk incurring significant grade deductions.

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/CALL PHONES/LAPTOPS/ELECTRONICS
- Please keep all CELL PHONES TURNED OFF 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.
- Eating and drinking small snacks is perfectly fine – but not full meals.

CONTACTING ME
I strongly encourage you to contact me for individual assistance or to discuss problems interfering with your performance via email at alan.cander@rutgers.edu.

QUESTIONS DURING CLASS
I encourage questions on course materials and class requirements.
GROUP PROJECT ETIQUETTE
- You are expected to comport yourselves in a responsible, adult manner when working on Group Project assignments.
- Please contact me asap if your Group is experiencing problems with students unwilling to share information or otherwise not pulling their weight - or micromanaging.

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

EXTRA CREDIT
In the interests of maintaining fairness to all students, there are no extra credit opportunities in this class.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Sept. 2
- No assigned readings. Introduction to class and requirements
- Discussion begins on Kingdon, Chapter 1

Sept. 9
- Required Readings: Kingdon: Chapters 1 and 2 and Smith: Preface, Introduction, Ch. 1
- Representation List assignment handed out
- Discussion of potential group projects
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

Sept. 16
- Required Readings: Kingdon: Chapter 3 and Smith Ch. 2, Ch. 3
- Representation List assignment due in class in hard copy
- Continued discussion of potential group projects
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

Sept. 23
- Required Readings: Kingdon: Chapter 4 and Smith: Ch. 4, Ch. 5
- Memo #1 Assignment – Critique of a Policy Website – handed out
- Finalize Group Project Topics and Assign Students to Groups
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

September 30
- Required Readings: Kingdon: Chapter 5 and Smith: Ch. 6 and Ch. 7
- 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
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources
October 7
- **Required Reading:** Kingdon, Chapter 6
- **Memo #2 Assignment handed out – Critique of an Actual Policy Proposal**
- **Budget Simulation “debate” between different groups**

October 14
- **Required Reading:** Kingdon, Chapter 7
- **Memo #2 Assignment due in class in hard copy – Critique of an Actual Policy Proposal**
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

October 21
- **Required Reading:** Kingdon, Chapter 8 and 9, Epilogue
- **Required Reading:** Reddit on Obamacare
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources
- **Midterm Study Guide handed out**

October 28
- **In-Class Midterm**

November 4
- **Guest Speaker**
- **Work with your Group**
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

November 11
- Work with your Group
- 5 student presentations on policy issues from newspaper articles/online sources

November 18
- Work with your Group

November 25 – No Class – Thanksgiving Schedule

December 2
- **All Group Reports due on Sakai by 9AM and in hard copy in class**
- **Group Presentations**

December 9 – Last Day of Class
- **Group Presentations**
- **Group Reports returned at end of class - graded**

December 15
- **Final Memos due on Sakai by 5 PM**