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PSCI 503.50: Policy Analysis - Online

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PSCI 503 Policy Analysis

MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Online Version

Semester: Spring 2013 / Professor: Jeffrey Greene / Telephone: 243-6181

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This class is open to graduate students from any graduate program at the University of Montana. Undergraduates must have the consent of the instructor to take this course.

The online version of PSCI 503 begins on Wednesday, January 30 and ends April 17.
All work will be returned on April 24

TEXTS

Public Policy: An Evolutionary Approach, 3/e, by Lester and Stewart (Students can use the 2/e of the book)

Issues for Debate in American Public Policy, 13/e, by The CQ Researcher (Supplemental Reader)

Public Policy: Theories, Models, and Concepts, by McCool (Supplemental Reader)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public policy is one of the most exciting areas in political science and public administration. **PSCI 503** is designed to provide students with an overview of the public policy process and an overview of the history and evolution of policy studies. The course also provides an introduction to the fundamental theories, concepts, terms, and methodologies associated with policy analysis, and an introduction to the basic procedures used in conducting policy analysis.

The purpose of the course is to acquaint students with the complexities of public policy and policy analysis. The course is intended to provide students with an adequate background at a level of understanding appropriate for a variety of public sector employment settings. The course will blend theory and practice. Much of the course will be used discussing and analyzing a series of policy issues included in the Lester and Stewart text and the *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* text by Congressional Quarterly via the **Discussion Board**. *The online version of PSCI 503 is a 12-week session.*

Primary Objectives

Objective #1: To provide students with a general understanding of public policy and policy analysis by reading and discussing classic and contemporary literature. Students will be exposed to the basic

concepts, terms, and methodologies associated with policy studies. In this process, students will gain a general understanding of the history and evolution of policy studies. Students' proficiency will be measured via the discussion board. *The traditional written, comprehensive exam that was used in the past will not be used in this section of PSCI 503.*

Objective #2: To enhance students' ability to write concise reports pertaining to public policy. This objective will be accomplished by having students write article critiques and an 10-12 page policy summary. Details of these projects are explained later in the syllabus. Students' proficiency will be assessed via the written article critiques and the policy summary paper.

Objective #3: To provide students with the basic procedures used to conduct policy analysis. Students' proficiency in this area will be assessed by material included on the comprehensive exam. Students will also develop proficiency at "framing" policy issues. This idea is illustrated in the [National Issue Forums](#) books.

Upon success completion of the course, students should be able to:

- 1). Demonstrate knowledge of the history and evolution of domestic public policy
- 2). Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental terms and concepts associated with public policy and policy studies, including the various stages of the *policy cycle*
- 3). Demonstrate proficiency at writing concise reports that deal with complex material
- 4). Be able to construct a policy analysis design
- 5). Demonstrate a thorough understanding of a specific policy by writing a policy summary.
- 6). Demonstrate the ability to "frame" complex policy issues.

Additional and more specific learning objectives can be viewed at [PSCI 503 Learning Objectives](#).

REQUIREMENTS: TAKE HOME EXAM (POLICY SUMMARY PAPER), and ARTICLE SUMMARIES

Policy Paper

The **policy paper** that requires the integration of concepts and the use of critical thinking skills, and analyzing a public policy choices. You can pick any policy area of interest to you personally for this paper. You can also find materials at Public Agenda, www.publicagenda.org

Article Critique Guidelines

The McCool text contains a variety of articles about public policy. All students must write **five (5)** article critiques for this class taken from the McCool text. *The critiques constitute 20 percent of one's final grade.*

There are some specific questions one should consider while reading the article and developing a summary.

1. What is the major subject and theme of the article?
2. What is the major question the author addresses?

3. What techniques, tools of analysis, or methods are employed by the author to answer the question? (*If applicable*)
4. What major points does the author make?
5. What does the author conclude? What suggestions are made?
6. What is the relevance of the article to theory or practice? (What does it mean?)
7. Is there anything in the article (a point, lesson, etc.) that you can "take back to the office?"

[Click here](#) for a sample article critique.

Grade Weights

Exam	50%	Due April 17 (Wednesday)
Article Critiques	20%	Due by April 17 (Wednesday) <i>All students must write five (5) article critiques of their choice</i>
Discussion Board	30%	Due on Wednesdays of each session

ATTENDANCE: Students are encouraged to participate in class. Attendance and participation is based on the **Discussion Board**.

COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS

PART I THE BASICS OF PUBLIC POLICY

Session 1 Introduction, Background, and Context: What is Public Policy? What is Policy Analysis? (January 30; due February 6)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 1,2

McCool, Sections 1,2

Assigned Articles (McCool)

"Interest Groups and the Nature of the State" by Truman _____

"Three Types of Pluralism" by Kelso _____

"The Golden Era of Interest Group Pluralism" by Garson _____

"The Comparative Study of Political Elites" by Putnam _____

"A Critique of Elitist Theory of Democracy" by Walker _____

["Policy Analysis" by Banfield](#) _____

Session 2 Approaches and Models (February 6; due February 13)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 3,4

Assigned Articles (McCool)

"The Political System Under Stress" by Easton _____

"Fiscal Behavior of the Modern Democratic State by Mitchell _____

"The Science of Muddling Through" by Lindblom _____

"Stages of the Policy Process" by Ripley _____

Session 3 Analysis in the Policy Process: Agenda Setting and Policy Formulation (February 13; due February 20)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 5,6

Assigned Articles (McCool)

"Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice" by Lowi _____

"Developing Public Policy Theory..." by Greenberg, Miller, Mohr, and Vladeck _____

"Typologies of Public Policy..." by Steinberger _____

"Promoting Policy Theory" by Spitzer _____

Session 4 Implementation, Evaluation, and Policy Change (February 20; due February 27)

Lesser and Stewart: Chapters 7,8,9

Assigned Articles (McCool)

"The Subsystems in Perspective" by Freeman _____

"Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment" by Hecl _____

"Patterns of Influence among Committees, Agencies, and Interest Groups" by Hamm _____

"An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy Learning Therein" by Sabatier

Section 6 of McCool

"Introduction: The Age of Dead Ideas?" by McCool _____

"The Future: Theoretical Choices" by McCool _____

PART 2 ANALYZING POLICY CHOICES AND POLICY ISSUES

Analyzing Public Policy Choices

This section will examine a variety of policies, including Education Policy, Welfare Policy, Crime Policy, and Environmental Policy from the Lester & Stewart text. Also, additional policies are included from the CQ Reader such as rising costs of higher education, race relations, gay marriage, media issues, and many others. You may find one of these useful for your policy summary paper (the take home exam). Please note that the original syllabus was prepared using the 13/e of the CQ Reader. It should also be noted that there are some differences between the Lester and Stewart 3/e and 2/e (mainly updated material and the 2/e includes a chapter on crime policy that was not included in the 3/e). You can use either edition of the Lester and Stewart book.

Session 5: Education Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 10) and Chapters 9, 10, and 11 in the CQ Reader, 13/e (February 27; due March 6)

#9 "Digital Education" _____

#10 "Student Debt" _____

#11 "Youth Volunteerism" _____

Public Agenda's summary of education policy is located at <http://www.publicagenda.org/citizen/issueguides/education>

Session 6 Welfare Policy (Lester and Stewart, Chapter 11 and Chapters 12, 13, and 14 in the CQ Reader for Welfare Policy). (March 6; due March 13)

Assigned Articles:

#12 "Occupy Movement" _____

#13 "Child Poverty" _____

#14 "Immigration Conflict" _____

There is an [article](#) that appears in *City Journal* by James Q. Wilson. It is an interesting article titled, "Why We Don't Marry." It is related to welfare policy. _____

Public Agenda's summary of welfare policy <http://www.publicagenda.org/citizen/issueguides/poverty-and-welfare>

Session 7: Health Care Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 12) and Chapters 15 and 16 the CQ Reader, (March 13; due March 20)

#15 "Preventing Disease" _____

#16 "Aging Problem" _____

Obamacare updates: For years there have been complaints about health care policy in the United States. In late 2009, the **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** (better known as Obamacare) was passed under a cloud of controversy by a few votes in the House and by Democrats in the Senate in late December along party lines. It was signed into law in March 2010 by President Obama. It was challenged in federal courts, and ultimately ruled constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. This link provides recent articles and updates about the law. <http://ihealthcareupdates.com/> It is the most significant change to our health care system ever and remains controversial to this date. One cannot discuss health care in the U.S. without including Obamacare. Other significant laws include Medicare and Medicaid, both passed in the 1960s.

["Ten years later, tobacco deal going up in smoke"](#) by Sullivan _____

Public Agenda's summary of health care policy is located at <http://www.publicagenda.org/citizen/issueguides/health-care>

Session 8: Environmental Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 13 in the 2/e) and Chapters 3 and 4 in the CQ Reader, (March 20; due March 27)

#3 "Fracking Controversy" _____

#4 "Water Crisis in the West" _____

Public Agenda's summary of environmental policy is located at <http://www.publicagenda.org/citizen/issueguides/environment>

A report from Public Agenda on **energy and the environment** <http://publicagenda.org/citizen/researchstudies/energy-environment>

Session 9: Spring Break April 1 – 5

Policy Paper is Assigned (Due April 17)

Session 10: Business and the Economy (No readings in Lester & Stewart) Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in the CQ Reader, (March 27; due April 10)

Assigned Article (McCool)

"American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory" by Lowi _____

#6 "Financial Misconduct" _____

#7 "Reviving Manufacturing" _____

#8 "Attracting Jobs" _____

Public Agenda's summary of economic policy is located at <http://publicagenda.org/citizen/issueguides/economy>

Session 11: All work is due (April 17)

Session 12: All work will be returned (April 24) Note that the online class is a 12-week session

[Study Guide](#) and [PSCI 503 Learning Objectives](#) (*The learning objectives are considered to be part of the study guide. Although there will not be a traditional exam in this section, the learning objectives should be reviewed by all students.*)

Policy papers guidelines can be found at [Policy paper](#). (This file is a Microsoft Word document). The document is also available in [Adobe Acrobat](#) format. You may find the instructions and format of the document useful in preparing your policy papers. Policy papers are the written version of your policy issue presentation.

Click the following links for samples of past policy papers. [Sample 1](#) [Sample 2](#) (These are Word documents)

Visit **Governing.com**, which is filled with news and policy matters pertaining to state and local government at www.governing.com

For students interested in foreign policy, visit [Foreign Policy Online Magazine](#)

Visit [Public Agenda](#), which is a rich source of data and studies about public policy.

Articles about New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina

Many point to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Gulf Coast as a perfect example of weaknesses and failures in federalism and intergovernmental relations. Public policy is at the center of preventing disasters and rebuilding after disasters occur.

I enjoyed reading the following article about New Orleans and Katrina. *A case study about Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans is now included in the Stillman text used in PSCI 501, but it is applicable to PSCI 503.* This article, from **City Journal**, is an interesting account of New Orleans. It is called "Who is killing New Orleans," by Nicole Gelinas. [Click here](#) for a copy of the article in Adobe Acrobat, or click

this link to go directly to the article at *City Journal*. http://www.city-journal.org/html/15_4_new_orleans.html

Another article found in *Governing Magazine* is located at <http://www.governing.com/topics/economic-dev/The-Katrina-Breakdown.html> The article is about the communication breakdown among various levels of government and between agencies. "THE KATRINA BREAKDOWN," by Jonathan Walters & Donald Kettl. This article is relevant to the latest Hurricane Sandy, which devastated the northeastern United States. Less has been written about the response to Hurricane Sandy at this time, but things appeared to be moving slowly when this syllabus was posted. President Bush and FEMA were severely criticized for the way New Orleans was handled. Many polls suggested that President Obama got a boost in the presidential election because of the storm (although the early evaluations of FEMA were not positive). The media had little criticism of FEMA or the way the Hurricane Sandy was initially handled.

<http://www.governing.com/news/state/Who-Will-Pay-the-Big-Bill-that-Sandy-Left.html>

PSCI 503 / Spring 2013 Syllabus for the online class

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