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PSCI 503.50: Policy Analysis

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PSCI 503 Policy Analysis

Masters of Public Administration Program / Spring 2017 Online Version

Online work is due on Friday mornings

Professor: Jeffrey Greene

Telephone: 243-6181 / **Office:** LA 356 / **Office Hours:** 3- 4 p.m. Tue/Wed

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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.

TEXTS

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

Issues for Debate in American Public Policy, 16/e, by The CQ Researcher (Supplemental reader)

Public Policy: Theories, Models, and Concepts, by McCool (Supplemental reader of classic articles; used for article summaries)

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 (the last five or six weeks) 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 CQ Press. This book, called the CQ Reader in the syllabus, contains some specific policy issues that are usually very current. The Discussion Board is a significant part of the class; students are expected to answer at least three of the questions each week.

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 class discussions. *The 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 developed in the National Issue Forums; you can view these online at Public Agenda, www.publicagenda.org for a variety of policy issues.

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 on Moodle.

REQUIREMENTS: Policy paper, article summaries, and discussion board

Exam

There is not a written, formal exam in PSCI 503.

Article Summaries

The McCool text contains a variety of articles. The critiques constitute 20 percent of one's final grade. Students are expected to write **five (5) article summaries**. These are due the last class, and it is helpful to put **all five article summaries into one document**. Sample article summaries are provided on Moodle. Students can use the materials included in the class or outside articles of interest not included in the class (e.g. journals, Governing Magazine, etc.).

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?
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?)

Sample article summaries are posted on Moodle.

Policy Paper

Students will select the policy. The topics should be approved to ensure the policy areas are not too broad. This paper is similar to what is used in PSCI 505 (the public budgeting class) but will consist of providing an overview of a policy, describing how the policy has been framed (or various ways it has been framed), an overview of the potential remedies to resolve the problem -- the pros and cons of the remedies. The paper should be 10 to 12 pages using single or double-spacing. The goal is to keep the paper as concise as possible while thoroughly covering the topic. Rather than write a longer paper, students can adjust the paper using single, space and a half, font size, etc. to make it fit within the 12 page limit. The title page and references, if endnotes or a bibliography is used, do not count in the 12 pages. Students can use any citation style they like.

Students can select any policy of interest. This policy does NOT have to be a broad policy, such as welfare or economic policy. It should be a narrow policy or a part of a much larger policy. For example, no one should select health care policy in America, but a person might select either the prescription drug plan associated with Medicare or "providing prescription drugs for senior citizens," and examine the various proposals.

Samples of policy papers are provided on Moodle.

Grade Weights

Policy Paper..... 40% Due May 6 (Friday)

Discussion Board 20 percent (based on quality of responses; due on Friday mornings)

Article Critiques.....20% Due May 6 (Friday)

Attendance and Participation: Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions on the discussion board. **Students are expected to answer at least three questions each week.** Poor attendance and poor quality or lack of participating in class discussions will affect one's final grade. Students are expected to miss no more than three classes during the semester.

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? (Assigned January 25; due February 3)

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

"The Political System under Stress" by Easton

"Policy Science as Metaphysical Madness" by Banfield (This article is posted on Moodle)

Session 2 Approaches and Models (due February 10)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 3,4

Assigned Articles (McCool)

"The Science of Muddling Through" by Lindblom

"Stages of the Policy Process" by Ripley

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

Session 3 Analysis in the Policy Process: Agenda Setting and Policy Formulation (due February 17)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 5,6

Assigned Articles (McCool)

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

"Typologies of Public Policy..." by Steinberger

"Promoting Policy Theory" by Spitzer

"Fiscal Behavior of the Modern Democratic State by Mitchell

Session 4 Implementation, Evaluation, and Policy Change (due February 28)

Lesser and Stewart: Chapters 7, 8, 9

Assigned Articles (McCool)

"The Subsystems in Perspective" by Freeman

"Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment" by Heclo

"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. In addition to what is assigned in the printed material, students will be required to read summaries and overviews provided by [Public Agenda](#). Adobe files are available that provide the general summaries for Public Agenda's studies. Public Agenda is located at <http://www.publicagenda.org>

Please note that only three policy chapters are included in the 3/e of Lester and Stewart. There are more policy chapters in the 2/e.

Session 5: Education Policy (due March 3)

Education Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 10)

Readings in the CQ reader.

14. School Discipline

Public Agenda's summary of education policy (at the link below)

[Public Agenda's summary of education policy](#)

Session 6 Welfare Policy (due March 10)

Lester and Stewart, Chapter 11 in the CQ Reader

11. Housing the Homeless

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.

Session 7: Health Care Policy (due March 17)

No readings in Lester & Stewart; read Public Agenda's policy summary online at the provided links below.

[Public Agenda's summary of health care policy](#)

[A second Public Agenda report on health care policy](#)

(Chapters in the CQ Reader)

15. Assisted Suicide

7. Abortion Debates

"Ten years later, tobacco deal going up in smoke" by Sullivan (This article is posted on Moodle)

Session 8: Spring Break, March 20-24 No class

Session 9: Crime Policy (due March 31)

Lester & Stewart, Chapter 12 (2/e only), *There is not a chapter on crime in the 3/e of Lester and Stewart.* (A copy of the 2/e of the book is on reserve at the Mansfield Library)

CQ Reader

16. Police Tactics

Public Agenda's summaries on crime policy (see below for the links)

[Public Agenda's summary of crime policy](#)

[A second report from Public Agenda on crime](#)

["Broken Windows," by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling](#)

Session 10: Environmental Policy (due April 7)

Lester & Stewart, Chapter 13 in 2/e; Chapter 12 in 3/e; and Environment, Chapters 1 and 2 in the CQ Reader

1. Food Policy Debates

2. Regulating Toxic Chemicals

Public Agenda's summary of environmental policy (Please note that some of the web links in this Adobe document no longer work due to changes on Public Agenda's website). This summary is posted on Moodle.

[Public Agenda's summary of environmental policy](#)

Session 11: Business and the Economy (due April 14)

Business and the Economy in the CQ Reader, Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6

3. Future of Cars

4. Wealth and Inequality

5. Women and Work

6. Youth Unemployment Assigned Article (McCool)

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

Paper: "Economic Policy," by J. Greene (Posted on Moodle. This is now the main lesson for Session 11.)

Public Agenda's summary of economic policy

[Public Agenda's summary of economic policy](#)

Session 12: Policy Paper assigned (assigned April 14; several weeks are provided to complete the policy paper and article summaries. All work is due May 5). It should be noted this semester begins a week earlier than usual – thus, the reason for three weeks to complete the policy paper.

Session 13: All work returned. (May 12)

Study guides, learning objectives, summary samples, the policy paper (and examples) are posted on Moodle.

Visit [Governing.com](http://www.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.

Table of Contents for CQ Researcher, 16/e

Table of Contents

ENVIRONMENT

1. Food Policy Debates
2. Regulating Toxic Chemicals

BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

3. Future of Cars
4. Wealth and Inequality
5. Women and Work
6. Youth Unemployment

RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

7. Abortion Debates
8. Big Data and Privacy
9. Domestic Drones
10. Voting Controversies

SOCIAL POLICY

11. Housing the Homeless
12. Paying College Athletes
13. Regulating Lobbying
14. School Discipline

HEALTH

15. Assisted Suicide

NATIONAL SECURITY

16. Police Tactics

Note: The CQ book should be the 16/e. These books change each year. Sometimes the UC Bookstore orders that latest edition, which may be the 17/e by the time the class starts. The books always follow a similar format. If you end up with a newer edition, it can be used – some of the article will just be different. If a new edition is out, I will adjust the syllabus and Moodle to accommodate new articles.

PSCI 503.50 / Professor Greene / Spring Online 2017 Syllabus