

Spring 2-1-2008

## PSC 503.01: Policy Analysis

Jeffrey D. Greene

University of Montana, [jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu](mailto:jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu)

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# PSc 503 Policy Analysis

Masters of Public Administration Program / Spring 2008

LA 337 -- 4:10-6:30 (Tuesdays)

Professor: Jeffrey Greene

Telephone: 243-6181 / Office: LA 356 / Office Hours: 3:30 - 4 p.m. T, Th

E-mail: [jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu](mailto:jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu)

*The Spring 2008 Semester begins on Tuesday, January 22 and ends Friday, May 9.  
PSc 503 meets for the first time on January 22.*

*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.*

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## TEXTS

***Public Policy: An Evolutionary Approach, 2/e***, by Lester and Stewart

***Issues for Debate in American Public Policy, 8/e***, by The CQ Researcher (Supplemental reader)

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

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public policy is one of the most exciting areas in political science and public administration. **PSc 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 Congressional Quarterly.

## 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 a class discussions. *The written, comprehensive exam that was used in the past, will not be used in this section of PSc 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 8-12 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 books; you can view these booklets at Public Agenda, [www.publicagenda.org](http://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.
- 7). Demonstrate the ability to present a complex public policy problem in a presentation format to a group.

It should be stressed that **PSc 503** contains many other secondary objectives. For example, oral communication skills and critical thinking skills are not primary objectives in **PSc 503** but are deeply embodied in the course. Additional and more specific learning objectives can be viewed at [PSc 503 Learning Objectives](#).

## **REQUIREMENTS: POLICY PAPER, ARTICLE SUMMARIES, and ORAL PRESENTATION OF A PUBLIC POLICY ISSUE**

### **Exam**

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

### **Article Critique Guidelines**

The McCool text contains a variety of articles that will be assigned to students on the first day of class. Part of designated classes will be used for brief oral summaries of the assigned articles. The articles will be assigned to "individual students" and a written summary should be prepared to hand out to the class. The critiques constitute 20 percent of one's final grade. *All students are expected to read all of the*

*assigned articles for each class but only have to prepare a written critique for their pre-assigned article.*

Each student is responsible to have thoroughly read the article, be prepared to present an overview of the article, and be prepared to respond to questions from the instructor and the class. The total time of the presentation should be no longer than 5 minutes. 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?
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?)

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

### **Policy Presentations**

Each student will present a 30 minute presentation on a public policy issue. Students will select the policy, which must be approved to avoid replication by other students, and to ensure the policy areas is not too broad. This presentation is similar to what is used in PSc 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), a overview of the potential remedies to resolve the problem -- the pros and cons of the remedies. Students are encouraged to use PowerPoint or other presentation software.

Students may use the same policy that they plan to use for the take home exam. 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 new prescription drug plan associated with Medicare or "providing prescription drugs for senior citizens," and examine the various proposals.

The last few sessions of the class will be used for presentations.

### **Grade Weights**

Policy Paper..... 40% Due April 29 (Tuesday)

Policy Presentation.....40% Due when scheduled during the final weeks of class

Article Critiques.....20% Due when presented in class

**Attendance and Participation:** Students are encouraged to attend and participate in class discussions. Poor attendance and poor quality or lack of participating in class discussions may affect one's final grade. Students are expected to miss no more than two classes during the semester.

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The University requires that this statement be placed on all syllabuses.

*All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.*

*All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>*

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## COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS

*\* Note: we will move quickly through the first nine chapters of the Lester and Stewart textbook*

### PART I THE BASICS OF PUBLIC POLICY

#### **Session 1: Introduction / No readings assigned (January 22)**

This is the introductory class and will cover some introduction to the various approaches and methods for conducting public policy.

#### **Session 2 Introduction, Background, and Context: What is Public Policy? What is Policy Analysis? (January 29)**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Session 3 Approaches and Models (February 5)**

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 4 Analysis in the Policy Process: Agenda Setting and Policy Formulation (February 12)**

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 5 Implementation, Evaluation, and Policy Change (February 19)**

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>*

### Session 6: Education Policy (February 26)

Education Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 10) and Education (Chapters 1 and 2 in the CQ Reader)

#1 "No Child Left Behind" \_\_\_\_\_

#2 "Fixing Urban Schools" \_\_\_\_\_

Public Agenda's summary of education policy

### Session 7 Welfare Policy (March 8)

Lester and Stewart, Chapter 11

Public Agenda's summary of welfare policy:

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 8: Health Care Policy (March 4)

No readings in Lester & Stewart

(Chapters 3 and 4 in the CQ Reader)

#3 "Universal Health Coverage" \_\_\_\_\_

#4 "Rising Health Care Costs" \_\_\_\_\_

# 5 "Stem Cell Research" \_\_\_\_\_

Public Agenda's summary of health care policy

### Session 8: Crime Policy (March 11)

Lester & Stewart, Chapter 12, Chapter #6 (Gun Violence) and Chapters 10 and 11 in the CQ Reader

#6 "Gun Violence" \_\_\_\_\_

#10 "Privacy in Peril" \_\_\_\_\_

#11 "Death Penalty Controversies" \_\_\_\_\_

Public Agenda's summary of crime policy

**Session 9: Environmental Policy** (March 18)

Lester & Stewart, Chapter 13 and Environment, Chapters 7, 8 and 9 in the CQ Reader

#7 "The New Environmentalism" \_\_\_\_\_

#8 "Energy Efficiency" \_\_\_\_\_

#9 "National Parks Under Pressure" \_\_\_\_\_

Public Agenda's summary of environmental policy

**Session 10: Spring Break March 24-March 28 No Class**

**Session 11: Business and the Economy** (April 1)

Business and the Economy in the CQ Reader, Chapters 12, 13, and 15

#12 "Consumer Debt" \_\_\_\_\_

#13 "Controlling the Internet" \_\_\_\_\_

#15 "Illegal Immigration" \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Article (McCool)

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

Public Agenda's summary of economic policy

**Session 12: Presentations** (April 8)

**Session 13: Presentations** (April 15)

**Session 14: Presentations** (April 22)

**Session 15: Presentations** (April 29) *Policy papers are due; these are written version of your presentation policies. See the link to "take home exam" below for suggestions on formatting your papers. These should not be copies of your presentations.*

**Session 16: Presentations** (Class will be used for presentations if needed, May 6) *Policy papers will be returned*

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Study Guide and PSc 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.)

The **final exam** was a "take home" exam in past. There is not an exam used this year but it can be downloaded or viewed at [Take Home Exam](#). (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 this document useful in preparing your policy papers.

Visit **Governing.com**, which is filled with news and policy matters pertaining to state and local government at [www.governing.com](http://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 will likely appear in the next Stillman text used in PSc 501, but it is applicable to PSc 503.* This article, from **City Journal**, is an interesting account of New Orleans. It is called "Who is killing New Orleans," by Nicole Gelinias. [Click here](#) for an 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](http://www.city-journal.org/html/15_4_new_orleans.html)

The link to the *Governing* article about Hurricane Katrina and federalism, "The Katrina Breakdown: Coordination and communication problems between levels of government must be addressed before the next disaster strikes," by JONATHAN WALTERS & DONALD KETTL (*Governing*, December 2005) is <http://www.governing.com/archive/2005/dec/disaster.txt>

***PSc 503 / Spring 2008 Syllabus for the campus class***

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