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PSC 503.50: Policy Analysis

Jeffrey D. Greene

University of Montana, jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu

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PSc 503 Policy Analysis

MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Online Version

Semester: Spring 2005 / Professor: Jeffrey Greene / Telephone: 243-6181

Office: LA 356 / Office Hours: 3:30 to 4 p.m. Tue/Thu / E-mail:
jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu

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 PSc 503 begins on Wednesday, January 26 and ends April 13
*All work will be returned on April 13***

[Click Here](#) to login into Blackboard

TEXTS

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

Issues for Debate in American Public Policy, 5/e, by The CQ Researcher (Supplemental Reader)

Note that many of the issues are not assigned in this book. The 5/e of the book has changed considerably since the 4/e and many of the subjects are less relevant to the main policies that we will discuss.

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

Money and Politics: Who Owns Democracy? by the National Issues Forums Institute

Examining Health Care: What's the Public's Prescription? by the National Issues Forums Institute

(You only need to buy one of these booklets; they are inexpensive, 30-page booklets that frame and address policy issues. These booklets can be used to help you with the final, take home exam).

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 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 PSc 503 is a 12-week session (there will not be any new work assigned over spring break, although it is listed as Session 10. This provides students with two weeks to complete the take home exam).*

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 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 8-10 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. This is the take home exam.

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 [PSc 503 Learning Objectives](#).

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

Exam

The exam will be a "take home" and students are expected to return the exam by the next class. The exam will include defining terms and concepts, essays that require the integration of concepts and the use of critical thinking skills, and analyzing a public policy such as, *Money and Politics: Who Owns Democracy?* or *Healthcare Policy*. These are the small National Issue Forums Institute booklets on these policies. If you like, you can order any policy of interest from the NIFI at www.nifi.org You can pick any policy area of interest to you personally for this exam; you are not limited to the National Issues Forums Institutes' booklets. Students will have two weeks to complete the exam due to spring break.

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 must write five (5) article critiques for this class taken from the McCool text.*

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?)

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

Grade Weights

Exam 50% Due April 6 (Wednesday)

| | | |
|-------------------|-----|--|
| Article Critiques | 20% | Due by April 6 (Wednesday) <i>All students must write five (5) article critiques of their choice</i> |
| Discussion Board | 30% | Due on Wednesday night 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 26; due February 2))

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 _____

Session 2 Approaches and Models (February 2; due February 9)

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 9; due February 16)

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 16; due February 23)

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).

Session 5: Education Policy Lester & Stewart, Chapter 10 (February 23; due March 2)

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

Session 6 Welfare Policy and Health Care Policy (Lester and Stewart, Chapter 11) and Health Care (Chapters 3 and 4 in the CQ Reader). No readings are assigned in the CQ Reader for Welfare Policy this week. (March 2; due March 9) *Please note that there are TWO policy areas to be covered this week. This is the only week where there will be two, distinct areas covered.*

Assigned Article:

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: Crime Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 12) and Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and Justice (Chapter 11 in the CQ Reader) (March 9; due March 16)

Session 8: Environmental Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 13) and Environment (Chapters 9 and 10 in the CQ Reader) (March 16; due March 23)

Session 9: Business and the Economy and Take Home Exam is Assigned (Chapters 13 and 14 in the CQ Reader) (March 23; due April 6) Note that there are two weeks before this material is due. **Spring Break** is this week (March 20 - 25) at the University of Montana. *Please note that the Take Home Exam is in Rich Text Format, which can be opened with Word or WordPerfect.*

Spring Break March 20-March 25

Assigned Article (McCool)

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

Please note that you have two (2) weeks to complete the take home exam. It is not due until April 6

Session 10: No new work assigned. This provides two weeks for the take home exam and to complete the Discussion Board for Business and the Economy (due April 6)

Session 11: All work is due / Discussion Board, Business and the Economy is due this week (April 6)

Session 12: All work will be returned (April 13)

Please complete the course evaluation and return the evaluations to Mrs. Edwards by April 13. Refer to the Announcements on Blackboard for the link to the evaluation.

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** is a "take home" exam. It can be downloaded or viewed at [Take Home Exam](#). (This file is in Rich Text format) The final exam involves writing a **policy summary paper**.

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.

PSc 503 / Spring 2005 Online Syllabus / Syllabus posted October 18, 2004 / Modified January 3, 2005

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