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PSC 503.01: Policy Analysis

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PSc 503 Public Policy Analysis

Masters of Public Administration Program / Spring 2003

LA 344 -- 4:10-6:30 (Tuesdays)

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The Spring 2003 Semester begins on Monday, January 27.

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, 2nd Edition, by Lester and Stewart

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

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

Cities and Privatization, by Greene (Supplemental Book)

Money and Politics: Who Owns Democracy, by the Kettering Foundation (Single Issue Handout)

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 8-10 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.

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 book and is illustrated in the *Cities and Privatization* book.

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
- 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.

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: 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?* Students will have one week to complete the exam. Exams that are not returned by the next class will be lowered one letter grade.

Policy Summary Paper

The policy summary paper is intended to enhance students' ability to write concise reports and demonstrate a competent understanding of a specific policy area. Students may select any policy area. Simply stated, a policy summary is a concise overview of a real public policy area that could be used as a chapter or section in a report, or as a freestanding report that one might construct for a public agency. The Lester and Stewart text provides four excellent examples (the chapters on education, crime, welfare, and environmental policy) that can serve as models for your paper. In short, after reading a policy summary, the reader should have an understanding of the specific policy area. Policy summaries should provide an overview of the policy area, include a brief overview of the history and evolution of the policy, the pertinent issues and debates associated with the policy area, and provide alternative solutions currently being considered to solve problems associated with the policy.

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.

Grade Weights

Exam. 40% April 29 (Tuesday)

Paper 40% Papers due May 6 (Tuesday)

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

ATTENDANCE: Students are encouraged to attend class. Poor attendance may affect one's final grade.

COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS

PART I THE BASICS OF PUBLIC POLICY

1 Introduction No Readings (January 28)

What is Public Policy? What is Policy Analysis?

2,3 Background and Context (February 4, 11)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 1,2

McCool, Sections 1,2 (*Article Critiques are due February 11*)

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 _____

4,5 Approaches and Models (February 18, February 25)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 3,4

Assigned Articles (McCool) (*Article Critiques are due February 25*)

"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 _____

6,7 Analysis in the Policy Process: Agenda Setting, Policy Formation, Implementation, and Evaluation (March 4, 11)

Lester & Stewart, Chapters 5,6,7,8,9

Assigned Articles (McCool) (*Article Critiques are due March 11*)

"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 _____

Cities and the Privatization Debate (Chapter 1 from *Cities and Privatization*) _____

PART 2 ANALYZING POLICY CHOICES AND POLICY ISSUES

8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 Analyzing Public Policy Choices (March 18, April 1, 8, 15, 22) See below for the Weeks 9-13

This section will examine a variety of policies, including Education Policy, Welfare Policy, Crime Policy, and Environmental Policy from the Lester & Stewart text. Also, articles are included from the CQ Reader. We will proceed at one major policy area per class until the end of the semester.

Week 8: Education Policy Lester & Stewart, Chapter 10 (Week 9)

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

Week 9 Spring Break March 24-28

Week 10: Welfare Policy and Health Care Policy (Lester and Stewart, Chapter 11) and Social Policy (Chapters 6,7, and 8 in the CQ Reader); and Health Care (Chapters 3, 4 and 5 in the CQ Reader).

Week 11: Crime Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 12) and Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and Justice (Chapters 11 and 12 in the CQ Reader)

Week 12: Environmental Policy (Lester & Stewart, Chapter 13) and Environment (Chapters 9 and 10 in the CQ Reader)

Week 13: Business and the Economy (*As an option, the class may opt to analyze Business and the*

Economy during this class (Chapters 13 and 14 in the CQ Reader). This will be dependent on time; often one of the sessions ends up being omitted.

Assigned Articles (McCool) (*Article Critiques are due in Week 13 [April 22] and will not be presented orally in class; just turn the critiques in as usual with copies for all members of the class.*)

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

"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 _____

14 Exam Assigned (April 29)

15 Exam Due and Informal Paper Presentations about Policy Summary Papers (May 6)

Policy Summary papers are due Tuesday, May 13 (Exam Week)

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 Adobe Acrobat format*) The exam will be handed out in class near the end of the semester.

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.

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PSc 503 / Spring 2003 Syllabus / The syllabus may be updated again before the beginning of the semester