This course will examine what we know about how to design and implement effective public policies. The course will focus primarily on design questions around (1) when and why particular policy tools are more or less effective and (2) what tools are available for improving the implementation and management of policies and programs. As the result of taking the course, students should (1) know the principal tools available for pursuing public policies, (3) understand better how to implement policies effectively, and (4) be better able to develop and analyze public policies.

**Required Readings:**

The required readings are of two kinds. First, there are three required books:


The Salamon book is a lengthy edited reader comprised of profiles of a various policy tools and issues in the implementation and administration of public policies. With each chapter authored by a well-known expert, the compilation represents an extraordinarily high quality, if somewhat dated, collection. *Nudge* presents the new “choice architecture” policy approach from two prominent scholars who have had the ear of President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron. *Citizen, Customer, Partner* is my own recent book, which I believe (immodestly) offers valuable perspectives that are not found in any one place elsewhere.
Second, there are extensive scholarly journal readings that represent some of the best recent research in this area. Most of these readings are available online through university libraries; a few will be available on the course Website.

With the class including both master’s and doctoral students, the reading assignments are somewhat heavier for the latter, with an asterisk (*) indicating a reading required only of doctoral students. The additional “optional” readings are relevant only for doctoral students if and when they take a field comprehensive examination that includes this course.

Class Format

Class sessions will combine lectures by the instructor, seminar discussions, and student presentations. Our small numbers should permit extensive discussion, but will require that everyone participate.

Student Responsibilities:

Expectations of students include the following:

Seminar participation. Each student should read all of the week’s assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss. Being prepared includes having given thought to the readings’ arguments and/or findings, including whether you agree or disagree with the author’s conclusions—and why. To catalyze discussion, each student should come to class with at least two questions about every assigned reading. The questions may concern interpretation of the reading, possible implications, or any issue the reading might raise.

Term paper on a policy-related topic. As the course term paper, each student will prepare a term paper on a course-related topic. The paper should include: (1) an initial statement of the policy issue of interest, (2) a survey of relevant scholarly literature on the issue, and (3) a concluding summary of what we know and do not know about the issue. A preliminary 1-2 page topic proposal is due Wednesday, February 4. A more detailed, 3-6 page draft is due by class time Wednesday, March 4, and the final paper of either 7-10 pages (master’s students) or 12-20 pages (doctoral students) is due Wednesday, April 22. All papers should be submitted via e-mail to the instructor as Word documents. Only the grade on the final paper will count toward the course grade.

Research presentations. Each student will make two brief in-class oral presentations on their research proposals on (1) March 4 and (2) April 22. The first of those presentations will be no longer than 5 minutes, the second no longer than 15 minutes. In making the latter presentations, students should assume their peers remember the gist of their initial presentations.

Two online examinations. There will be both mid-term and final examinations, both online and open book, taken wherever the student chooses. The mid-term, which is scheduled for the regular class session time, Wednesday, Feb. 25, will consist of two essay questions (from a
The final, which is scheduled for a 4-5 hour period on the regular exam day, **Wednesday, April 29**, will consist of three essay questions (from a choice of four or five). Students will receive the exam questions on the course site on Brightspace. A study guide of all possible questions will be provided probably a week in advance of both exams.

These several activities will carry the following weights in the final grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar participation, including questions on readings</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper &amp; presentations</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Schedule of Topics and Readings:**

1. **Introduction: the tools approach to public policy (Jan. 14)**


   John C. Thomas, Chs. 1 & 2 in *Citizen, Customer, Partner*.


   **Optional:**


2. **Direct government, government corporations, and tax expenditures (Jan. 21)**


Optional:


3. Grants, loans, and vouchers (Jan. 28)


Optional:


4. Contracting and privatization (Feb. 4)

Steven J. Kelman. “Contracting,” Ch. 9 (pp. 282-290 & 305-318) in The Tools of Government.


Optional:

5. Regulatory tools, old and new (Feb. 11)


Peter J. May. “Social regulation,” Ch. 5 (pp. 156-159 & 161-164) in *The Tools of Government*.


Joseph J. Cordes. “Corrective taxes, charges, and tradable permits,” Ch. 8 (pp. 255-263 & 268-273) in *The Tools of Government*.


*Optional:*


6. Information, transparency, & choice architecture (Feb. 18)

*Nudge*, pp. 1-103 (with a chapter-by-chapter division of responsibilities for pp. 103-253).

**Online mid-term examination, Feb. 25**

7. Information, transparency, choice architecture, & coproduction (March 4)

Janet A. Weiss. “Public information,” Ch. 7 (pp. 217-219 & 221-236) in *The Tools of Government*.


John C. Thomas. Chs. 5 & 6 in *Citizen, Customer, Partner*.

*Optional:*


8. The mix of policy tools (March 11)


(Master’s students should read any two of the articles above.)

Optional:


*No class, March 18 (spring break)*

9. Managerial challenges in implementing indirect government (March 25)


Optional:


10. Tools for working with the public as customers (April 1)

John C. Thomas, Chs. 3 & 4 in Citizen, Customer, Partner.


Optional:


11. Democratic tools for policy design & implementation (April 8)


John C. Thomas, Chs. 7-8 in Citizen, Customer, Partner.
*Chapter 9 in *Citizen, Customer, Partner.*


*Optional:*


12. Administrative reform & policy implementation (April 15)


*Optional:*


13. Conclusions: Policy tools, policy design, & contemporary governance (April 22)


John C. Thomas. Ch. 10 in *Citizen, Customer, Partner.*


*Optional:*


Online final examination, Wednesday, April 29

Caution: Plagiarism on a paper—that is, using another person’s writing, word for word, while leaving the impression that the choice of words is your own—is grounds for a failing grade on the work in question and for the course overall.