The goal of this course is to provide an introduction to the study of public policy within a political context. We will consider the roles of different actors in public policy-making as well as consider several different policy issues. For some of this class, we will study policy within the framework of the policy process model. Thus, we will view the development of policy as occurring in several distinct stages: agenda setting, policy formulation, legitimation, implementation, and evaluation. However as the course progresses, we will also consider the limitations of this process model and the merits of several alternatives.

You should leave this course with an increased understanding of the policy process, who the major players are, and some of the key factors that influence the making of public policy. We will pay particularly close attention to the use of information and decision-making within policy contexts. In addition, this course should increase your skill in summarizing and evaluating arguments made by scholars writing across a few different policy issues.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand different ways of categorizing policies.
2. To understand how different actors are likely to influence policies.
3. To understand different ways that decisions may occur in policy contexts.
4. To understand different models of policy-making.

Course Requirements:

Exams
There will be 2 exams: midterm (30%) and final (30%). Both exams will be geared to test your understanding of the key points made by the various readings. The first exam will be held in class. The second exam will be a take home exam and will ask you to write several longer essays.

Papers
There will be a short paper assignment. You will have 3 weeks to complete this assignment, and the paper should be about 3-5 pages long. (15%)
Debate
Each student will be assigned to a small group of 3-4 students. The groups will participate in a
debate, as indicated on the course schedule (we will have approx. 5 debates). In each debate, one
group will argue in favor of a given viewpoint and the second will argue against that
viewpoint/in favor of a different perspective. These topics will be closely connected to the course
readings. Each group will provide a 3-5 page paper (double-spaced) summarizing their argument.
The paper should draw on readings from the course and can draw on outside readings and
examples as well. Each side will give a presentation that can last up to 12 minutes. All the
members of a group will receive the same grade. I ask that all group members do not “shirk” and
rely on others in the group to complete their tasks in this project. (15%)

In-class Participation
You will be expected to have read the assigned readings before coming to class and to be
prepared to participate in class discussions. I may call on you and ask you to respond to specific
questions or provide a quiz at the beginning of class. (10%)

Texts:

Required:


Westview Press.


How to obtain additional * readings will be discussed in class.

Grade Calculation

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Grade Overall numeric score
A+ 97.00-100.00
A  94.00 – 96.99
A- 90.00 – 93.99
B+ 87.00 – 89.99
B  83.00 – 86.99
B- 80.00 – 82.99
C+ 77.00 – 79.99
C  73.00 – 76.99
C- 70.00 – 72.99
D  60.00 – 69.99
F  <60.00
Please Note:

- All instructors must, on a date after the mid-point of the course (to be set by the Provost),
  1. Give a WF to all those students who are on their rolls, but no longer taking the class and
  2. Report the last day the student attended or turned in an assignment
- Any cases of plagiarism will be handled according to university guidelines as outlined in the student handbook.
- If you have any condition, such as a physical or mental disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined above or which will require extra time on examination, please notify me in the first two weeks of the course so that we can make appropriate arrangements.
- The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.
- Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State University. Upon completing the course, please take the time to fill out the online course evaluation.
- Do not use your cell phone during class. Please do not use it to text; this will distract other students.

Please also note the following definition of plagiarism, from the student handbook:

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or part, taken from the internet without properly referencing the corresponding URL may be considered plagiarism. An author's name and the title of the original work, if available, should also be included as part of the reference. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.
Course Schedule – Tentative
Changes in Course Readings May Be Announced

1. Aug. 22  **Introductions**

2. Aug. 29  **What is Public Policy?**  
**Policy Typologies**  
Birkland (2016): Chapt. 1 (pp. 1-19), 2, 7  

3. Sept. 5  **Informal and Formal Actors**  
**Scope of Participation in Policy-making**  
Birkland (2016): Chapt. 4, 5  
*TC: Dahl, Robert. “With the Consent of All.”  
**Debate #1**

4. Sept. 12  **Information and Decision-Making**  
Birkland (2016): Chapt. 8 (285-293)  
**Debate #2**

5. Sept. 19  **Agenda Setting and Policy Problems**  
Birkland (2016): Chapt. 6  
*Kingdon, J. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Chapter 5 and 9  
6. Sept. 26 Models of Policy Innovation and Change I
State Level Policy-making
S and W (2018): Berry and Berry Chapt. 7 (253-275)

7. Oct. 3 Midterm Exam

8. Oct. 10 Models of Policy Innovation and Change II
Punctuated Equilibrium
*Advocacy Coalition
Debate #3

Looking at Policy Design, Policy Tools, and Policy Feedbacks
*S and W (2014): Ingram, Schneider, and DeLeon: Democratic Policy Design

Introduction to Collective Action and Public Policy
Debate #4
11. Oct. 31  
**Collective Action and Public Policy (Class will not meet – use online materials)**

12. Nov. 7  
**Summary of Collective Action and Public Policy**

**Institutions and Public Policy**


*Short Paper Assignment Due*

13. Nov. 14  
**Policy Implementation and Policy Analysis**

Birkland (2016): Chapt. 8 (274-285)

*Additional Readings May Be Announced*

**Debate #5**

NOVEMBER 22 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASSES THIS WEEK

14. Nov. 28  
**Wrap-Up**

*Schlager: A Comparison of Theories*

**Final Exam Handed Out on Nov. 28th -- Due on Dec. 5th by 9:45pm**