

POLS 270 –Public Policy and Administration

Instructor: Barbara Gomez-Aguinaga, M.A.
Fall 2018 –University of New Mexico

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Office: Social Science Building #2066
Office Hours: Thursday 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm, and by appointment
Class Time: TR 2:00 pm – 3:15 pm
Class Location: Dane Smith Hall (DSH) 120

I. Course overview

This course provides an introduction to the process of public policymaking and the issues (including the politics) surrounding policies and policy debates in the United States. We will first study the policy system, the roles of institutions and key policy makers, and different ways to analyze public policy and the policymaking process. Then, the course elaborates on selected policy areas that are relevant in the current political environment such as firearm, immigration and health policies. The course ends with a series of remedial policies and practices that have been incorporated to alleviate policy inequalities.

This course has assignments and activities designed with the intention of helping you understand the basics of US public policy, develop as a writer in the social sciences, be able to communicate in public and think critically about policies and the political world around you.

II. Required Text & Course Website

Public Policy: A Concise Introduction by Sara R. Rinfret, Denise L. Scheberle, and Michelle C. Pautz (2018).

I will use Learn to share announcements and additional course readings beyond the textbook.

III. Grading

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|--|
| Background/theory test | 25% | September 20th |
| Policy issues test | 25% | December 6th |
| Debate | 15% | Discussion of pros and cons of specific policies |
| Policy/debate paper | 20% | Due the date of debate |
| Class participation | 15% | Lecture attendance and discussion |

Grades will be assigned on the following scale:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|---|------|
| A+ | 97-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 67-69 | F | 0-59 |
| A | 93-97 | B | 83-86 | C | 73-76 | D | 63-66 | | |
| A- | 90-92 | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | D- | 60-62 | | |

Background/theory test: this will cover the first unit of the course, and it will be both multiple choice and short answer. This test accounts for 25 percent of your grade and will be conducted on Thursday, September 20th during class. If you anticipate a scheduling conflict, you are responsible for making prior arrangements with the instructor to facilitate a make-up exam. If you have an emergency and cannot provide advance notice, you must provide official documentation for the instructor to arrange a make-up.

Policy issues test: this test will cover material from all policy units, and it will be both multiple choice and short answer. It accounts for 25 percent of your grade and will be conducted on Thursday, December 6th during class. Same rules apply.

Debate: all students will participate in one debate on a topic relevant to the policy studied in class. Students will sign up for their preferred policy issue to debate, and they will be randomly assigned to discuss for and against points of a specific policy proposal given by the instructor. Debate participants should come prepared with data and talking points that support their arguments. The rest of the students will serve as an active audience, asking questions and providing their insights on the debate. Debates will last about 30 minutes.

Policy/debate paper: you will be responsible for writing a 7 to 10-page paper that expands on the policy proposal of the debate or on anything related to the policy issue (e.g. if immigration unit, you can write on whether the government should provide a path to legalization for unauthorized immigrants OR any immigration policy of your interest). Your paper should first provide a background of the policy issue, examine its implementation, provide an evaluation of the policy or program identifying problems, and propose a plausible change or solution to the policy problem. Guideless are included in a separate handout.

Class participation: participation at the A-level means attending all classes and coming prepared by having completed and thought critically about the readings for that day. You are expected to participate actively in the discussion and contribute towards a positive learning experience for the class.

IV. Academic Freedom

You are strongly encouraged to participate in this course in a constructive fashion. Any class that addresses politics, policy and program evaluation is bound show us that we all have different individual opinions and perspectives. You may find that at times you disagree with other student's positions or the position of the instructor. In this class you will be graded on the quality of your discussion, not on your point of view. I expect that we value each other's diversity and backgrounds, and discuss the content of the class in a welcoming and non-judgmental manner. Disrespectful acts and commentaries will not be tolerated

V. Academic Integrity

It is expected that students attending the University of New Mexico understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity, and are willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. **Any work submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism will subject a person to university disciplinary action.** Using or attempting to use materials, information, study aids, or commercial "research" services not authorized by the instructor is cheating. Representing the words, ideas, or concepts of another person without appropriate attribution is plagiarism.

VI. Special Accommodations

In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Contact Accessibility Resource Center at 277-3506 for additional information.

Class Overview

| Date | | | Unit | Topic/Activity |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|---|---|
| Tues. | Aug. | 21 | Introduction / The Study of Public Policy | Course Introduction |
| Thurs. | Aug. | 23 | | The basics: Public policy and politics |
| Tues. | Aug. | 28 | | The policy process and policy theories |
| Thurs. | Aug. | 30 | | Watch video on your own |
| Tues. | Sep. | 4 | | Cont. The policy process and policy theories |
| Thurs. | Sep. | 6 | | Federalism and intergovernmental relations |
| Tues. | Sep. | 11 | | Cont. Federalism & intergov. relations |
| Thurs. | Sep. | 13 | | Rulemaking and regulations |
| Tues. | Sep. | 18 | | Cont. Rulemaking and regulations |
| Thurs. | Sep. | 20 | | Review exam 1 |
| Tues. | Sep. | 25 | | Exam |
| Thurs. | Sep. | 27 | Firearm policy | Federal and state-level policies |
| Tues. | Oct. | 2 | | Mass shootings |
| Thurs. | Oct. | 4 | | Debate #1 |
| Tues. | Oct. | 9 | Health policy | Overview of health care policy |
| Thurs. | Oct. | 11 | | Fall break! |
| Tues. | Oct. | 16 | | Health care reform & ACA implementation |
| Thurs. | Oct. | 18 | | Watch x on your own |
| Tues. | Oct. | 23 | | Debate #2 |
| Thurs. | Oct. | 25 | Immigration policy | Introduction to immigration policy |
| Tues. | Oct. | 30 | | History and development of US immigration policy |
| Thurs. | Nov. | 1 | | Executive orders and state-level immigration policies |
| Tues. | Nov. | 6 | | Debate #3 |
| Thurs. | Nov. | 8 | Carceral state and urban policing | Watch video on your own |
| Tues. | Nov. | 13 | | Overview of Crime in the U.S. |
| Thurs. | Nov. | 15 | | Criminalization of homelessness |
| Thurs. | Nov. | 15 | | Debate #4 |
| Tues. | Nov. | 20 | Remedial practices and policies | Affirmative Action and Positive Discrimination |
| Thurs. | Nov. | 22 | | Thanksgiving break |
| Tues. | Nov. | 27 | | Reparations |
| Thurs. | Nov. | 29 | | Interest groups, social movements and advocacy state |
| Tues. | Dec. | 4 | | Debate #5 and review exam 2 |
| Thurs. | Dec. | 6 | Exam | Exam 2 |
| Tues. | Dec. | 11 | FINAL WEEK | |
| Thurs. | Dec. | 13 | FINAL WEEK | |

Detailed schedule

I. INTRODUCTION/THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

August 21 –Course introduction

August 23 – The basics: Public policy and politics
Textbook, Chapter 1

August 28 – The policy process and policy theories
Textbook, Chapter 2

August 30 –Watch on your own

September 4 – Continuation: The policy process and policy theories
Textbook, Chapter 2

September 6 – Federalism and intergovernmental relations
Textbook, Chapter 3

September 11 –Continuation: Federalism and intergovernmental relations
Textbook, Chapter 3

September 13 – Rulemaking and regulations
Textbook, Chapter 4

September 18 –Continuation: Rulemaking and regulations
Textbook, Chapter 4

September 20 –Review exam 1

September 25 –Exam 1

II. FIREARM POLICY

September 27 –Overview; Federal and state-level policies

- “Gun Control Around the World: A Primer” by J. Masters:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/01/worldwide-gun-control-policy/423711/>
- “Why states, not Congress, are passing more gun laws” by G. Frazee:
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/why-states-not-congress-are-passing-more-gun-laws>
- “Right to Carry Laws by state” by the National Rifle Association (NRA) Institute for Legislative Action: <https://www.nraila.org/gun-laws/>

October 2 –Mass shootings and Firearm-related policy outcomes

- “Untangling Gun-Related Fatalities, Firearm Policies and Inequality of Outcomes Across the U.S. States” by B. Gomez-Aguinaga. Available in learn.
- Textbook, pages 148-150

October 4 –Debate #1

III. HEALTH POLICY

October 9 – Overview of health care policy

- Textbook, pages 218-230

October 11 –Fall break!

October 16 –Healthcare reform & ACA Implementation

- “Why Health Reform Happened” by J. Hacker. Available in Learn
- “Nativity and citizenship status affect Latinos’ health insurance coverage under the ACA” by G. Sanchez, E. Vargas, M. Juarez, B. Gomez-Aguinaga and F. Pedraza. Available in Learn
- “Affordable Care Act: A Tale of Two States” by A. Goodnough and R. Abelson:
<https://nyti.ms/2pJYjcc>

October 18 –Watch on your own

October 23 –Debate #2

IV. IMMIGRATION POLICY

October 25 –History and development of US immigration policy

- Textbook, pages 187-201

October 30 –Lost in Detention

November 1 –Executive orders and state-level immigration policies

- “How U.S. immigration laws and rules have changed through history” by D. Cohn:
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history/>
- “Stepping into the Vacuum: State and Cities Act on Immigration, But Do Restrictions Work?” by B. Gomez-Aguinaga: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/stepping-vacuum-state-and-cities-act-immigration-do-restrictions-work>
- “DACA, explained” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzYDqQDNFzc>
- “Obama's executive action on immigration, explained in 2 minutes”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVq0APUjtwg>

November 6 –Debate #3

V. CARCERAL STATE AND URBAN POLICING

November 8 –Watch on your own

- “Mass Incarceration, Visualized” by The Atlantic: https://youtu.be/u51_pzax4M0
- “Fixing the System: VICE on HBO Special Report Ft. Barack Obama (Full Episode)” by Vice News: <https://youtu.be/QgJPYJ0Jn04>

November 13 –Overview of Crime in the U.S.

- Textbook 128-142

November 15 – Criminalization of homelessness

- “No Right to Rest: Police Enforcement Patterns and Quality of Life Consequences of the Criminalization of Homelessness” by T. Robinson. Available in learn
- “No Safe Place: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities” by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty:
https://www.nlchp.org/documents/No_Safe_Place
- November 15 –Debate #4

VII. REMEDIAL PRACTICES AND POLICIES

November 20 —Affirmative action and positive discrimination

- “Affirmative Action: Comparative Policies and Controversies” by R. Smith:
<http://clarkcunningham.org/PDF/EncyclopediaArticle.pdf>
- “ The Unspoken Limit on Affirmative Action” by D. Gift. Available in Learn

November 22 –Thanksgiving

November 27 –Reparations

- “Reparations Are Owed” by J. Bouie:
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2014/05/reparations_should_be_paid_to_black_americans_here_is_how_america_should.html
- “The Impossibility of Reparations” by D. Frum:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/the-impossibility-of-reparations/372041/>

November 29 –Interest groups, social movements and advocacy state

- “Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender” by D. Strolovitch. Available in learn
- “Movements, marginalization and representation” (introduction) by Weldon in “Gender and American Politics: When Protest Makes Policy: How Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups.” EBook available in UNM library
- “The advocacy state” (Chapter 6) by Weldon in “Gender and American Politics : When Protest Makes Policy: How Social Movements Represent Disadvantaged Groups.” EBook available in UNM library

December 4 –Debate #5 and review exam 2

December 6 –Exam 2

Debate topics

| Date | Issue | Debate topic |
|-------------|--------------------|---|
| October 2 | Firearm policy | Gun-control laws are necessary to reduce firearm violence and deaths |
| October 16 | Health policy | All individuals should be mandated to have health insurance |
| October 23 | Immigration policy | The government should provide a path to legalization for unauthorized immigrants with no criminal records |
| November 15 | Urban policing | Local police should arrest homeless individuals who engage in illegal behavior such as being intoxicated, trespassing and soliciting. |
| December 4 | Remedial practices | Is affirmative action a good approach against historical and systemic discrimination? |

Student signup

| Date/Topic | Your name | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Firearm policy 10/04</p> <p><i>Prompt: Gun-control laws are necessary to reduce firearm violence and deaths</i></p> | 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ | 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____ |
| <p>Health Policy 10/23</p> <p><i>All individuals should be mandated to have health insurance</i></p> | 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ | 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____ |
| <p>Immigration policy 11/06</p> <p><i>The government should provide a path to legalization for unauthorized immigrants with no criminal records</i></p> | 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ | 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____ |
| <p>Urban policing 11/15</p> <p><i>Local police should arrest homeless individuals who engage in illegal behavior (e.g. being intoxicated, trespassing and soliciting)</i></p> | 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ | 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____ |
| <p>Remedial Practices 12/04</p> <p><i>Is affirmative action a good approach against historical and systemic discrimination?</i></p> | 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ | 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____ |