

**DOMESTIC PUBLIC POLICY
POLITICAL SCIENCE 3255
MWF 1:00-1:50PM**

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OFFICE HOURS: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 2-4pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will focus on American policy-making process and major issues in several public policy areas. The question for political scientists is: how do we describe and make sense of the way in which social problems get defined and redefined over time in legislation? Moreover, how do we understand how specific social and economic conditions capture the attention of our policymakers (while others do not) and how public policy “solutions” about these conditions are crafted, negotiated, and enacted? This course addresses these questions by examining eight analytic frameworks used by political scientists to help describe and explain government policies: (1) institutional structure; (2) game theory; (3) public choice; (4) rational; (5) incremental; (6) interest group; (7) elite actor; and (8) process. These models are not mutually exclusive but, singly and in combination, help to highlight different aspects of the policymaking process.

To demonstrate the potential explanatory power of these models, we will apply each model to a specific public policy area. We will use demographic, ethnographic, survey, and institutional data to explore these explanatory models. We will also use these specific policy areas to get some perspective about why certain aspects of these policy areas have become politically visible while others have not. Students can expect to emerge from this course with important substantive knowledge about several specific policy areas, the structure and workings of many American political institutions, and the policymaking process more generally. At the same time, students will gain a critical appreciation of how a triangulation of various political science approaches can help us to think clearly about societal problems and alternative possible responses to them.

Students are required to come prepared to class. Missing more than one class without instructor’s approval will result in grade reduction.

REQUIRED READINGS AND COURSE INFORMATION:

The following texts are required for the course and can be found in the UNC Charlotte Bookstore.

Dye, Thomas. 2008. 12th Edition. **Understanding Public Policy.** Upper Saddle River, NJ; Prentice Hall.

In addition to this textbook, a WebCT account will be established for each student. Students will find the course syllabus, supplemental readings, additional class assignments, and grades.

Continuity of Instruction

In the event that face-to-face classes are suspended due to a pandemic or other catastrophe I will strive to continue instruction to those that are able to participate. If and when face-to-face classes are suspended, you will receive an email from me and a Blackboard Announcement that detail how we will communicate, where you can locate course information and what you can expect during this time period. I realize that some of you may be affected by the event and not able to participate, however I will continue to provide instruction to those that are able to continue.

Disability Statement: East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 ((252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY)).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of this course is a thorough introduction to policy-making processes in the American system of government. The comparative perspective will be introduced where necessary. After the completion of this course students should be able to

- apply policy frameworks to any selected policy analysis area;
- identify major policy players for a selected policy;
- follow a policy issue from its formulation or appearance on the agenda until evaluation or “sunset”;
- identify and emphasize the role of politics in formulating different public policies;
- recognize public policy consequences, intended and unintended;
- describe implementation process and how it can change the initially formulated policy;
- acknowledge the opportunity costs of policy action and non-action;

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Student performance will be primarily evaluated based on several activities:

- **QUIZZES (100 points EACH)** – There will be two quizzes given during the semester. The quizzes are not cumulative, and will combine fill-in-the blank, multiple choice, and essay type questions.
- **FINAL EXAMINATION (200 points)** – There will be a final exam given in this course that will draw from the lectures, readings, videos, and class discussions. The final is cumulative.

You have the option to take the in-class final examination or to submit a 10-page policy brief paper. If you choose the writing assignment, then the completed paper is due on the final exam date. No extensions will be granted for any reason. If you have not completed the paper by the deadline, then you must take the in-class final exam.

- **POLICY BRIEF OPTION (200 pts.)** – If you feel that tests do not adequately reflect your learning abilities, you have an option to research and write a policy brief on a particular policy/piece of legislation that has recently been enacted (within the last 5 years) in any policy area. However, you must notify the professor that you have selected the research option. Email your policy brief topics by the end of January. (For example, a student writing about criminal justice issues might choose to write a brief on the federal Three Strikes Law.) The policy brief should include: (1) a brief description of the policy, (2) the rationale for its enactment, (3) the coalition formed for and against the policy, (4) the tenor of the debates on the policy, (5) a short statement about which of the policy models seems to best explain the enactment of the policy, and (6) an update about what has happened since the policy was enacted. The policy brief should be no longer than 10 double-spaced pages. Two copies of the policy brief are required: 1 paper copy and an electronic copy. The policy briefs are due on the day of final exam. If a policy brief is not submitted, then you must take the exam. Otherwise, you lose 200 points. If you fail to notify the professor about your policy brief topic by the end of January, your paper will be penalized by 10 points.
- **CLASS PARTICIPATION (100 points)** – Students are expected to participate fully in the class, come on time, and read assignments. There will be some class participation assignments given throughout the class, check the Blackboard regularly for assignments.

GRADING SCALE

There are 500 points possible for the course. The following grading scale will be used to calculate final grades.

A	440-500 points
B	380-439 points
C	320-379 points
D	260-319 points
F	259 points or less

COURSE POLICIES

Class Format: Significant student participation will be required and expected.

Exams: A make-up exam will be allowed **only** under exceptional circumstances (such as a documented medical emergency) and with prior consent of the instructor.

LATE OR MISSED ASSIGNMENTS: No late assignments will be accepted, and in-class activities cannot be made up without prior notification and verification of the reason preventing completion of work. If you are unable to attend class when an assignment is due, hand it in early, mail it, have it mailed for you or email it.

CLASS PROTOCOL: Arriving to class late, leaving class early, and carrying on private conversations with neighbors or on cell-phones during class are not acceptable.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Acts of cheating, plagiarism, falsification or attempts to cheat, plagiarize or falsify in the class will not be tolerated. If the instructor becomes aware of a potential academic integrity violation, the procedures outlined in the Student Code of Conduct will be used http://www.ecu.edu/cs-studentlife/policyhub/academic_integrity.cfm. If it has been determined that an academic integrity violation has taken place, the instructor reserves the right to assign a grade penalty up to and including an F for the course. If a student has a prior academic integrity violation, or if there are other aggravating circumstances, this case will be referred directly to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for an Academic Integrity Board hearing. The Academic Integrity Board may assign a grade penalty and/or any other sanction allowed under the Student Code of Conduct, up to and including expulsion from the University system.

COURSE OUTLINE

All dates and topics are tentative and may be amended during the course of the semester as deemed appropriate by the professor. Students are responsible for knowing about these changes as they will be posted on the Blackboard and announced in class.

WEEK	CLASS SESSIONS
Week 1) Jan. 8 th	Introduction to Public Policy
Week 2) Jan. 11-13-15	Dye, Chapter 1 - What is Public Policy and Policy Analysis Dye, Chapter 12 - American Federalism: Institutional Arrangements and Public Policy
Week 3) Jan. 18-20-22	Monday no classes Dye, Chapter 2 - Models of the Policy Process Additional Reading: Sabatier, Paul. 1991. "Toward Better Theories of the Policy Process" Political Science and Politics, Vol. 24, No. 2. pp. 147-156
Week 4) Jan. 25-27-29	Dye, Chapter 3 - The Policymaking Process: Decision-Making Activities and Review of Paper and Exam Guidelines
Week 5) Feb. 1-3-5	Dye, Chapter 14 - Policy Evaluation: Finding out what happens after a law is passed Additional Readings available on Blackboard!
Week 6) Feb. 8-10-12	Dye, Chapter 8 - Tax Policy: Battling Special Interests Additional Reading: Bartels, Larry, 2002, "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind" http://www.princeton.edu/~csdp/research/pdfs/homer.pdf
Week 7) Feb. 15-17-19	Dye, Chapter 7 - Economic policy: Incrementalism at Work Additional Readings available on Blackboard!
Week 8) Feb. 22-24-26	Biomedical and Biotechnology Policy Readings available on Blackboard! Quiz 1 Dye, Chapter 5 - Health and Welfare: The Search for Rational Strategies
Week 9) March 1-3-5	Dye, Chapter 6 - Education: The Group Struggle Additional Readings available on Blackboard!
Week 10) March 8-10-12	Spring Break! No classes
Week 11) March 15-17-19	Dye, Chapter 4 - Criminal Justice: Rationality and Irrationality in Public Policy Additional Readings available on Blackboard!
Week 12) March 22-24-26	Dye, Chapter 9 - International Trade and Immigration : Elite-Mass Conflict Additional Readings available on Blackboard!
Week 13) Apr. 5-7-9	Dye, Chapter 11 - Civil Rights Policy: Elite and Mass Interaction Additional Readings available on Blackboard!
Week 14) Apr. 12-14-16	Dye, Chapter 10 – Environmental Policy: Externalities and Interests Quiz 2
Week 15) Apr. 19-21-23	Dye, Chapters 13 and 14 - Defense Policy Additional Readings available on Blackboard!
Week 16) Apr. 26-28-30	***FINAL EXAM REVIEW***
MAY 3 rd	***11:00 am – 1:30 pm Final Exam***