Introduction to Public Policy

POSC 315-02 – Spring 2025

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:30 in Humanities 426

January 18 – May 15, 2025

Professor: David P. Adams, Ph.D.

Contact Information:

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- Office Hours:

    - Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.; Tuesdays: 5:30pm – 6:30 p.m.
    - Schedule meetings throughout the week: dadams.io/appointments

1. Catalog Description

Federal domestic policymaking. Structure, functions, and relationships among American national institutions, including executive, legislative and judicial branches, media, political parties, and pressure groups.

2. Course Description

In this course, students will explore and engage in thoughtful discussions on the processes and key players in creating public policy in the United States. The curriculum focuses on the structure, functions, and relationships among American national institutions, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, the media, political parties, and interest groups. We will examine the various official and unofficial influences on the policy process and the limitations imposed by institutional and structural factors.

This course delves into the historical and constitutional development of the policy process, as well as the distinct characteristics of public policy within a federal system. By

understanding policy-making in the context of a constitutional republic and a federalized governance system, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities and uncertainties surrounding agenda setting, policy making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation in the American political system.

3.   Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to

1. discuss and explain the key features of the public policy-making process in the United States;

2. recognize and describe the distinct stages of the public policy process;

3. describe the various internal and external actors that influence public policy, their interactions, and their impact on the policy process;

4. articulate the historical and contemporary structures and institutions that facilitate, expand, or constrain the public policy process;

5. differentiate and describe the various theories that attempt to explain the drivers and influences leading to public policy change or maintaining the status quo; and

6. apply their knowledge of the policy process to analyze specific policy domains impacted by multiple policy actors and diverse elements of the policy process within the context of public policy-making in the United States.

4.   General Education Information

Requirements Satisfied

This course satisfies General Education Explorations in Social Sciences subarea D.5. The writing assignments in this course, including the policy memo papers and current event summaries described below, meet the requirement of UPS 411.201:

> Writing assignments in General Education courses shall involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas and careful and timely evaluations of writing so that deficiencies are identified, and suggestions for improvement and/or for means of remediation are offered. Evaluations of the student's writing competence shall determine the final course grade. . . .

A grade of "D" (1.0) or higher is required to meet this General Education requirement. A grade of "D-" (0.7) or below will not satisfy this General Education requirement.

General Education Student Learning Goals

Students completing courses in this subarea shall encounter the following learning goals:

1. Examine problems, issues, and themes in the social sciences in greater depth; in a variety of cultural, historical, and geographical contexts; and from different disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.

2. Analyze and critically evaluate the application of social science concepts and theories to particular historical, contemporary, and future problems or themes, such as economic and environmental sustainability, globalization, poverty, and social justice.

3. Analyze and critically evaluate constructs of cultural differentiation, including ethnicity, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, and their effects on the individual and society.

4. Apply theories and concepts from the social sciences to address historical, contemporary, and future problems confronting communities at different geographical scales, from local to global.

5. Text Books

Required: Birkland, T. A. (2020). *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making* (5th ed.). Routledge. ISBN: 978-0367333286

6. Technical Competencies

Students are expected to have the following technical competencies to succeed in this course:

- Basic computer skills, including the ability to navigate the internet, use email, and create and save documents.

- Proficiency in using *Canvas*, including submitting assignments, participating in discussions, and accessing course materials.

- Ability to use word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs, to create and format documents.

- Access to a reliable computer and internet connection.

- Ability to use Zoom for virtual meetings and discussions.

- Basic knowledge of online communication tools, such as email and discussion boards.

- Ability to use online research tools and databases to find academic sources.

7.   Technical Problems

University IT Help Desk

Contact the instructor immediately to document the problem if you encounter any technical difficulties. Then contact the Student IT Help Desk for assistance. You can also call the Student IT Help Desk at (657) 278-8888, email, visit them at the Pollak Library North Student Genius Center, or log on to the my.fullerton.edu portal and click "Online IT Help" followed by "Live Chat".

Canvas Support

If you encounter any technical difficulties with Canvas, call the Canvas Support Hotline at 855-302-7528, visit the Canvas Community, or click the "Help" button in the lower left corner of Canvas and select "Report a Problem". The Student Support Live Chat is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

8.   Response Time

I will strive to respond to all student emails, Discord posts, and *Canvas* messages within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays. If you are still awaiting a response within 24 hours, please send a follow-up message. If you are still waiting to receive a response within 48 hours, please send another follow-up message and contact me via phone or text at (657) 278-4770.

9.   University Student Policies

In accordance with UPS 300.00, students must be familiar with certain policies applicable to all courses. Please review these policies as needed and visit this Cal State Fullerton website `https://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/student-info-syllabi.html` for links to the following information:

1. University learning goals and program learning outcomes.

2. Learning objectives for each General Education (GE) category.

3. Guidelines for appropriate online behavior (netiquette).

4. Students' rights to accommodations for documented special needs.

5. Campus student support measures, including Counseling & Psychological Services, Title IV and Gender Equity, Diversity Initiatives and Resource Centers, and Basic Needs Services.

6. Disability Support Services (DSS) information.

7. Academic integrity (refer to UPS 300.021).

8. Actions to take during an emergency.

9. Library services information.

10. Student Information Technology Services, including details on technical competencies and resources required for all students.

11. Software privacy and accessibility statements.

10. Course Student Policies

Course Communication

All course announcements and communications will be sent via *Canvas* and university email. Students are responsible for regularly checking their *Canvas* notifications and email. Students are also responsible for ensuring that their *Canvas* notifications are set to receive messages from the course. Students are expected to check *Canvas* and their email at least once daily.

Due Dates

All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the specified due date. Save for extenuating circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor. Students are responsible for submitting assignments on time. Failure to submit an assignment on time may result in a failing grade for the assignment.

The exception to this policy is the final paper, which must be submitted by 12:50 p.m. on the due date. Late submissions of the final paper will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor.

Students are expected to plan ahead and manage their time effectively to ensure that assignments are submitted on time. If you are having trouble meeting a deadline, please contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

Alternative Procedures for Submitting Work

Students are expected to submit all assignments via *Canvas*. If you cannot submit an assignment via *Canvas*, please get in touch with the professor to discuss alternative submission procedures.

Retention of Student Work

Students are responsible for retaining copies of all assignments submitted for this course. Students are also responsible for retaining copies of all graded assignments returned by the professor.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit available in this course. Students are expected to complete all assigned work to the best of their ability. Failure to complete assigned work may result in a failing grade for the course.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to the sanctions described in the Academic Dishonesty Policy (UPS 300.021). Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and submitting previously graded work without prior authorization. Students are expected to be familiar with the university's policy on academic dishonesty and to adhere to this policy in all aspects of this course. Any student who has questions about the policy should ask the professor for clarification.

Written Work

All written work must be submitted in a professional format, including proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Written work must also be properly cited using the appropriate citation style. Students are expected to follow the guidelines for written work provided by the professor and to seek clarification if they have questions about the requirements. Assignments that do not meet these standards may be subject to point deductions or resubmission requirements.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, copying and pasting text from sources without proper citation, paraphrasing text from sources without proper citation, and submitting work that is not your own. Students are expected to properly cite all sources used in their work and to submit original work. Failure to do so may result in a failing grade for the assignment and further disciplinary action. Written work will be checked for plagiarism using plagiarism detection software. If you are unsure whether your work constitutes plagiarism, consult the professor before submitting.

AI-Generated Text and Tool Usage Policy

Permissible Use of AI Tools

Definition of AI Tools: In this course, AI tools refer to any software or platform that generates or assists in generating text, ideas, research references, or content creation. This includes, but is not limited to, large language models like OpenAI's ChatGPT-4, Anthropic's Claude, AI-based research tools like RefWorks or EndNote, and writing assistants like Grammarly.

Permissible Use Cases: Students are allowed to use AI tools for brainstorming, generating ideas, checking grammar, and summarizing content. However, AI tools should not be used to produce final drafts of assignments or significant portions of text that are submitted as original work. If AI tools are used, their contributions must be appropriately cited and disclosed.

Ethical Considerations

Academic Integrity: The use of AI tools must adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. This means that while these tools can support your work, they cannot replace your own analysis, critical thinking, and original writing. Misuse of AI-generated content is a form of academic dishonesty and will be treated as such under the university's policies.

Required Disclosures: Students must disclose their use of AI tools in any assignments. This disclosure should include a brief explanation of how the tool was used and how the student ensured the integrity of their work. For example, a note might state, "I used ChatGPT to generate initial ideas for this essay, but all writing and analysis are my own."

Plagiarism and Originality

AI Detection Tools: Assignments will be checked for originality using advanced AI detection software. Any submission found to contain unoriginal content generated by AI without proper citation will be subject to the university's academic dishonesty policy. Submitting AI-generated text as your own work, without attribution, is considered plagiarism.

Guidance and Resources

Ethical AI Usage Resources: Students are encouraged to take advantage of available resources on responsible AI usage. This includes online tutorials, ethical guidelines, and citation practices. Workshops or additional materials on how to use AI tools responsibly may be provided throughout the course.

Continuous Policy Review: This AI policy will be reviewed and updated regularly to keep pace with technological advancements. Students are encouraged to provide feedback on this policy to ensure it aligns with their educational goals and the course's academic standards.

Example Scenarios

Acceptable Use: A student uses Grammarly to check the grammar and clarity of their essay. The student does not need to disclose this use unless Grammarly significantly altered the content. Another student uses ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas but writes the essay independently, only citing the AI where directly quoted or paraphrased.

Unacceptable Use: A student uses ChatGPT to generate an entire essay and submits it as their own work without attribution. This would be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy and could result in a failing grade or further disciplinary action.

Participation

Students are expected to participate in all course activities. This includes completing all assigned readings, watching all assigned videos, and participating in all discussions. Students are expected to participate in discussions in a professional and respectful manner. Students are expected to be familiar with the university policy on netiquette and to adhere to this policy in all aspects of this course. Any student who has questions about the policy should ask the professor for clarification.

Netiquette

Students are expected to adhere to the university's policy on netiquette. The university's policy on netiquette is as follows:

> Netiquette refers to a set of behaviors that are appropriate for online activity (e.g., social media, email, discussions, presentations). All personnel at Cal State Fullerton are expected to demonstrate appropriate online behavior at all times. A good summary of netiquette can be found in the CSUF Canvas self-help guides, which adapts ten rules to the online course situation from the website for the book Netiquette by Virginia Shea and other sources referenced at the bottom of the guide.

11. Course Assignments

Reading Quizzes (25% of Final Grade)

Reading quizzes will be assigned weekly to assess students' understanding of the course readings. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the assigned readings for that week. Quizzes will be available on *Canvas* and must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on the due date.

Policy Process Analysis Paper (35% of Final Grade)

This course includes a scaffolded and peer-reviewed writing project where students will analyze a specific policy issue through the lens of policy process theories. The project will be completed in stages, with opportunities for peer review and feedback at each stage. The final paper will be a 10-12 page policy process analysis paper that applies policy process theories to understand the selected policy issue's development, implementation, and/or impact. Each stage of the project will be graded based on the rubric provided in the assignment instructions. Peer reviews will also be graded based on the provided rubric.

Project Stages

1. **Topic Selection and Proposal (Due Week 4)**
    - Submit a one-page proposal outlining the policy issue, its significance, and a preliminary research question focusing on the policy process (e.g., agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation).

- Conduct detailed peer reviews using a provided rubric.

2. **Annotated Bibliography (Due Week 7)**

   - Compile an annotated bibliography of 8-10 sources, summarizing and evaluating each source's relevance to your research question and its relation to policy process theories.
   - Conduct detailed peer reviews using a provided rubric.

3. **Literature Review (Due Week 10)**

   - Write a 3-4 page literature review synthesizing key findings, identifying gaps in the research, and situating your analysis within the broader context of policy process theories.
   - Conduct detailed peer reviews using a provided rubric.

4. **Draft Analysis (Due Week 14)**

   - Submit a 6-8 page draft analysis, including an introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, and preliminary conclusions on how policy process theories explain the issue.
   - Conduct detailed peer reviews using a provided rubric.

5. **Final Paper (Due Week 16)**

   - Submit a final 10-12 page policy process analysis paper, incorporating peer feedback and additional research or revisions. The paper should apply policy process theories to understand the selected policy issue's development, implementation, and/or impact.

This project will help you develop your research, analytical, evaluative, and writing skills while providing a deep understanding of policy theory and the policy process. The project will also provide opportunities for peer review and feedback, enhancing your ability to provide and receive constructive criticism.

Exam 1 (15% of Final Grade)

An in-class midterm exam will be held in Week 8. The exam will cover material from the first half of the course, including readings, lectures, and discussions. The exam will consist of multiple-choice and essay questions.

Exam 2 (15% of Final Grade)

An in-class exam will be held during the 13th week of the course. The exam will cover policy process theories, policy analysis methods, and the application of these concepts to specific policy issues. The exam will consist of multiple-choice and essay questions.

Participation and Active Learning (10% of Final Grade)

Participation in this course is essential for your success. Participation includes attending all class sessions, actively engaging in discussions, asking questions, and contributing to group activities. Participation also includes completing all assigned readings, watching all assigned videos, and participating in all discussions. Participation will be assessed based on your contributions to class discussions, group activities, and other course activities.

12. Grading

Grades will be allocated based on the following components:

- **Reading Quizzes**: 25%
- **Policy Analysis Paper**: 35%
    - Topic Selection and Proposal: 2%
    - Annotated Bibliography: 3%
    - Literature Review: 5%
    - Draft Analysis: 10%
    - Final Paper: 10%
    - Combined Peer Reviews: 5%
- **Exam 1**: 15%
- **Exam 2**: 15%
- **Participation**: 10%

Grading Scale

- A+: 97.00 – 100.00
- A: 93.00 – 96.99
- A-: 90.00 – 92.99
- 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+: 67.00 − 69.99

- D: 63.00 − 66.99

- D-: 60.00 − 62.99

- F: 0.00 − 59.99

13. Course Schedule

week	Tuesday	Thursday
week 1 *Readings*	<u>1/21</u>: **Introduction** Syllabus	<u>1/23</u>: **Overview of Policy** *Birkland ch. 1* American Regime Values
week 2 *Readings*	<u>1/28</u>: **Policy Process Elements** *Birkland ch. 2*	<u>1/30</u>: **Policy Process Theories** Posted to *Canvas*
week 3 *Readings*	<u>2/4</u>: **History & Structure** *Birkland ch. 3*	<u>2/6</u>: **Official Policy Actors** *Birkland ch. 4*
week 4 *Readings*	<u>2/11</u>: **Unofficial Policy Actors I** *Birkland ch. 5*	<u>2/13</u>: **Unofficial Policy Actors II** *Letter from the Birmingham Jail* **Due: Term Paper Topic**
week 5 *Readings*	<u>2/18</u>: **Documentary 1**	<u>2/20</u>: **Documentary 1 Discussion** **Due: Peer Review**
week 6 *Readings*	<u>2/25</u>: **Agenda Setting** *Birkland ch. 6*	<u>2/27</u>: **Policy Types** *Birkland ch. 7*
week 7 *Readings*	<u>3/4</u>: **Decision Making I** *Birkland ch. 8*	<u>3/6</u>: **Decision Making II** Posted to *Canvas* **Due: Term Paper Annotated Bib.**
week 8 *Readings*	<u>3/11</u>: **Exam 1 Review**	<u>3/13</u>: **Exam 1** **Due: Peer Review**
week 9 *Readings*	<u>3/18</u>: **Policy Analysis I** *Birkland ch. 8*	<u>3/20</u>: **Policy Analysis II** Posted to *Canvas*
week 10	<u>3/25</u>: **Writing Day** *1:1 Meetings with Professor*	<u>3/27</u>: **Writing Day** *1:1 Meetings with Professor* **Due: Term Paper Lit. Review**

Spring Break	**3/31 – 4/7: Spring Break**	
week 11 Readings	<u>4/8:</u> **Policy Design & Tools** *Birkland ch. 9*	<u>4/10:</u> **Implementation** *Birkland ch. 10* **Due: Peer Review**
week 12 Readings	<u>4/15:</u> **Failure and Learning** *Birkland ch. 10*	<u>4/17:</u> **Evaluation and Science** *Birkland ch. 11*
week 13 Readings	<u>4/22:</u> **Documentary 2**	<u>4/24:</u> **Documentary 2 Discussion** **Due: Term Paper Draft**
week 14 Readings	<u>4/29:</u> **Exam 2 Review**	<u>5/1:</u> **Exam 2** **Due: Peer Review**
week 15	<u>5/6:</u> **Writing Day** *1:1 Meetings with Professor*	<u>5/8:</u> **Writing Day** *1:1 Meetings with Professor*
week 16		<u>5/15:</u> **Due: Final Draft Term Paper** *Submit by 12:50 p.m.*