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Public Policy Syllabus

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PUBLIC POLICY

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Course Description

This course is composed of three modules. In **Module I**, The Study of Public Policy, we will introduce and discuss the basics of public policy and the key actors and institutions involved in the policymaking process. In **Module II**, Public Policy Analysis, students will be introduced to theories concerning the process through which policy is developed, implemented, and changed, a framework for analyzing and assessing public policy decision-making, and the tools that are used to address policy problems.

In **Module III**, Substantive Areas of Public Policy, students will receive a broad overview of six policy areas: economy and budget, healthcare, welfare and social security, and environmental policy. For each area we will discuss: 1) the rationale for government intervention; 2) how problems have been defined and measured; 3) key participants and stakeholders inside and outside government; 4) major policy developments; and 5) significant impediments to policy change. In exploring each area, we will consider the extent to which each exhibit theories of the policy process in action, and illustrate the process of policy analysis.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the essential elements of public policy, how public policy is developed and implemented, and the various strategies available to government for addressing policy problems;
2. Be able to explain how American political institutions and actors affect the development and implementation of public policy;
3. Be able to identify and map the interests, stakeholders, institutions, and political cultures that surround policy issues;
4. Be able to apply policy analysis tools to compare the potential tradeoffs of different policy approaches to address a particular policy problem;
5. Develop written and oral communication skills related to policy analysis;
6. Summarize and describe the stages of policy development, and explain how public policy theory relates to real world issues;
7. Critically argue perspectives on policy issues using evidence and public policy concepts

Course Text

Krutz, G. 2019. American Government. Second Edition. Houston, TX: Rice University.

The course text is Open Access and available online here: <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-2e>

Throughout the semester, additional readings may be made available to students electronically via Blackboard. Students will be provided adequate time for review prior to class meetings. It is your responsibility to pay attention to announcements on additional readings, which will be made in class and on Blackboard.

Course Material

Course readings are an integral part of the learning process, and are intended to support and extend the material covered during our class meetings. With the exception of the required text, all course material and information will be disseminated via Blackboard; including lecture slides, supplemental readings, online discussions, and announcements.

Course Evaluation

Course meetings will consist of a combination of lectures, discussions, and in-class activities. Outside of the classroom, you will be expected to complete assigned readings and assignments. Assessment of student performance for this course is based on the following:

- Class Participation (10% of grade): 100 points
- Assignments (4 assignments, 20% of grade): 200 points
- Quizzes (5 quizzes, 10% of grade): 100 points
- Policy Brief (20% of grade): 200 points
- Midterm Exam (20% of grade): 200 points
- Final Exam (20% of grade): 200 points

Total: 1,000 points

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following point scale

A 1,000-925 points	A- 924-895 points	
B+ 894-865 points	B 864-825 points	B- 824-795 points
C+ 794-765 points	C 764-725 points	C- 724-695 points
D+ 694-665 points	D 664-625 points	D- 624-595 points
F 594-0 points		

Please note: There will be no extra credit offered for this course.

Participation & Attendance

Your participation is valued and this course requires participation in class. Participation includes being prepared for class (completing readings assigned for that day **before** class), engaging in classroom activities (which will help you to apply the material learned in lecture and complete course assignments), and participating in discussions and asking questions during class.

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If you anticipate missing a class meeting, you must send an email to me prior to the class meeting time with a valid excuse. If you do not do so, your absence will be considered unexcused and will affect your overall participation grade.

Assignments

There will be a series of assignments throughout the semester that students will complete and submit on Blackboard. Assignments are designed to reinforce important concepts from the readings and lectures, deepen your understanding of the material, and to help you think critically about specific topics discussed in class and within the broader context of the course. Assignment due dates are shown on the course schedule. You are responsible for accessing Blackboard and completing assignments by the due date. When applicable, requirements for citations will be included with instructions for assignments. You will be expected to cite properly and this will be part of the assignment evaluation.

Late assignments will not be accepted. I will only accept late work in cases of medical or family emergency. For each assignment, be sure to follow directions and answer all parts completely.

Quizzes

Short quizzes will be given randomly throughout the semester. The content of the quizzes will be based upon the reading to be completed for that particular class meeting. So please, do the reading

Policy Brief

Each student will be required to write a policy brief (of no more than 2 pages, single-spaced, not including tables, figures, bibliography, or appendices) on a specific public policy topic of interest. In this paper, you should: 1) demonstrate your understanding of the policy process; 2) apply this knowledge to a particular policy issue; 3) identify key stakeholders and institutions engaged in discussions regarding the issue; 3) characterize what is currently being done to address this issue; and 4) suggest a policy solution(s) or alternative(s). Guidelines for the brief will be provided in class and on Blackboard.

Exams

There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. The dates and times for the examinations are final, and are included in the syllabus. There will be no make-ups or alternate dates. The final exam will be cumulative in that it builds from concepts and foundations discussed in the first portion of the course. The content for these examinations will come from lectures, classroom activities/discussions, required readings, assignments, and quizzes.

Classroom Protocol

Students are expected to attend all lectures and arrive to class on time. Participation in classroom discussions is an important component of the course, and so students are expected to have completed the required reading for each lecture prior to class meetings. Laptop use during lecture is acceptable, however, use of cellphones is discouraged. Use of electronic devices during class may be prohibited if usage becomes disruptive.

Academic Integrity

Lehman College values the academic integrity of its students and faculty, and instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic integrity, which can be found in the Student Handbook. Violations of academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will be reported to the Academic Integrity Officer, and may result in a failing grade for the course.

For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. Please note that the Academic Integrity Policy of Lehman College requires instructor approval before you include any material you have submitted, or plan to submit, for another class.

Disability Services

Lehman College is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students. Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services, which can be found in Shuster Hall Room 238, or reached via telephone at 718-960-8441. To receive accommodations in this course, advanced notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Science Learning Center (SLC)

The ACE and the SLC are two tutoring centers located on the Lehman College campus. The ACE provides appointment-based and drop-in tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing, as well as general writing and academic skills workshops. The SLC provides drop-in tutoring for natural and computer science courses. To obtain more information about the ACE and the SLC, please visit their website, or feel free to call the ACE at 718-960-8175, and/or the SLC at 718-960-7707.

The Counseling Center

If you are experiencing personal and/or academic difficulties, confidential counseling services are available free of charge at The Counseling Center. The Counseling Center is located in the Old Gym 114, and can be reached via telephone at 718-960-8761.

Course Schedule

Module I: The Study of Public Policy, Government Institutions, and Policy Actors

Week 1	Course Overview and Introductions	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Syllabus
	Introduction to the Fundamentals of Public Policy	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 16 Sections 1-4 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/16-introduction)
Week 2	Government Institutions: Federalism and Political Parties	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 3 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/3-introduction)
		Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 9 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/9-introduction) <p><i>Due: Assignment 1</i></p>
Week 3	Formal Policy Actors: Congress and the Presidency	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 11 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/11-introduction)
		Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 12 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/12-introduction)
Week 4	Formal Policy Actors: the Courts, The Bureaucracy, and State and Local Governments	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 13 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/13-introduction) • Krutz – Ch. 15 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/15-introduction)
		Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz – Ch. 15 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/15-introduction) • Krutz - Ch. 14 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/14-introduction)

Week 5	Informal Policy Actors: Interest Groups and Lobbying	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 10 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/10-introduction) <p><i>Due: Assignment 2</i></p>
	Informal Policy Actors: Public Opinion	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 6 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/6-introduction)
Week 6	Informal Policy Actors: The Media	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 8 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/8-introduction)

Module II: Policy Analysis

Week 6	Doing Policy Analysis	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – CDC’s Policy Analytical Framework (https://www.cdc.gov/policy/analysis/process/docs/cdcpolicyanalyticalframework.pdf) • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Policy Analysis (https://www.cdc.gov/policy/polaris/policyprocess/policyanalysis/index.html)
Week 7	Policy Brief Discussion	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Brief Assignment (Blackboard) • Policy Briefs – UNC Writing Center (https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/policy-briefs/) • Sociology Policy Briefs - Writing Policy Briefs (https://www.policybriefs.org/writing)
	Problem Definition	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Monetary Fund – Externalities: Prices Do Not Capture All Costs (https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/basics/external.htm) • Caplan – Externalities (https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Externalities.html) • Lumen – Boundless Economics: Public Goods (https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-economics/chapter/public-goods/) <p><i>Due: Assignment 3</i></p>

Week 8	Agenda Setting and Issue Framing	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owens and Lamm – How Problems Gain Importance and Become Contentious Issues Through Agenda Setting (https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/WC177) • Pew Research Center - Economy and COVID-19 Top the Public's Policy Agenda for 2021 (https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/01/28/economy-and-covid-19-top-the-publics-policy-agenda-for-2021/) • Frameworks Institute – Framing Public Issues (https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FramingPublicIssuesfinal.pdf)
	Policy Tools	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Economic Incentives (https://www.epa.gov/environmental-economics/economic-incentives) • Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – National Policy Instruments, Their Implementation and Interactions (https://archive.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg3/en/tssts-ts-13-2-national-policy.html)
Week 9	Assessment of Policy Alternatives	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers for Disease Control – Policy Analysis (https://www.cdc.gov/policy/polaris/policyprocess/policyanalysis/index.html) • RAND Corporation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A History of Cost Effectiveness (https://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P4557.html) ○ Ethics and Policy Analysis (https://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P6463-2.html) ○ The Prediction of Political Feasibility (https://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P4044.html)
	Midterm Exam	

Module III: Substantive Areas of Public Policy

Week 10	Economic and Budget Policy	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krutz - Ch. 16 Section 5 (https://openstax.org/books/american-government-2e/pages/16-5-budgeting-and-tax-policy) • Congressional Research Service – Introduction to the Federal Budget Process (https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46240)
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressional Research Service – Fiscal Policy: Economic Effects (https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R45723.pdf) <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Lab - Your Guide To America’s Finances (https://datalab.usaspending.gov/americas-finance-guide/) • Data Lab - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Federal Investment in Higher Education (https://datalab.usaspending.gov/colleges-and-universities/) ○ COVID-1 Funding (https://datalab.usaspending.gov/federal-covid-funding/) ○ Homelessness (https://datalab.usaspending.gov/homelessness-analysis/) <p><i>Due: Assignment 4</i></p>
<p>Week 11</p>	<p>Health Care Policy</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkowitz – Medicare and Medicaid: The Past as Prologue (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4194925/) • Keisler-Starkey and Bunch - Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2020 (https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-274.pdf) • The Policy Circle – The Affordable Care Act (https://www.thepolicycircle.org/minibrief/the-affordable-care-act/) <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookings Institution – Current Debates in Health Care Policy (https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/current-debates-in-health-care-policy-a-brief-overview/) • National Conference of State Legislatures - Improving the Health Care System: Seven State Strategies (https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/Health/ImprovingHealthSystemsBrief16.pdf)

Week 12	Welfare and Social Security Policy	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnes et al. - The Social Insurance System in the U.S.: Policies to Protect Workers and Families pp. 1-44 (https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Social-Insurance-FP_v4.5.pdf) • Congressional Research Service - The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant (https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10036) • Nestle - The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): History, Politics, and Public Health Implications (https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/epub/10.2105/AJPH.2019.305361) <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin and Weaver - Social Security: A Program and Policy History (https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v66n1/v66n1p1.html) • U.S. Dept. of Treasury –Social Security Reform: The Nature of the Problem (https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/226/post.pdf) <p><i>Due: Final Policy Brief</i></p>
Week 13	Environmental Policy	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kraft - U.S. Environmental Policy and Politics: From the 1960s to the 1990s (https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/48E1FE467160CF9B72782B2C4B9CF723/S0898030600002712a.pdf/us-environmental-policy-and-politics-from-the-1960s-to-the-1990s.pdf) • Meyer - How the U.S. Protects the Environment, From Nixon to Trump (https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/03/how-the-epa-and-us-environmental-law-works-a-civics-guide-pruitt-trump/521001/)

		<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biden - Executive Order on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis (https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-protecting-public-health-and-environment-and-restoring-science-to-tackle-climate-crisis/) • U.S. Department of Agriculture - Policy Instruments for Protecting Environmental Quality (https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/natural-resources-environment/environmental-quality/policy-instruments-for-protecting-environmental-quality/) • Congressional Research Service - U.S. Climate Change Policy (https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46947)
Week 14	Policy Brief Presentations	Reading: Student Policy Briefs
Week 15		
Week 16	<i>FINAL EXAM</i>	