

The Politics of Public Policy

Summer 2020

Instructor: Professor Dan Butler

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Office Hours (via Zoom): Mondays and Wednesdays, 11 am – Noon

Optional Section: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 am – Noon

TA: Zoe Nemerever

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Office Hours: By Appointment.

Purpose

Students will learn how politics determines policy. The course will first briefly introduce students to cost-benefit analysis and then will discuss how political ideas, interests, and institutions often move policy outcomes away from those based on cost-benefit analysis. I assume you have are familiar with the material covered in a standard course on American politics and government. If you have any questions about your preparation for the course, contact me.

Class Structure

The class has been designed to allow for asynchronous learning. The course is designed into sections and there are videos that correspond to those sections (this includes videos I have made and video resources from others). I will then hold office hours 2 days a week and an optional section meeting 2 days a week. The sections will be a group review of the material that we have been covering at that point in class.

Course Readings

The readings are listed on the session schedule given below. These can be found online for free (either Canvas or the journal websites).

Course Requirements

- (1) **Homework Assignments – 20% total (10% each). We are working to make both homeworks available via the quiz function in canvas.**
 - a. Homework 1 – Due on July 13 at 11:59pm
 - b. Homework 2 – Due on July 28 at 11:59pm
- (2) **Mid-term exam (July 15) – 25% of grade.** The exam will be on canvas and will consist of math based, short-answer, and a few multiple-choice style questions. It will be available all day (12:00am - 11:59pm) on July 15 so you can take it at your convenience. The test will be open book and notes (but you should not get help from any other person). You will be given 2 hours for the test.
- (3) **Group Project – 25% of grade.** Students in groups of 5 will use the framework developed in class to analyze a public policy. Grade: 15% will

come from the written part, and 10% will come from a presentation of the material. This can be done online live over zoom or could be recorded in advance. Group assignments will be made during the first week of class. You can be placed with people you know, please tell me who you would like to be placed with, or just let me know that I should place you with a group. I will take requests of up to 4 people together. Note that I will survey all students about the contributions from the other members in their group.

- (4) **Final exam (July 31) – 30% of grade.** The exam will consist of essay, math based, short-answer, and a few multiple choice style questions. It will be online all day (12:01am - 11:59pm) and can be taken anytime during July 31. The test will be open book and notes (but you should not get help from any other person). You will be given 3 hours for the test.

Grades will be based on the following scale:

100-96.67 = A+	83.34-86.67 = B	70-73.34 = C-
96.67-93.34 = A	80-83.34 = B-	60-70 = D
90-93.34 = A-	76.67-80 = C+	0-60 = F
86.67-90 = B+	73.34-76.67 = C	

For those taking the course pass/fail – you need to earn at least a C-

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with University rules and regulations. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with University regulations regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty. **Students are expected to do the homework assignments on their own.**

Grade Changes and Extensions: All requests for grade changes must be made formally to your TA, within one week of getting back your assignment or test. Requests must be typed and double spaced, and review of a grade may result in either a higher or lower grade. Extensions on assignments and make-up exams will only be granted in cases of documented illness or family medical emergencies. I will require documentation for everyone. Please contact your teaching assistant as soon as possible if you need to request one. We will return your assignments in a timely fashion in section. Due to university policy, no grade changes may be requested on the final except in cases of our clerical error. (Note: We will **not** grant any extensions because stolen or damaged computers. This happens, so you should be in the habit of using some cloud service to back up your work automatically).

Late Assignments: Assignments are due at the date and time indicated on the assignment. If you turn it in within 24 hours of the due date, you will be penalized with minus 10 percent. If you turn it within 48 hours of the due date it will minus 20 percent. Nothing will be accepted after that. Each student must do his or her own exercises alone, subject to university regulations prohibiting plagiarism and cheating.

Announcements. I do not allow students to make announcements in class. I also do not allow groups outside of the department to make announcements.

Accessibility

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.

Video and Reading Schedule

Unit: Intro to Course (June 29 at Zoom Link)

Unit: Cost-Benefit Analysis: Calculating Expected Values (June 30)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAjVAEDil_Q
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5yWr1hr6QY>
- Practice Problems: <https://youtu.be/USbgxB2-mTU>

READINGS

- *Analyzing Policy* Ch. 9
- *DC Stadium CBA* (Read the executive summary, the table of contents, and then skim the rest to see what goes into the CBA report)

Unit: Cost-Benefit Analysis: Calculating Net Present Value (July 1)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mol1yT7tczY> (The first 4 minutes are the key part. Don't worry about the "weighted average discount rate" I won't have you do that).
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HXwiCoYM8o> (I won't test you on the investment points they make in the videos – although that is good to know.)
- Practice Problems: <https://youtu.be/uN4LDqMeoL8>

READINGS

- *Analyzing Policy* Ch. 10 (pages 322-336)
- *West-Lake-Landfill-SFS-Executive-Summary* (More Information at <http://westlakelandfill.com>)

Unit: Cost-Benefit Analysis: Additional Points about CBA (July 2)

- Lecture on Additional Points: <https://youtu.be/y6LovzFNZh8>

Unit: Issue Definition (July 6-7)

- Political Analysis Introduction: <https://youtu.be/mRObxOEWywM>
- Issue Definition Lecture: https://youtu.be/gX_j2YNBhcU
- Explaining the 2001 Repeal of the Estate Tax (3:05)
<https://youtu.be/JoQKHysCRsg>
- Yes, Minister clip on Leading Questions:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0ZZjXw4MTA>

- CA Gas Tax: <https://youtu.be/jwyUejXAl50>

READINGS

- E.E. Schattschneider. 1960. *The Semi-Sovereign People*. Fort Worth, TX: HBJ. [chapter 4]
- Jeff Daniels “California’s gas tax repeal is in danger of losing...”
- Michael Graetz and Ian Shapiro. 2006. *Death by a Thousand Cuts: The Fight over Taxing Inherited Wealth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [Chapter 8]

Unit: Venue Shopping (July 8-9)

- Venue Shopping Lecture: <https://youtu.be/DFDTn48nMBM>
- McCain-Kerry Effort to Increase CAFÉ Standards: <https://youtu.be/K4BqdljSfgU>

READINGS

- Pralle, Sarah B. 2003. “Venue Shopping, Political Strategy and Policy Change: The Internationalization of Canadian Forest Advocacy.” *Journal of Public Policy* 23:3.

Unit: Members are Reelection Motivated (July 13)

- Congressional Elections: Crash Course Government and Politics #6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxiD9AEX4Hc&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H&index=6> (Note: Especially be sure to watch the last 3 minutes which talks about Mayhew’s research)
- The Reelection Motivation: <https://youtu.be/72mIR4kVIRY>

READINGS

- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, John F. Cogan. 2002. “Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members’ Voting.” *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 127-140.

Unit: Interest Groups and Lobbying (July 14, 16)

- Interest Group Formation: Crash Course Government and Politics #43 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGo9Asfwric&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H&index=43> (Note: You can ignore the section from 3:08-4:48 – I’m not expecting you to think about how groups overcome the collective action problem – just recognize that certain types of groups are more likely.)
- Interest Group Lecture: <https://youtu.be/r11RUx7Q-wo>
- Wilson-Lowri Matrix: <https://youtu.be/0EV19dAapnQ>
- CAFÉ Standards in 1989: <https://youtu.be/fuTh3f5fKNc>
- Lobbying Lecture: <https://youtu.be/9udRtaFn0eA>

READINGS

- David Baron. 2003. "CAFÉ Standards," in *Business and Its Environment*, ed. David Baron. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Frank Baumgartner and Beth Leech. 2001. "Issue Niches and Policy Bandwagons: Patterns of Interest Group Involvement in National Politics" *Journal of Politics* 63: 1191-1213.
- Kay Lehman Schlozman, "What Accent the Heavenly Chorus? Political Equality and the American Pressure System," *The Journal of Politics* 46, no. 4 (Nov., 1984): 1006-1032.

MIDTERM: JULY 15 – It will be available all day on canvas. It will cover the material through July 9.

Unit: Pivotal Politics (July 20-22)

- How a Bill Becomes a Law: Crash Course Government and Politics # 9: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66f4-NKEYz4&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H&index=9>
- Pivotal Politics Lecture 1: https://youtu.be/7LuAO3y_KSA
- Pivotal Politics Lecture 2: <https://youtu.be/BKoaUs9RBLg>
- Pivotal Politics Lecture 3: <https://youtu.be/qhHCtcBiBmI>

READINGS

- David Brady and Craig Volden. 2004. *Revolving Gridlock*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. [chapter 2]
- Elizabeth Gerber. 1996. "Legislative Response to the Threat of Popular Initiatives." *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1): 99-128.

Unit: Parties in Congress (July 23)

- Congressional Leadership: Crash Course Government and Politics # 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8urcMLGFyU&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H&index=8>
- Parties in Congress: <https://youtu.be/0ehSrIqQeag>

READINGS

- Carson, Jamie L., Nathan W. Monroe, and Gregory Robinson. "[Unpacking Agenda Control in Congress: Individual Roll Rates and the Republican Revolution](#)" *Political Research Quarterly* 64(1): 17-30.

Unit: Committees in Congress (July 27)

- Congressional Committees: Crash Course Government and Politics #7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evLR90Dx79M&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H&index=7> (Note: You only need to know the first 5 minutes – but the rest is also interesting)
- Committees: <https://youtu.be/IcKLadVBUKw>

READINGS

- Minta, Michael D. 2009. "Legislative Oversight and the Substantive Representation of Black and Latino Interests in Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 34 (2): 193-218.

Unit: Student Presentations (July 28-30)