

**PADMN 6320/POLS5320
PUBLIC POLICY THEORIES AND APPLICATIONS**

Fall 2015

Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m., OSH 216

Instructor: Samantha W. Ball, MPP, Ph.D.

Welcome to class! I am looking forward to working with each of you. In order for everyone to get off to a strong start, please note that this class will cover a large amount of material and that I will expect each student to have completed the assigned reading and be ready engage in the conversation with the class.

Assignments also require that you complete your reading, so please don't procrastinate! Also, as a public policy class, we will be discussing ideas and issues where people on all sides feel strongly. It is important for us to discuss different viewpoints. Please be sure to interact respectfully with others who have a view that differs from your own.

Office Hours: By appointment only. The best way to contact me is via canvas email. If you would like to set up a telephone conversation, please provide me with your phone number and the best times to reach you. This will enable me to have all of the materials relating to your inquiry in front of me when we talk. If you would like to make an appointment to meet, please send me an email with a list of times you are available to meet.

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the US policymaking process. We will examine prominent policy theories and the factors that promote or deter public action within the context of these theories.

Accommodation Notice: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Texts

Policy and Evidence in a Partisan Age: The Great Disconnect A

Policy Paradox: The Art of Political

Additional readings as assigned and made available to you through links in Canvas modules.

Course Requirements

1. Assignments: There are five assignments.

Assignment 1: Balancing the Federal Budget

Your assignment is to balance the federal budget using the Concord Coalition budget tool that we will discuss in class. After balancing the budget, please write a 4-5 page policy memo that provides a summary table of your spending cuts and/or tax increases and a discussion and analysis of why these cuts were chosen, including policy and political considerations. You should supplement the Concord Coalition background information with

information from news articles, readings from class, think tank reports and other sources. If there are spending cuts or tax increases that you would like to include in your budget that are not provided as options, you may include them as long as you can find a respected non-partisan source, such as the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) that has scored the budgetary impact of the proposed policy change. You cannot balance the budget by changing economic assumptions, or calling things “waste” (e.g., you cannot say that you will cut waste in government by 10% and therefore the budget is balanced).

Total points for the Assignment 1 = 100 points (10% of your grade)

Assignment 2: Policy Problems, Policy Theories

This assignment is the start of your semester-long project. Using the topic you were assigned the first week of class, you are to conduct a Google Scholar search in www.scholar.google.com for peer reviewed academic articles (so not books, reports, etc.) on the topic. (You should be able to Google the exact words in the topic as written below and find good things).

Select six (6) articles that are related and then write an integrated literature Identify the theory or theories that underpin the articles you chose and write an approximately 6-7 page paper.

Social Interventions for Homeless

Adolescent Risk Taking

Obesity and Health Outcomes

Risky Family Model

Cell Phones and Driving

Working Women Child Care

Total points for the Assignment 2 = 150 points (15% of your grade)

Note: In class on September 22nd you will be called upon to provide a 4 minute presentation of either your budget assignment or assignment 2. I will not be grading this presentation. This is an opportunity to share your ideas and findings with the class and to practice presentation skills for the final presentation.

Assignment 3: Policy Paradox and Framing Issues

Using the policy you studied in Assignment 2, find an existing or proposed state or federal law related to the issue (e.g., laws governing cell phones and driving). Address the following in a five page double-spaced paper:

What is the primary goal/value in the law/policy proposal and the primary goal/value that the law/policy proposal dismisses (explicitly or implicitly)?

Using Stone's criteria, which problem definitions are incorporated into the law and which are not?

Specifically, using Stone's criteria, which solutions are incorporated into the law/policy and which ones are not?

Does the law/policy link with the research you did regarding the policy problem from Assignment 2? How does it and how doesn't it? Be clear, concise, and thorough in your writing. Please

reference examples from the Stone book to strengthen your discussion.

Total points for the Assignment 3 = 150 points (15% of your grade)

Assignment 4: Comparing ACF and Punctuated Equilibrium Theories

Write an 8-page paper that has the following components:

Explain the key tenants of ACF and Punctuated Equilibrium; explain the differences and commonalities in the theories; and compare how these theories have been tested using two articles from the PSJ symposia (one for each theory). An effective paper will be concise, show great understanding of the theories, and be able to critically compare the theories.

Total points for the Assignment 4 = 200 points (20% of your grade)

Assignment 5: Final Paper and Presentation (Two Part Assignment)

This assignment will tie together the previous work you have done on your topic.

Paper and presentation = 250 points (25% of your grade)

Final Paper

Identify the theory or theories that underpin the articles you chose (improving on Assignment 2);

Identify the policy implications of those theories (based on theory, what should policy makers take into account in addressing this problem/issue);

Identify the barriers to turning the theories into policy (building on Assignment 3);

Identify what a policy addressing this issue look like.

This paper should be approximately 15-20 pages long but please remember that you are building on two previous assignments, so you are not writing 15-20 new pages.

Total points for paper = 150 (15% of your grade)

Presentation

Coordinate with classmates who have been researching the same policy topic as you and create a 15-minute summary presentation of your findings. The presentation should include slides and a one-page fact sheet. Not every person needs to be a part of the presentation each person needs to contribute. For instance, one person could create slides, another person could draft the fact sheet, etc.

Total points for presentation = 100 (10% of your grade)

2. Participation:

Each week you should create 3 discussion questions for that week's assigned reading. Give some thought to how you would answer the questions you create. During class we will use these questions to direct small and large group discussions. I will collect your discussion questions at the end of each class. Your

grade will include consideration of the questions you submit and your engagement in class discussion.

Total points for participation = 150 (15% of your grade)

Total points for course = 1000

Your grade will be determined on a percentage basis. For example, if you earn 850 of the 1000 points, your grade will be 85% or a B.

Grading Distribution: The following distribution will be used in this course.

A 94% and above

A- 90% - 93%

B+ 88% - 89%

B 83% - 87%

B- 80% - 82%

C+ 78% - 79%

C 73% - 77%

C- 70% - 72%

D+ 68% - 69%

D 63% - 67%

D- 60% - 62%

E 59% and below

For POLS 5320 Students only: Undergraduate students should consider the minimum page levels listed above to be their maximum, with the same range of variation. For instance, the 4-5 page paper called for in Assignment 1 will be a 3-4 page paper for undergraduate students. If no range is given, your assignment is one page less than what is stated. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Course Outline

Week 1, August 25th:

Reading assignment: None
Discussion Questions Due: No
Assignment Due: No

Week 2, September 1st:

Reading assignment: *Policy and Evidence in a Partisan Age*
(entire book)
Discussion Questions: Yes
Assignment Due: No

Week 3, September 8th:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module
Discussion Questions Due: Yes
Assignment Due: No

Week 4, September 15th:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module
Discussion Questions: Yes
Assignment Due: Assignment 1

Week 5, September 22nd:

Reading assignment: None
Discussion Questions Due: No
Assignment Due: Policy Presentations, Assignment 2

Week 6, September 29th:

Reading assignment: *Policy Paradox*, Chapters 1-6
Discussion Questions: Yes
Assignment Due: No

Week 7, October 6th:

Reading assignment: *Policy Paradox*, Chapters 7-11

Discussion Questions Due: Yes

Assignment Due: No

Week 8, October 13th:

FALL BREAK

Week 9, October 20th:

Reading assignment: *Policy Paradox*, Chapters 12-16

Discussion Questions: Yes

Assignment Due: Assignment 3 Due

Week 10, October 27th:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module

Discussion Questions Due: Yes

Assignment Due: No

Week 11, November 3rd:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module

Discussion Questions: Yes

Assignment Due: No

Week 12, November 10th:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module

Discussion Questions Due: Yes

Assignment Due: No

Week 13, November 17th:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module

Discussion Questions Due: Yes

Assignment Due: Assignment 4 Due

Week 14, November 24th:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module

Discussion Questions: Yes

Assignment Due: No

Week 15, December 1st:

Reading assignment: Canvas Module

Discussion Questions Due: Yes

Assignment Due: No

Week 16, December 8th:

Reading assignment: None

Discussion Questions: No

Assignment Due: Final Presentation and Paper Due

Course Policies

- Attendance is important. Please send me an email if you are going to miss class.
- If you need to bring food to class, please choose food that will not be a distraction.
- Please silence your cell phone prior to class and only use computers for class-related activities.

Academic Honesty

The University Code (Article XI) specifies generally accepted standards of academic honesty including, but not limited to,

refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, research misconduct, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating.

Students engaging in academic misconduct may be subject to academic sanctions including, but not limited to, a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate.

University of Utah Student Resources

The Graduate Writing Center - The University Graduate Writing Center provides writing consultations to help graduate students with their writing projects. Please visit the Graduate Student Reading Room of the Marriott Library, Room 1180B if you are in need of assistance. The Center is funded by the Graduate School of the University of Utah and staffed by expert writing fellows.
<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/Gradstudentservices.php>

The Center for Student Wellness - www.wellness.utah.edu (801-581-7776) provides students with resources to address personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, and cross-cultural differences.

The Veterans Support Center, located in Room 161 in the Oplin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about support offered; a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: [http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/.](http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/)

The LGBT Resource Center, located in Room 409 of the Oplin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Their website has information about resources, support, and events: [http://lgbt.utah.edu/.](http://lgbt.utah.edu/)

Support for Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language

includes: the Department of Linguistics ESL Program (<http://linguistics.utah.edu/esl-program/>); the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/>); the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu/>); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli/>).