

POL 10300: Public Policy (CRN#: 17154)
Spring 2017
Department of Political Science
Kent State University
TR 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Bowman 218

Instructor: Jason M. Adkins
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Office Hours: TR 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.-1:45 p.m.

Course Description

Public policy involves decisions the federal, state, or local government makes or chooses not to make. This course explores why government acts or does not act, the type of actions government takes, how government arrives at a decision, and constraints on government action. Three main themes will be addressed during the course, which include the role politics plays in this process; the results of policy decisions and how public policy is assessed, analyzed and responded to; and examining policy controversies that are currently being addressed by government at various levels. These policy areas include, but are not limited to: health care, education, immigration, social policy, religious accommodation, and welfare.

Required text:

Kraft, Michael E. and Scott R. Furlong. 2015. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis and Alternatives*. 5th Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN 978-1-4833-4578-9
(Required)

This text is available at the University Bookstore as well as online retailers (e.g., amazon.com, barnesandnobles.com, half.com, etc.). There will also be additional handouts/readings available on Blackboard Learn, including chapters from the book listed below.

Peters, B. Guy. 2016. *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*. 10th Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN 978-1-4833-9150-2

Technology Policy

Out of respect for your fellow students, your professor, and the educational process, all technology devices (laptops, tablets, and cell phones) must be put away, and not on your desk or on your lap during class. Recent studies have shown handwriting is more effective at retaining knowledge than using a computer or tablet to take notes, especially if you are engaged in other online activities such as surfing the web or chatting with

others. In addition, I want your focus to be on the lecture and class discussion instead of a screen, as you need to come to class already having read the readings. If you feel you have an **emergency** situation that requires you to need to access your phone, please discuss with me before class begins. Students who disregard the policy will be asked to leave class and will receive a zero for any in-class assignments that day.

Student Responsibilities and Attendance Policy

Please come to class prepared. This means you need to read the assigned section of the textbook beforehand. Attending class and participating is important, as there will be material discussed only in lectures that will be tested on exams and in-class assignments. Please treat your classmates with respect, especially during discussions. We each come to this course with diverse backgrounds and different ideas regarding various issues and how government should work. Please respect your classmates by not talking when others have the floor.

Class attendance is important and affects your final grade as exams cannot be made up unless an absence is excused (e.g. approved university activity, illness, funeral for immediate family). Absences related to your academic workload, work schedule, car problems, etc. are not usually excused absences. If you do miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining the missed material (e.g., notes) from another student, as my notes/PowerPoint slides will not be made available. In-class assignments cannot be made up, but exams may be made-up if you have an approved excuse or an emergency. If you have an emergency that causes you to miss an exam, you must contact me as soon as possible (within 24 hours unless there is a **valid** reason why you could not contact me sooner) to arrange a make-up exam that will be given in an alternative format from the exam taken in class.

Instructor Responsibilities

As part of being your instructor, I have responsibilities to you. I will help answer questions regarding the course, and help you understand all the material. I will be available during office hours and available by appointment if you cannot make office hours. I will also try to answer questions via email within 48 hours. Emails will not be answered in the evening or weekends. All questions regarding grades must be asked in person, either after class, or during office hours. If you are appealing a grade, be advised to come prepared to discuss why you think you should receive a higher grade. I will be using Blackboard Learn to communicate and post grades. Please check Blackboard Learn regularly to make sure you can view course announcements and review your grades as the semester progresses.

Grading

Exams – 75% (Three at 25% each)

In-class assignments – 15%

Letter to member of Congress or state legislator assignment – 10%

Final grade scale: A = 93% and above, A- = 90%-92%, B+ = 87%-89%, B = 83%-86%, B- = 80%-82%, C+ = 77%-79%, C = 73%-76%, C- = 70%-72%, D+ = 67%-69%, D = 60%-66%, F = 59% and below. (Note: I do not round up final grades if you are just below the cutoff, such as having a 93.8%. I have to define the scale at some point, and some students are always going to fall on the other side of the divide). There will be extra credit opportunities available to all students throughout the semester.

Exams (75% or 25% each): Exams will be given in class and make-up exams are only allowed with an approved excuse. The format of the exams will be multiple choice using a Scantron. Exams are not cumulative.

In-class assignments (15%): In lieu of an attendance, in-class assignments will be given throughout the semester that will not be announced beforehand and could be given at the start, in the middle, or at the end of class. In-class assignments include quizzes that will cover readings for day and will measure how prepared you are for that day's lecture and activities, short essays based on the day's topic, and other activities. The two lowest in-class assignment scores will be dropped. Make-ups are not allowed for in-class assignments.

Letter to member of Congress or state legislator (10%): There will also be a writing exercise that consists of drafting one-to-two-page (single-spaced) letter to your local member of Congress (either your Senator or Representative) or state legislature regarding an issue of your choice. Letters must use the proper format for business letters. Examples of how to format a business letter can be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/653/2/>. The issue you choose must be one that Congress has power to address, or an issue that the state legislature has power to address if you write a letter to your local member of the state legislature. You will submit a paragraph by Tuesday, March 14, outlining the topic of your letter and whom the letter will be addressed to. The proposal is worth 10 percent of the assignment. Letters must be uploaded to Blackboard Learn before class Tuesday, April 25. Late assignments are penalized 10 percent per day. As part of this assignment, you must come to class on Tuesday, May 2, with a stamped envelope addressed to the member of Congress or state legislator to their office in Washington, D.C. or respective state capitol with a hard copy of the letter ready to mail. I will be responsible for mailing your letters. There will be a 10-percent penalty if you do not come to class with an envelope ready to mail. If you are absent this day you must bring your envelope and letter to class Thursday, May 4.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

University policy 3-01.8 addresses academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. Academic dishonest, cheating, or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question. Repeat violations academic dishonesty/cheating/plagiarism on exams or the final paper will result in a failing grade for the course. I reserve the right to refer students for Plagiarism School or recommend to the Chair of the Department of Political Science that further action be taken. Kent State University policy on academic

honesty can be found at www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism.

Student Accessibility

University policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit <https://www.kent.edu/sas>) for more information on registration procedures for accommodation.

Registration Requirement

The official registration deadline for this course is January 22. Course drops must be completed by January 29 to not receive a Grade “W”, and the last day to withdraw with a Grade “W” is March 26. Please refer to the bursar’s policies regarding pro-rated tuition refund dates. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashFast) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline.

Course Schedule

Readings will come from the Kraft and Furlong text unless noted. Additional readings from the Peters text will be available on Blackboard Learn. You should be prepared to discuss the assigned reading on the day listed below. The instructor retains the right to make changes to the schedule as needed.

PART I - THE STUDY OF PUBLIC POLICY

Week 1

1/17 Introduction – Discussion of Syllabus

1/19 Public Policy and Politics

Chp. 1 (p. 1-19)

Week 2

1/24 Public Policy and Politics

Chp. 1 (p. 19-32)

1/26 Government Institutions and Policy Actors

Chp. 2 (p. 34-58)

Week 3

1/31 Government Institutions and Policy Actors
Chp. 2 (p. 59-72)

2/2 Understanding Public Policymaking
Chp. 3 (p. 74-93)

Week 4

2/9 Understanding Public Policymaking
Chp. 3 (p. 93-110)

2/9 Explaining Policy Choices
Chp. 3 of Peters text *Blackboard Learn

Week 5

2/14 Introduction into Policy Analysis
Chp. 4 (p. 112-128)

2/16 Introduction into Policy Analysis
Chp. 4 (p. 128-138)

Week 6

2/21 Exam #1

2/23 No class due to research trip
(C-SPAN video on effectiveness of 2009 federal stimulus and online discussion activity)

PART II – POLICY EVALUATION AND FISCAL/MONETARY POLICYMAKING

Week 7

2/28 Policy Problems and Alternatives
Chp. 5

3/2 Assessing Policy Alternatives
Chp. 6 (p. 170-184)

Week 8

3/7 Assessing Policy Alternatives
Chp. 6 (p. 184-206)

3/9 Budgeting and Public Policy
Chp. 11 of Peters text (p. 138-156)

Week 9

3/14 Budgeting and Public Policy
Chp. 11 of Peters text (p. 157-177)
Topic for letter-writing assignment due

3/16 Economic Policy
Chp. 7 (p. 210-235)

Week 10

3/21 Economic Policy
Chp. 7 (p. 236-256)

3/23 Exam #2

Spring Break (3/27 – 3/31)

PART III – CONTEMPORARY POLICYMAKING

Week 11

4/4 Health Care Policy
Chp. 8 (p. 258-277)

4/6 No class due to MPSA annual meeting
(Frontline video on how Affordable Care Act was passed and online discussion activity)

Week 12

4/11 Health Care Policy
Chp. 8 (p. 278-301)

4/13 Welfare and Social Security Policy
Chp. 9 (p. 302-318)

Week 13

4/18 Welfare and Social Security Policy
Chp. 9 (p. 319-336)

4/20 Social Policy
Chap. 16 of Peters text (p. 428-441) *Available on Blackboard Learn

Week 14

4/25 Social Policy
Chap. 16 of Peters text (p. 442-449) *Available on Blackboard Learn
Letter to member of Congress/state legislator due

4/27 Education Policy
Chp. 10 (p. 340-379)

Week 15

5/2 Foreign Policy and Homeland Security
Chp. 12 (p. 426-445)
Bring copy of letter in stamped envelope ready to mail

5/4 Foreign Policy and Homeland Security
Chp. 12 (p. 446-469)

Week 16 – Finals Week (Note different day and time)

5/11 (Thursday) Exam #3
(10:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)