

PADM 5382: Public Policy Development and Implementation, Fall 2008

Section 161: Tu 7:30–10:00 p.m., 202 Bullock Hall (BH)

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Office: 313 Lamar Bruni Vergara Science Center (LBVSC)

Hours: MWF 9:00–10:00 a.m., MW 2:30–3:15 p.m., Tu 6:00–7:30 p.m., or by appointment

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This course focuses on the *public policy* process in the United States: how potential ideas for government action are translated from concepts into reality. We will examine both the policy process at the federal (national) level and policy-making by state government and its subsidiary units.

Student Learning Objectives: Ideally, at the conclusion of this course, you will have a greater understanding of

- ▷ the structure of the American political system.
- ▷ the major stages in the policy process.
- ▷ the actors involved in the policy process.
- ▷ specific policy problems relevant to contemporary society in the United States, Texas, and the Laredo area.
- ▷ how policy-making differs at the national, state, and local levels.
- ▷ how to evaluate the successes and failures of government policy.
- ▷ how the ideal policy process differs from reality.

Prerequisites: Students enrolled in the MPA program should already have taken, or be concurrently enrolled in, PADM 5372: Survey of Public Administration and Public Affairs. Please see the MPA Director, Dr. William Riggs, if you have any questions about this corequisite requirement.

If you completed your undergraduate degree at TAMIU or another Texas institution of higher learning, or have an undergraduate major in political science, you should already have sufficient background in U.S. and Texas politics to successfully complete this course. If not, you should review and be familiar with the topics covered in PSCI 2305: American Government and PSCI 2306: State and Local Government.

Required Materials: There are **five** books required for this course:

- ▷ Martha Derthick. 2001. *Keeping the Compound Republic: Essays on American Federalism*. Washington: Brookings Institute Press. ISBN 978-0-81570-202-3.
- ▷ Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong. 2006. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*, 2nd ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 978-1-56802-941-2.
- ▷ Michael C. Munger. 2000. *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practice*. New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-97399-0.
- ▷ Costas Panagopolous and Joshua Schank. 2007. *All Roads Lead to Congress: The \$300 Billion Fight Over Highway Funding*. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 978-0-87289-461-7.
- ▷ *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy: Selections from CQ Researcher*, 9th Ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 978-0-87289-609-3.

All these textbooks should be available, new and used, at the TAMIU Bookstore in the Student Center; you may also be able to order them on-line at a discount.

Additional readings may be assigned at the discretion of the professor and will be provided for you at the library reserve desk, on the course Angel site, or as handouts in class.

Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on the following elements:

Local Policy Brief	15%
Local Policy Brief Presentation	5%
National Policy Brief	15%
National Policy Discussion	10%
Book Review	15%
Final Exam	20%
Homework	10%
Class Participation	10%

Your final grade in the course will be assigned based on this scale:

Final Average	≥ 90.0	≥ 80.0	≥ 70.0	≥ 60.0	< 60.0
Grade	A	B	C*	D*	F*
Grade Points	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0.0

* The grade of “D” is a failing grade in graduate school (in other words, you must retake this course if you want it to count towards your degree), and no more than two “C”s may count for credit towards a master’s degree in any TAMIU graduate program. In addition, you must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA (“B” average) to remain in good standing.

Exam: The exam will be an open-book, take-home examination. Per college policy, the final exam is *comprehensive*. The requirements for written assignments below apply; however, unlike the other written assignments in this course, you *may not* consult with other individuals while working on the exam.

National Policy Brief: In this paper, you will consider a single national policy issue from a chapter of *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy* that will be discussed in class (see the list under “course outline”). Ideally, each student will be assigned a unique topic.

This policy brief should:

1. Describe the problem faced by the United States.
2. Outline steps that have already been taken to try to deal with the problem.
3. Describe alternative policies that could be pursued, including their expected costs and benefits.
4. Recommend a *politically feasible* alternative and justify that choice. If this is not the ideal alternative, you should discuss why it is not feasible.

In your discussion, you should *go beyond* the points of view presented in *Issues for Debate* to include discussions from at least *five* other perspectives, drawn from:

- ▷ position papers from policy institutes or “think tanks,” such as the American Enterprise Institute, Center for American Progress, the Reason Foundation, Cato Institute, Brookings Institution, Heritage Institute, Hoover Institution, Public Citizen, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Council on Foreign Relations;
- ▷ scholarly journal articles; and,
- ▷ long-form essays (at least five pages long) from magazines such as *The Atlantic*, *Mother Jones*, *Reason*, *The New Republic*, *The Economist*,¹ and *National Review*.

¹Generally, only “special sections” of *The Economist* will qualify.

This paper should be approximately ten pages long and is due *two weeks* after your topic is presented in class. You should also provide copies of the paper to your fellow students in the course, either on-line or in printed form.

You are also expected to *lead class discussion* on the topic on the date it is to be discussed in class. This means you should be thoroughly familiar with the debate in question and prepared to answer questions about other experts' opinions besides those presented in *Issues for Debate*.

Local Policy Brief: In this paper, you will explore alternative policies for a problem that is *primarily* under the control of local government and relevant to Laredo and/or Webb County.

The policy brief should:

1. Describe the problem faced by Laredo and/or Webb County.
2. Outline steps that have already been taken to try to deal with the problem.
3. Describe alternative policies that could be pursued, including their costs and benefits.
4. Recommend an alternative and justify that choice.

Pursuing recent issues of the *Laredo Morning Times* and *LareDOS* should provide some examples of the policy problems that Laredo and Webb County are currently dealing with.

Policies that Laredo and/or Webb County would be unable to pursue independently without substantial changes in federal or state law are not acceptable topics for the policy brief. Examples of unacceptable topics include (but are not limited to) immigration policy, altering the "border fence," abortion, the War on Drugs (except as it relates to demands on local law enforcement bodies), terrorism, No Child Left Behind, school vouchers, welfare benefits, social security reform, improving services from the VA, etc. The problem need not be unique to the area (most of Laredo's public policy problems aren't!), but it must be addressable within the competence and powers of local government.

This paper should be approximately ten pages long and be suitable for presentation to the Laredo City Council, Webb County Commissioners Court, or other relevant governing body. You will make an oral presentation to the class presenting the key findings of your paper at the end of the semester. This paper will be due on Tuesday, December 2nd at the beginning of class.

Book Review: In this paper, you will write a 5–7-page book review of Panagopolous and Schank's *All Roads Lead To Congress*. In the book review you should both summarize the book and place the book's arguments in the context of the broader course; in particular, you should examine the degree to which Panagopolous and Schank's account of the policy process in Congress that led to the passage of the SAFETEA bill comports with the "idealized" policy-making process described in our textbooks. You should also consider other approaches to setting national transportation policy and the obstacles to making policy via more ideal means.

Examples of scholarly book reviews can be found in recent editions of the *Public Administration Review*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and the *American Journal of Political Science*.

General Requirements for Written Work: All papers written for this course must be word-processed or electronically typeset. The body of your paper should be double-spaced and written using a proportional typeface (either 11 point or 12 point).²

The paper must consistently utilize an "author-year" citation style, such as that of the [American Political Science Association](#) (or, if you prefer, one of the [Modern Language Association](#) or

²Proportional typefaces include Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Garamond, etc. "Typewriter-style" (constant-width) typefaces such as Courier New are not acceptable.

American Psychological Association styles), include appropriate figures and tables and a full bibliography listing the works cited in your paper, and be written in standard English using coherent prose and acceptable grammar. You should also include a title page with the date, title, and appropriate identifying information.

Your paper must be an individual effort; you may consult with me, the Writing Center, other faculty members, or other students, but the writing and research must be substantially your own work.

Homework: There will be a few, relatively brief homework exercises associated with the policy analysis section of the course. These exercises are designed to help you perform better on the final examination. We will typically go over each homework exercise the week after it is assigned in class.

Class Policies: As this course is a *seminar*, it is your responsibility to have completed the readings prior to class and to be ready to discuss them with your fellow students. I realize that many of you have daytime employment and/or other obligations, but that does not relieve you of the responsibility to devote out-of-class time to this course. While I, as the professor, will often lead the discussion, you are expected to contribute to the success of the class as well.

As graduate students, you are solely responsible for your performance in the course and attendance. I am always happy to meet with students to discuss their concerns about the course, but I will not necessarily assume that you are in difficulty simply because you perform poorly on an assignment or disappear from class for a few days.

Please provide a respectful learning environment for your fellow students. Repeated tardiness, cell phone disruptions, reading materials unrelated to the course (such as the student newspaper), and abuse of communication technologies (e.g., web browsing/IMing/texting during class) during class will adversely affect your participation grade; per university policy, repeated disruptive behavior may result in your involuntary withdrawal from the course.

Please arrive at class *on time* and mute (or switch off) all pagers, cell phones, and alarms during class.

I do not provide lecture notes for students under any circumstances. You will have to rely on the generosity of a classmate or make use of the materials provided on the textbook website or the textbook's study guide. Students with disabilities who require notes or other learning environment accommodations should consult with the Student Disability Services office for assistance.

This syllabus is subject to revision by the professor.

Grade Appeals: If you wish to dispute a grade on a particular assignment for any reason other than an obvious arithmetic error on my part, you will need to type a one-page explanation of your position and turn it in, along with the original graded assignment, *at least one week after* the assignment is returned to you. I will then consider your appeal and make a determination. Appeals must be submitted in hard copy format; no appeals submitted via email will be considered.

For appeals regarding your final grade in the course, please consult the Student Handbook and Catalog for procedures.

University and College Policies: The following policies of the TAMIU College of Arts and Sciences and Texas A&M International University are reproduced here for your information; you may already be familiar with them from other courses, but please review them.

STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS: All students must obtain a TAMIU email address and have access to the Angel E-Learning system. Students should check their TAMIU email on a regular basis.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR DROPPING A COURSE: It is the student's responsibility to drop the course before the designated drop date. Faculty are not responsible for dropping students who stop attending class.

OFFICE HOURS: Your professor will keep regular office hours, as posted above, and appointments can be made to accommodate students' schedules. The door will be open for all students on a "first-come, first-served" basis when no appointment has been previously scheduled.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Texas A&M International University seeks to promote reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local level laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Student Disability Services office and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: The College of Arts and Sciences encourages classroom discussion and academic debate as an essential intellectual activity. It is essential that students learn to express and defend their beliefs, but it is also essential that they learn to listen and respond respectfully to others whose beliefs they may not share. The College will always tolerate diverse, unorthodox, and unpopular points of view, but it will not tolerate condescending or insulting remarks. When students verbally abuse or ridicule and intimidate others whose views they do not agree with, they subvert the free exchange of ideas that should characterize a university classroom. If their actions are deemed by the professor to be disruptive, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being involuntarily withdrawn from the class.

COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS: The Copyright Act of 1976, as amended by the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, grants to copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce their works and distribute copies of their work. Works that receive copyright protection include published works such as a textbook. Copying a textbook without permission from the owner of the copyright may constitute a copyright infringement. Civil and criminal penalties may be assessed for copyright infringement. Civil penalties include damages up to \$100,000; criminal penalties include a fine up to \$250,000 and imprisonment.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING: Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as one's own work. Recently the internet has complicated the issue. Taking from the internet and presenting it as one's own work is still plagiarism. Copying another student's paper or a portion of the paper is called "copying." Neither plagiarism nor copying will be tolerated. Should a faculty member discover that a student committed plagiarism, the student will receive a grade of "F" in that course and the matter will be referred to the Executive Director of Student Life for possible disciplinary action.

INCOMPLETES: Incompletes are discouraged and are assigned only under extenuating circumstances. College policy mandates 70% of course requirements must be met before an "I" can be considered. In fairness to those students who complete the course as scheduled, under no circumstances will an incomplete ("I") be changed to an "A" unless the student has experienced a death in the immediate family or has a written medical excuse from a physician.

Course Outline: Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and will be posted to the course calendar and in Angel. We will not necessarily read books in the order they appear on the syllabus; please be sure you read the correct chapters *in advance of* the designated class dates.

While the professor may periodically remind students of upcoming scheduled events, it is **your responsibility** to be familiar with this schedule and any changes to it.

As our class sessions are scheduled for 2½ hours, I will typically schedule a short, ten-minute break at around 8:40 p.m. Please return promptly so we can keep on-schedule.

Aug 26: Introduction Introduction to the course; what is public policy?

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 1; Munger, Chapter 1.

Sep 2: Policy Actors Who is involved in the policy-making process?; federalism and public policy; organized interests and the policy agenda.

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 2; Derthick, Chapters 1–4; Madison, *Federalist* #10 (R); Schattschneider, “The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System” (R)

Sep 9: The Interaction Between Policy and Politics Who decides?

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 3; Munger, Chapter 2.

Sep 16: Policy Analysis I Overview of policy analysis; regulation versus the market.

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 4; Munger, Chapters 3–4.

Sep 23: Policy Analysis II Is policy analysis “objective”?; the limits of democratic decision-making.

Readings: Munger, Chapters 5–6.

Sep 30: Policy Analysis III The Welfare Economics paradigm; regulatory approaches; policy alternatives.

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 5; Munger, Chapters 7–8.

Oct 7: Policy Analysis IV Discounting

Readings: Munger, Chapters 9–10.

Oct 14: Assessing Alternative Policies Cost-Benefit Analysis

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 6, 13; Munger, Chapters 11–12.

Book review due at beginning of class.

Oct 21: Economic Policy Fiscal and monetary policy.

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 7; CQ Researcher, Chapters 12, 16.

Oct 28: Health Care Policy

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 8; CQ Researcher, Chapters 3–4; Derthick, Chapter 7.

Nov 4: Welfare and Education Policy

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 9–10; CQ Researcher, Chapters 1–2, 5; Derthick, Chapter 5.

Nov 11: Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Policy

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 11; CQ Researcher, Chapters 7–9, 13; Panagopolous and Schank.

Nov 18: Foreign Policy and Homeland Security

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 12; CQ Researcher, Chapters 10, 14, 15.

Nov 25, Dec 2: Local Policy Presentations

Local Policy Brief due at beginning of class, December 2nd.

Tuesday, December 9, 8:00 p.m. Final Exam Due