American Public Policy
Political Science 210.001
Fall 2015
BOL 95
M/W 12:30-1:45PM

Prof. Paru Shah
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Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11 am
and by appointment.

Teaching Assistant:
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Office Hours: Thursday, 1-2pm

Course Description:
This course offers an introduction and overview to American public policy. The course is divided into the two major sections. In Part I, we focus on the process of public policy making. We begin with a comprehensive study of what public policy is and why we study it. Next, we turn our attention to the theories of policymaking and some of the key explanations for how policy is made in the American political system. We then turn our attention to the role of institutions and non-institutional actors in American public policy. In Part II of the course, we look more closely at past and current public policy debates in a number of policy venues, including education, social welfare and poverty, immigrant, foreign defense, and morality policy.

The goals of the class are, first, to help students develop a fuller understanding of public policy and the way governments make policy decisions. The second goal is to encourage students to look ahead to the implications of policy choices. And the third goal is to foster critical thinking public policy and possible alternative courses of action.

Required Texts:


Additional readings will be made available on D2L.

Course Requirements

(1) Engaged Participation (10 points)
An undergraduate seminar depends to a great extent on the efforts of the students. Each student plays a large role in the creation and quality of the course. Engaged participation includes attending all classes and arriving on time, reading all the assigned readings before our meeting, and coming to class prepared to discuss and question them. It also means listening to your fellow classmates and being respectful of differing viewpoints.
(2) Discussion Assignments (50 points)
Discussion activities are designed for you to demonstrate what you have learned from the reading and apply the knowledge in various contexts. It is also an area where you can demonstrate your skills as a critical analyzer - break down the ideas, analyze the parts, and make a coherent argument.

Answer the discussion prompt in D2L under "Discussions." These should be 350-400 words in length. Full credit will be given to answers that are complete, refer to readings/lecture notes, and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

Except for Discussion Assignment #1, discussion assignments are always due on Monday by noon.

There are 5 discussion assignments (10 points each).

I do not accept late assignments – all discussion assignments not turned in by the due date/time will receive a zero.

(3) In-Class Debates (50 points)
The second half of the course will be focused on current public policy debates. Over the course of 6 weeks, we will look closely at issues, including their historical development, and current policy practices. Students will participate in 2 debates, and will be required to turn in two group position papers. More information about the debates will be provided in class.

(4) Exams (125 points): Two exams will be given. The first will be a midterm exam, and cover the material from Part I of the course (October 14th). The midterm will be worth 50 points.

The Final exam will be held on Monday, December 21st (12:30-2:30pm) and will be cumulative over the full course (75 points).

Grade distribution:
Letter grades will be assigned according to the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>100-94%</td>
<td>93-90%</td>
<td>89-88%</td>
<td>87-82%</td>
<td>81-80%</td>
<td>79-78%</td>
<td>77-72%</td>
<td>71-70%</td>
<td>69-68%</td>
<td>67-62%</td>
<td>61-60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are encouraged to keep track of their progress in the course and consult with me in person should they have questions or concerns about their performance. Please note I will not discuss grades via email or telephone.

Other Policies

1. Students with disabilities. Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf

2. Religious observances. Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm
3. *Students called to active military duty*. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.

http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

4. *Incompletes*. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work.

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

5. *Discriminatory conduct* (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

6. *Academic misconduct*. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University.

http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

7. *Complaint procedures*. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy.

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

8. *Grade appeal procedures*. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School.

http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm
Course Schedule
*subject to change

Part I: The Public Policy Process

Week 1: (September 2)
• W: Introductions

Week 2: The Study of Public Policy (September 9)
• W: Anderson, Chapter 1
  * Discussion Assignment #1 Due

Week 3: The Policy Makers and Their Environment (September 14-16)
• M: D2L Assignment
  *Discussion Assignment #2 Due
• W: Anderson, Chapter 2

Week 4: Policy Formation: Problems, Agendas and Formulation (September 21-23)
• M: Anderson, Chapter 3, pp: 87-105
  *Discussion Assignment #3 Due
• W: Anderson, Chapter 3, pp: 106-132

Week 5: Policy Adoption and Budgeting (September 28 – 30)
• M: Anderson, Chapter 4
  *Discussion Assignment #4 Due
• W: Anderson, Chapter 5

Week 6: Policy Implementation (October 5-7)
• M: Anderson, Chapter 6, pp 225-238
  *Discussion Assignment #5 Due
• W: Anderson, Chapter 6, pp. 239-289

Week 7: Policy Impact, Evaluation and Change (October 12-14)
• M: Anderson, Chapter 7
• W: Exam #1


Part II: Public Policy Debates

Week 8: **Debate Prep** (October 19-21)

- M:
- W:

Week 9: **Policy I** (October 26-28)

- M:
- W: Debate #1

Week 10: **Policy II** (November 2 - 4)

- M:
- W: Debate #2

Week 11: **Policy III** (November 9-11)

- M:
- W: Debate #3

Week 12/13: **Policy IV** (November 16-18, November 23)

- M:
- W:
- M: Debate #4

Week 14: **Policy V** (November 30 – December 2)

- M:
- W: Debate #5

Week 15: **Policy VI** (December 7-9)

- M:
- W: Debate #6

Week 16: **Course Wrap-up**

- M:

**Final Exam: Monday, December 21st, 12:30-2:30pm**