

**American Public Policy
Political Science 210.001
Fall 2021
Bolton B95
Hybrid Class: Face-to-Face T 12:30-1:45pm; On-line TH**

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Course Description:

This course offers an overview to and application of American public policy. We begin with an overview of the nature and purpose of public policy. 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. With these theoretical building blocks, we then cover seven major areas of contemporary public policy.

The goals of the class are, first, to help students develop a fuller understanding of public policy and the ways government makes 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:

Mintrom, Michael. 2019. *Public Policy: Investing for a Better World*. Oxford University Press.

Additional readings will be made available on Canvas.

Panther Community Health and Safety Standards:

UWM has implemented reasonable health and safety protocols, taking into account recommendations by local, state and national public health authorities, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of our campus community, you are expected to abide by the Panther Interim COVID-Related Health & Safety Rules, which were developed in accordance with public health guidelines.

These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus, UWM grounds, or participating in a UWM-sponsored activity:

- All individuals visiting UWM facilities must wear face coverings while indoors;
- Unvaccinated students coming to campus are required to test weekly for COVID-19; and,
- You should check daily for COVID-19 symptoms and not come to campus if you are feeling sick. Additional details about student and staff expectations can be found on the UWM COVID-19 webpage.

Course Format and Expectations:

This is a hybrid course, taught partly on-line and partly face-to-face. This means you will need a computer with Internet access to take this course, and an ability to work independently.

You will complete a reading assignment and quiz every week, due at Monday midnight. We will meet in person on Tuesday from 12:30-1:45pm.

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 face-to-face 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.

Course Requirements

(1) Reading Quizzes (110 points)

Every week you will need to complete a short (10 question) quiz on the reading, available on D2L. These quizzes will serve a number of purposes, including ensuring you are prepared for our face-to-face discussions on Thursday. In addition, they will prepare you for the exams.

There are 10 reading quizzes, each required to be completed by Monday at midnight (**10 points each**). They are posted in Canvas under "Quizzes," and have a time cap of 30 minutes.

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

(2) Policy Position Papers (100 points)

We will be examining eight public policy areas, including historical development and current policy practices. You will be responsible for writing **4 policy position papers**. More information about the papers is found at the end of the syllabus.

They will always be due Monday at midnight, in Canvas.

(3) Exams (150 points): Three exams will be given, each worth 50 points. They will not be cumulative, and the format will be short answer/essay.

Grade distribution:

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following distribution:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-
100-94%	93-90%	89-88%	87-82%	81-80%	79-78%	77-72%	71-70%	69-68%	67-62%	61-60%

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: Sept 2

- TH: Complete Indiana University Plagiarism Test (<https://plagiarism.iu.edu/register.html>)

Read Mintrom Chapter 1; Complete Quiz 1

Week 2: Sept 7-9

- T: Introductions and Course Overview
In Class Application: The Value of Higher Education
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 2; Complete Quiz 2, Part A

Week 3: Sept 14-16

- T: Theories of Policy Making
- TH: Complete Quiz 2, Part B

Week 4: Sept 21-23

- T: In Class Application: Same-Sex Marriage
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 3; Complete Quiz 3

Week 5: Sept 28-30

- T: Library Presentation
- TH: Take **Exam#1 - online**

Part II: Applications

Week 6: Oct 5-7

- T: Policy Analysis: Defining Problems, Solutions and Evaluating Outcomes
- TH: Read Mintrom, Chapter 4; Complete Quiz 4
Read CQ Researcher Biden's Infrastructure Plan

Week 7: Oct 12-14

**** Monday – Public Infrastructure Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Biden's Infrastructure Plan
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 5; Complete Quiz 5
Read CQ Researcher Domestic Terrorism

Week 8: Oct 19-21

**** Monday – Domestic Terrorism Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Extremist Groups in the US
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 6; Complete Quiz 6
Read CQ Researcher Public School Funding

Week 9: Oct 26-28

**** Monday – Public Schooling Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Public Education Funding
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 7; Complete Quiz 7
Additional reading TBD

Week 10: Nov 2-4

**** Monday –Health and Society Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Social Determinants of Health
- TH: **Exam #2 - online**

Week 11: Nov 9-11

- T: Case Study: Racism is a Public Health Issue
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 8; Complete Quiz 8
Read CQ Researcher Women in the Workplace

Week 12: Nov 16-18

**** Monday –Poverty Alleviation Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Women in the Workplace
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 9; Complete Quiz 9
Read CQ Researcher Police Under Scrutiny

Week 13: Nov 23-25

**** Monday –Criminal Justice Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Police Reform
- TH: THANKSGIVING!

Week 14: Nov 30-Dec 2

- T: In Class Discussion: Police Reform
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 10; Complete Quiz 10
Read CQ Researcher Expertise Under Assault

Week 15: Dec 7-9

**** Monday –Science Policy Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Governing Misinformation
- TH: Read Mintrom Chapter 11, Complete Quiz 11
Read CQ Researcher Extreme Weather

Week 16: Dec 14

**** Monday –Environmental Justice Paper Due**

- T: Case Study: Governing Climate Change

Exam #3: Tuesday, December 21 (on-line)

Short Paper Assignment – Policy Analysis

Length: 1250-1500 words

Grade: 25 points

Due – Monday at midnight day before class.

Required number of references – 3.

Part 1: Problem Analysis

This section describes the symptoms, magnitude, and consequences of the problem you are analyzing, and identifies one or more plausible goals for government intervention (i.e. goals for a policy or program). Your analysis should convince a thoughtful, analytic reader (such as myself) of the existence and importance of the problem, and inform the reader about alternative goals for public intervention.

Warning: you should not approach this as an advocate (watch out for exaggerated claims, etc.) and you should not begin by identifying the lack of a policy or program as the problem. Nor should you start with a program itself. All programs deal with a problem or issue.

Your analysis should address the following questions:

What are the symptoms of the problem (name at least 3)? Who is affected? How?
What is the magnitude of the problem? What happens if the problem continues? What are the plausible goals for intervention (name at least 2)?

Part 2: Solution Analysis

This section describes and evaluates the policy alternatives designed to help meet the policy goals. You are expected to *identify two or more policy or program alternatives* (one of which may be to “do nothing” or to “maintain the status quo”) and to identify and logically support criteria by which these alternatives can be compared. The alternatives can draw on both existing policies and programs, or propose new ones.

This section should address the following questions:

What are 2 to 3 principal policy alternatives? (Existing or possible)
What three criteria should be used to evaluate policy alternatives?
How can they be measured and implemented?
Based on the existing evidence, what outcomes do you predict for each alternative on the specified evaluation criteria?

Part 3: Implementation Analysis

Now that you know the problem, the goals, the alternatives, and advantages of each, your job in this segment is to think critically about the implementation realities. You will want to consider

the political interests and how they are organized, along with the capacity (both public and private) to enact policy alternatives. And remember, new policies create new politics (as well as the reverse!) Finally, you must decide! Based on your analysis, in about one page, make a recommendation for action or, if there is no single “best” solution, compare the relative benefits of the top two alternatives.

Questions to be addressed in this section include:

Can you recommend one policy alternative, which is clearly superior to the others? If not, what are the most important tradeoffs to consider in the choice between the top two alternatives?

Paper Positions

Public Infrastructure: Infrastructure projects should include nontraditional items such as aid for home health care workers, job training and expanding green energy source.

Domestic Terrorism: Domestic terrorism should be a federal crime.

Public Schooling: States should increase public school funding.

Health and Society: States should spend more money on social services to reduce health care costs.

Poverty Alleviation: The US should provide federal childcare.

Criminal Justice: Milwaukee should defund the police.

Science: The US government should sanction authors of misinformation on social media.

Environmental Justice: The US government should create tougher policies on fuel efficiency standards for cars.