**URPA 5311: SOCIAL POLICY FORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

**Spring 2015**

**Instructor(s):** Dr. Colleen Casey

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 2:30-4:30 pm and by appointment.

**Section Information:** URPA 5311, 001

**Time and Place of Class Meetings:** Mondays, 6:00-8:50 pm, University Hall Room 09

**Description of Course Content:** The course covers the policy process, policy formulation and provides an introduction to the tools and techniques of policy analysis, using multiple theoretical and analytical perspectives. The primary focus is on U.S. policy, with an emphasis on state and local policy issues. The course aims to provide students with a foundation in the theory, process, and tools of policy analysis, so that they are able to think critically about applied public policy problems and the role of policy analysts. Students will also gain practical skills in the development and presentation of policy analysis and recommendations.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Compare and contrast the different approaches and models of policy analysis in order to differentiate the strengths and limitations of each.
2. Identify, analyze and evaluate scholarly reports, publications and policy reports in order to locate background information on a social problem.
3. Evaluate published scholarly reports, publications and policy reports in order to differentiate the quality of the tools and techniques applied.
4. Construct a policy position paper using audience specific language to effectively communicate a policy message.

**Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:**

Kraft, M. & Furlong, S. (2014). *Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives, 5th ed*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-4833-4578-9

Radin, B. (2000). *Beyond Machiavelli: Policy analysis reaches midlife, 2nd ed*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN: 9781589019584. e-book: 9781589019591

Smith, C. (2012). *Writing public policy: A practical guide to communicating in the policy-making process*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199933921

**Descriptions of major assignments and examinations\*:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Quantity** | **Points Each** | **Total Points**  |
| **Mid-Term Exam** | 1 | 100 | 100 |
| **Short Assignments** | 3 | 25 | 75 |
| **Leading and Facilitating Class Discussion**--Leading--Facilitating | 11 | 2525 | 2525 |
| **Policy Communication** | 1 | 100 | 100 |
| **Total**  | 7 |  | 325 |

\*Note: Official syllabus will be distributed in class and posted to BB on the day the class begins.

**Attendance:** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I do not take attendance; however, attendance at all class meetings is encouraged and typically there is a correlation between student performance and course attendance.

However, It is important that students understand that any attendance rules applied in my course are my own and *not* a matter of institutional policy. Other courses have other rules that require attendance to be tracked to be compliance with federal regulations. More information can be found here: <http://www.tgslc.org/pdf/Program-integrity-R2T4-Taking-Attendance.pdf>

**Other Requirements:** There are no prerequisites for this course; however, this is a graduate level course and as such, students can anticipate a great deal of out-of-class work that may also include small group work.

**Grading**: Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor or teaching assistant) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels. Grades are typically returned to you within 10-14 days of submission and will be tracked on the course Blackboard (BB) site.

**Make-up Exams**: Make-up Exams are not allowed. If you have a medical emergency, you will need to contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss possible options. All medical emergencies require official documentation.

**Expectations for Out-of-Class Study**: Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional 9 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

**Grade Grievances**: Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current University Catalog. For graduate courses, see <http://catalog.uta.edu/academicregulations/grades/#graduatetext>.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located in the center of the building. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Support Services**:UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**The English Writing Center (411LIBR)**: Hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am to 3 pm Fridays and Noon to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Walk In ***Quick Hits*** sessions during all open hours Mon-Thurs. Register and make appointments online at [http://uta.mywconline.com](http://uta.mywconline.com/). Classroom Visits, Workshops, and advanced services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information.

**Library Resources:** Mitch Stepanovich is the SUPA subject librarian. His contact information is 817-272-2945, or stepanovich@uta.edu. Additional library resources include:

Library Home Page <http://www.uta.edu/library>

Subject Guides [http://libguides.uta.edu](http://libguides.uta.edu" \t "_blank)

Subject Librarians [http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php](http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Database List [http://www.uta.edu/library/databases/index.php](http://www.uta.edu/library/databases/index.php%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Course Reserves [http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do](http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Library Tutorials [http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php](http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Connecting from Off- Campus [http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus](http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Ask A Librarian [http://ask.uta.edu](http://ask.uta.edu/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**Assignment details**

**1) Leading and Facilitating Class Discussions**

**Class Participation, Presentations and Leading of Class Discussion**The success of the course as a learning experience depends, to a large extent, on the level and quality of participation by students. Class participation by everyone in the class is therefore required. Participation quality is enhanced by the students’ willingness to challenge the readings, established concepts and theories, and each other or by highlighting the important and interesting points. This can only be accomplished by prior preparation and attendance to all class sessions.

**Class discussion/presentation**. Students will lead **ONE** class discussion and serve as a discussion facilitator for **ONE** class session. Lead and Discussant roles will be assigned at the beginning of the class.

* **Leaders** are expected to prepare and deliver a presentation covering the most salient ideas from the readings and activity assigned for the week. The presentation can be delivered using Powerpoint or Prezi. Quality of oral presentations should heed the criteria in Oral Presentation Rubric found in BB/Rubrics. The PPT file of the presentation should be posted to the “Discussion” section in BB for the corresponding lead # . Leaders are required to submit a 2-3 page outline of key points in their planned presentation to the instructors and the discussion facilitators **THE WEDNESDAY** prior to the class session they intend to lead.
* **Discussion Facilitators** (discussants) are expected to integrate the leader’s presentations in order to lead the class in discussion**.** The role of the discussant is to be idea “provocateur” and to lead the class discussion with questions prepared based on the readings and the activity for the week. The facilitator will summarize convergences or divergences from the different class leads and pose questions to the class and the class leads to further discussion. The discussant should follow and adhere to the the “discussant guidelines” posted in BB. Following the class lesson, the discussant(s) will upload their summary to the appropriate discussion thread.

**2) Short Assignments.**

**Assignment #1: Framing the Problem**

Assignment one will be a 2-3 page (single-spaced) news review focused on framing public policy and treatment of policy issues in the news media. You will be required to review 3 major newspapers to explain how they portray or frame a particular policy issue. Your essay should address the following questions:

How is your policy issue framed in the press? What evidence of policy analysis do you find in the various articles? Which are most persuasive? Why? What tools do they use? Which are least persuasive? Why? What tools do they use?

Students will post their 2-3 page news review on BB before class on the date the essay is due. ***Failure to be present in class will result in a 50% deduction in points for the assignment.***

**Short Assignment #2: The Role of Policy Analysts**

Assignment two asks you to discuss the role policy analysts play in today’s policy environment and what skills are critical. Based on the knowledge you gained on tools and techniques of policy analysis, identify a policy issue or problem you care a lot about and write a 2-3 page essay (single-spaced) that addresses the following:

* In a paragraph, describe the issue in your own words and why you chose it.
* Provide some statistics, data, or other evidence of the problem. It should come from a credible source that you reference. Explain why the source is credible.
* Is there political conflict surrounding this issue? If so, identify two interest groups or policymakers that have opposing views on this issue and explain their position.
* Explain how policy analysis (and policy analysts) can bring greater clarity to the problem. And, to do so, what skills, tools, or techniques are important for policy analysts in today’s policy environment?

All students will post their 2-3 page assignment on BB before class on the date the essay is due. ***Failure to be present in class will result in a 50% deduction in points for the assignment.***

**Assignment #3: Draft Policy Position Paper**

Assignment three is a draft of the written portion of your final assignment. You are required to write a policy position paper that recommends a particular policy action, as described in Chapters 6 and 7 in the Smith book. Students will post their draft position paper on BB before class on the date it is due. Students should be prepared to share their paper with the class and/or small groups of students in order to get feedback on ways to improve it before the final class sessions.

**3) Mid Term Examination**

The mid term examination will be held in class, following the week of spring break. It will be a short essay exam, closed book and note. Prior to the week of spring break, all students will receive a list of possible mid-term questions. On the day of the exam, students will be randomly assigned a question from the list, and this will constitute the mid term exam. You will have the entire class session to respond to the question.

**4) Policy Position Paper & Presentation**

The final assignment is the creation of a policy position paper and presentation around a policy issue of your choice. Guidance for the written final product is provided in the Smith book (Chapters 6 and 7). However, a grading rubric will be published after the mid term examination to provide transparency as to how the papers will be graded. Position papers should be limited to 6-8 pages, double-spaced, Times, 11’ font, 1” margins. They should include both an argument (Chapter 6) as well as a suggested course of policy action (Chapter 7).