

PPA 340 – POLICY NETWORKS

Instructor: Chandrasekhar Commuri
Fall 2009; CRN-80310
Thursdays at 6 PM; SCI-III 105
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Catalog Description

“This course offers an overview of the policy-making process and policy networks at the national, state, and local levels. This process can be divided (somewhat arbitrarily) into several stages: agenda setting, policy formulations, policy adoption, budgeting, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. The course covers the relevant literature on each stage of the process. The course will also examine several important policy areas including economic policy, energy and environmental policy, crime and criminal justice, welfare policy, health policy, education policy, legal and social equality, immigration policy, and life-style policy. Satisfies Theme III (Social Science Requirement) in the General Education Program.”

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to the basic concepts, theories, and issues in the study of American public policy making. This course is suitable for students that have not taken any previous public policy coursework. A different topic in the public policy making process is studied each week. Students apply these concepts and theories to policy issues through various exercises.

The course will be delivered in the classroom and online. The online components may include instruction as well as student exercises (like discussion boards). The course thus has a ‘hybrid’ delivery model.

By the end of the course students should:

1. Understand the core concepts that form the basis for policy studies.
2. Describe the public policy making system in the US.
3. Apply policy concepts and models to at least one policy issue.
4. Make well reasoned arguments about public policy issues.

The course meets the following goals of the PPA department's undergraduate major (through the listed assignments):

- 1a and 1b. Oral and written communication (policy paper and presentations)
- 1c. Teamwork (presentations)
- 2b. Politics (in-class discussions; policy paper)
- 3a. Theory application (case analyses; policy paper)
- 3f. Argumentation (presentations; policy paper)
- 4d. Public management (implementation section of the policy paper)

Readings

Christopher Simon: Public Policy - Preferences & Outcomes, Pearson Longman.
Journal articles and cases will be assigned during the term and will be available on WebCT.

Assignments

The course has the following assignments for which you are individually responsible:

- Plagiarism note
- Exams (2)
- WebCT discussion boards (2)
- Policy paper

You will complete the following assignments as a member of a team:

- Policy issue presentation
- Chapter presentation

See the 'Schedule' section below for assignment due dates.

Format for written assignments: Please follow the APA style guide for all written assignments in this course. Unless otherwise specified, written assignments are due at the start of class on the due dates. Please bring a paper copy to class; do not submit by e-mail.

Individual assignments

Attendance and participation: You are expected to attend every class session having completed the assigned readings. Class sessions will involve students in discussion through questions on the readings. Students can earn up to 10 points for attendance,

and up to 30 points for class participation and for completing small homework projects. Homework projects can only be submitted by students that actually attend a class session in which the homework was handed out.

Plagiarism note: You should read the ‘What is Plagiarism?’ handout and explore the links referenced there. You should then write a one-page note answering the questions, ‘What is plagiarism?’ and ‘Why are the penalties for plagiarism so severe?’ You will receive full credit if you submit this assignment on time; otherwise, you will receive 0 points.

Exams: These are closed book, in-class exams that will test your understanding of the key concepts in the Simon book. The exam will mostly consist of definitions and short answers.

WebCT discussion boards: Two class sessions will be conducted on WebCT (see ‘schedule’ below). You will have to complete the exercises assigned, answer the discussion questions, and respond to the postings of other students.

Policy paper: You will write an 8-page paper (not including references) on a topic assigned by me. This topic is the same one that your team will work on for its ‘policy issue presentation’ assignment. This paper is due after the last class session. You can submit this paper in one of two ways—send your file as an email attachment to ccommuri@csu.edu or upload it on WebCT. When I receive your paper, I will send you an email confirmation within 24 hours; if you don’t get a confirmation from me, I don’t have your paper.

Team assignments

Chapter presentation: Student teams will be assigned chapters from the Simon textbook for presentations. Each team will make a 20-minute presentation on the basis of the assigned chapter and following the instructions and questions assigned to the team. These chapters deal with substantive policy areas. All the students in the team are expected to participate in the preparation and delivery of the presentation. Teams should sign up by the second class session.

Policy issue presentation: Your team will be assigned a topic for research. Your team’s 20-minute presentation will thoroughly analyze the issue (problem definition, key actors, agenda setting, implementation, etc.). Rubrics and recommended format will be discussed in class.

Late submissions: Unless otherwise specified, two points will be deducted from your total score for every day that an assignment is late. Assignments submitted more than a week after the due date will not be graded unless I have approved such late submissions.

Grading

<u>Individual assignments</u>	<u>Team assignments</u>
Plagiarism note = 10	Policy research presentation = 30
Exams (2 x 20) = 40	Chapter presentation = 20
WebCT discussion boards (2x15) = 30	
Policy paper = 40	<u>Total</u> = 200
Attendance = 10	A 180; A- 170; B+ 160; B 150; B- 140; C+
Class participation & homework = 20	130; C 120; C- 110; D 100; F 99 or lower

- A: Excellent quality work that meets or exceeds expectations
- B: Good quality work that meets expectations
- C: Fair quality work that is below expectations in graduate courses
- F: Fails to meet expectations

Schedule

- Week 1 Introduction; overview of the course; expectations;
9/17 preliminary discussion of some key concepts
- Week 2 Public policy & governance; institutional context
9/24 Simon 1, 10
Plagiarism note due
- Week 3 Theories of public policy
10/1 Simon 2
- Week 4 Value conflicts
10/8 Simon 3
- Week 5 Policy analysis
10/15 Simon 4
Exam 1
- Week 6 Agenda setting
WebCT Simon 5
WebCT discussion board 1 10/19-10/22

Week 7	Policy formulation; budgets
10/29	Simon 6, 17
Week 8	Policy implementation; evaluation
11/5	Simon 7, 8
	<u>Exam 2</u>
Week 9	<u>Policy presentations</u>
11/12	
Week 10	Policy termination; review
WebCT	Simon 9
	<u>WebCT discussion board 2</u> 11/16-11/19
Mon. 11/23	<u>Policy paper due</u> by 5 PM (Email or WebCT upload).

Other Policies

Academic honesty and classroom conduct: You are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity and professionalism in the classroom. Demonstrating respect for each other is necessary for academic discourse and debate. CSUB instructors are required to notify the Dean of Student Life, Student Conduct Coordinator, and the student in question when they discover a violation. Instructors have the right to apply a grade sanction, including a course grade of F. Additional academic sanctions are determined by the student conduct coordinator and can include penalties such as probation, suspension, or permanent expulsion from CSUB or the entire CSU system. Students have the right to a formal hearing relating to sanctions devised by the student conduct coordinator. Please review the section of your CSUB Catalog titled, "Rights and Responsibilities of Students," especially the material relating to academic dishonesty (cheating).

CSUB students also can formally grieve a final grade when they believe the grade assignment violated established policy or resulted from a clerical error, prejudicial evaluation, or capricious evaluation. A copy of the procedures to grieve a final grade can be obtained online (www.csub.edu/undergradstudies) or through the BPA Dean's Office.

Incompletes: An 'incomplete' may be given at my discretion if there is a documented emergency.

Students with disabilities: In accordance with university policies special accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Students needing accommodation will need to

notify me by the second week of the quarter. CSUB's Office of Services for Students with Disabilities has stringent deadlines for handling examination materials. Students should contact that office during the first week of the term.

Please turn off your cell phones during class.

Changes to the syllabus: If I need to change items in this syllabus, I will provide a handout in class and also post it on the course's WebCT page.

Grading Rubrics

Policy paper

Organization: Paper is logically ordered with a clear introduction, thesis statement, body, and conclusion; transitions are logical and smooth; clearly organized into sections with sub-headings.	
Scope of discussion: Paper addresses all aspects of the policy process related to this issue (background, actors, agenda setting, implementation, etc.).	
Content & analysis: Issue is clearly described and looked at from different sides; argument is clear and compelling; claims are backed by evidence and reasons; policy recommendation is clearly stated and reasoned.	
Sentences & mechanics: Complete and well written sentences; avoids passive language; spelling, punctuation, grammar, and word choice are correct; well constructed paragraphs.	
APA: Confirms to the APA style for in-text citations, format for the paper, and references.	
Points:	

A: good to excellent; B: satisfactory to good; C: below expectations

WebCT discussion board

Thoroughly answered the posted questions.	
Made connections between the various ideas, theories, and models in the readings.	
Provided thoughtful responses to the postings of others.	
Points: _____ / Grade: _____	
A: good to excellent; B: satisfactory to good; C: below expectations	

Presentations

Slides: Clarity, professionalism, spelling & grammar.	
Problem and significance	
Key actors and positions	
Policy solutions	
Presentation style; participation by all team members	
Q&A	
Exceeded time limit?	
(For chapter presentation) Covered all aspects of the presentation guide?	
Points	

(Sep. 12, 2009)