

SAMPLE

**SYLLABUS FOR PP&D 221 –  
PUBLIC POLICY: PROCESS, INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNANCE  
(C-255 and Pol Sci-221A, seminar A)**

Department of Planning, Policy and Design,  
School of Social Ecology, University of California-Irvine

***Introduction:***

Public policy is concerned with what government does or, in other words, how local, regional, national, and international levels of governance make decisions affecting peoples' lives. We call this the *process* that leads to their design. Public policy is also concerned with the *outcomes* brought about by these decisions – in other words, their *impact*. This course explores three broad questions regarding the nature of governmental decision-making processes and institutions having as their aim the enactment and implementation of public policy: 1) what conceptual frameworks and theories illuminate how policies get made? 2) What is the role of the policy analyst - an academically trained professional - in *designing, formulating, implementing, and evaluating* these policies? And, 3) what are the consequences (impacts) of different policy designs on society – including our well-being?

While we focus on public policy generally, attention will be paid to how *actual policies are made and modified in particular domains* (e.g., health, the environment, education, welfare, immigration, employment), and how they affect diverse areas of public life. My objectives in this course are:

- **To help you understand the causes of, and motives underlying, various policies as manifested by key actors in the policy process** including interest groups, governing institutions, and “policy entrepreneurs.” This includes their sources of power and influence.
- **To make you aware of tools, approaches, and methods used to exert influence upon the policy process**, including (but not limited to) lobbying, direct public participation, administrative rule making, juridical decisions, and avenues for sharing strategic information.
- **To illuminate how (or if) public decisions are put into practice, in other words, how policies are implemented and revised.** We also explore the scope of public decisions – why does “thick” policy characterize some domains, while in others; policies are “thin?”
- **To show how policy processes and outcomes can be evaluated** vis-a-vis contending views about how we determine whether governmental outcomes are beneficial, and how policy success is maximized, and failure minimized.

***Readings (for purchase):***

1. Levin, Martin and Martin Shapiro. 2004. *Transatlantic Policymaking in an Age of Austerity*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
2. Radin, Beryl. 2013. *Beyond Machiavelli - Policy Analysis Reaches Midlife*, 2nd edition. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
3. Stone, Deborah. 2012. *Policy Paradox - The Art of Political Decision-making*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

***Reserved Readings (on course EEE homepage):***

1. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Root, Hilton S. 2002. *Governing for Prosperity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
2. Bovens, Mark, and Paul Thart. 1996. *Understanding Policy Fiascoes*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction publishers.
3. Ellis, Ralph D. 1998. *Just Results: Ethical Foundations for Policy Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
4. Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. NY: Harper Collins.
5. Pal, Leslie and R. Kent Weaver (eds.) 2003. *The Government Taketh Away: The Politics of Pain in the United States and Canada*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
6. Peters, B. Guy. 2013. *American Public Policy – Promise and Performance*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington: CQ Press.

***Requirements:***

To facilitate dialogue, and discussion, regular attendance is **expected**. Each class will be devoted to a specific issue or topic and will feature a brief lecture interspersed with frequent discussion and Q&A. Readings, scheduled to coincide with a session's topic, should be read prior to class to ensure meaningful discussion. Furthermore, each student is responsible for the following products:

- Students will be divided into “subsets.” On alternate dates, as noted in the syllabus, each of you in that subset is responsible for an **electronically submitted** (2-3) page paper that, drawing upon the reading and discussion, addresses a specific question found in the syllabus for that date. You are responsible for 2 papers, each worth 30%, for a total of ..... 60%.
- Students will also be responsible for a final paper, NO MORE THAN 4 double-spaced pages in length. You are to choose ONE current public policy and evaluate its effectiveness according to the criteria discussed in the class as well as the course readings – no outside reading is required, however you may draw on outside works if you wish. The paper is due

\_\_\_\_\_ and should be submitted electronically, as a Word document..... 30%.

- Class participation: students are expected to participate in discussions by asking questions and raising salient issues. Participation is expected ..... 10%.

***Class Schedule***

Quarter begins: \_\_\_\_\_ **TA – meets with class,** \_\_\_\_\_

Week #1: \_\_\_\_\_ **Public policy as a field of study– the influence of social science**  
Read: Levin and Shapiro, Introduction; Stone, Part I.

Week #2: \_\_\_\_\_ **Empirical and normative approaches to policy analysis**  
Read: Stone, Part II; Ellis, Introduction and Chapter 1.

Writing assignment – Group A: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, how is public policy a prescriptive discipline – does this imply that empirical knowledge is irrelevant to its debate? What values should guide its study and why (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – \_\_\_\_\_)**

Week #3: \_\_\_\_\_ **Democracy, participation, and political & economic development**  
Read: Bueno de Mesquita and Root, Chapters 7-8; Pal and Weaver, chapter 1.

Writing assignment – Group B: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what factors make the process of policy-making democratic? Conversely, what factors impede the process from becoming democratic? What reforms in process help ensure democracy (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – \_\_\_\_\_)**

Week #4: \_\_\_\_\_ **Interest articulation and agenda-setting**  
Read: Stone, Part III; Kingdon, Chapters 5-7; Peters, Chapter 2.

Writing assignment – Group C: Drawing on the reading and class discussion why do policy makers choose some issues for governmental attention and not others? What roles are played by circumstance, expertise, and power in getting policy-maker attention (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – \_\_\_\_\_)**

Week #5: \_\_\_\_\_ **Roles of information and expertise as inputs into decisions**  
Read: Radin, Chapters 1-4.



Week #6: \_\_\_\_\_ **Objectives of the policy process I: allocating benefits**  
Read: Levin and Shapiro, Chapters 1-4.

Writing assignment – Group A: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, how do some policies allocate benefits to certain groups? What factors determine why some groups receive such benefits, others don't? Finally, what do we mean by a “benefit”? (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – \_\_\_\_\_)**

Week #7: [REDACTED] **Objectives of the policy process II: re-allocating benefits & regulating behavior.** Read: Levin and Shapiro, Chapters 5-9.

Writing assignment – Group B: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what distinguishes regulatory, distributive, and re-distributive policies? Do their objectives sharply differ? Is it possible for a single policy to be two- or three types simultaneously (2-3 pages)? (DUE – [REDACTED])

Week #8: [REDACTED] **Policy design – challenges in implementation**  
Read: Radin, Chapters 5-8; Stone, Part IV.

Writing assignment – Group C: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what factors ensure that a policy will be successfully implemented? Can we anticipate barriers to effective policy implementation and incorporate them into a policy's design? (2-3 pages)? (DUE – [REDACTED])

Week #9: [REDACTED] **The art and science of policy evaluation**  
Read: Ellis, Chapter 6; Bovens and Thart, chapter 2.

[REDACTED]

Week #10: [REDACTED] **Conclusions: the future of policy studies?**  
Levin and Shapiro, Conclusions; Radin, Chapter 9.

[REDACTED] **final 3-4 page paper due - electronically.**

***Course Policies:***

**LECTURES:** PowerPoint materials used in class will be made available on the course homepage at the end of each week. E-mail alerts regarding this and other matters will be sent to enrolled students under the rubric: [REDACTED]

**DROPS:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 2.

**ADDS:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 3 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 3.

**CHANGE:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. From week 3 - 6, must use Student Access system to submit a request for grade option change. No exceptions after week 6.

***Students with Disabilities:*** If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please discuss this with me during the first week of class AND please register with the Disability Services Center (<http://www.disability.uci.edu/>). In order for you to receive any type of academic accommodation, I will need formal notification from the Disability Services Center during the first two weeks of the quarter of the type of academic accommodations to which your disability entitles you.