

Syllabus  
**PSCI 3040: Introduction to Public Policy (CRN 43071)**  
Fall 2011

**Professor:**

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Office hours: Noon to 1:30 pm and 3:30-4:30 pm on Tues. and Thurs., and by appointment.

**Class meetings:** Tues./Thurs., 2:00-3:15 pm, Dunbar 2205

**Course description:** This course provides an introduction to the process of public policymaking in the United States and to the substance of policy in selected areas, and it includes a significant undergraduate research experience. Its goals are to enable students to: 1) analyze the policymaking process, 2) develop substantive policy expertise in an issue area, 3) participate effectively in the policy process, 4) conduct secondary and primary research, and 5) write a social science research paper using a theoretical model to guide research and frame case description. Students are expected to be active and interactive participants in class and proactive researchers. Students will read, discuss, research, write, present and teach. Several tests and interim assignments will build toward a final product – a research paper in which students demonstrate an understanding of the policy process *and* the substance of policy in an issue area of their choice. *PSCI 2000 is a firm prerequisite.*

**Reading:**

Textbook: James E. Anderson. *Public Policymaking*. 7th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2010.

E-learning: Besides the textbook, course readings will be available on e-learning and the world wide web. Please do the reading listed in the schedule *before* we discuss it in class; you will get more out of class if you do.

Please notice that the assigned reading load is light for an upper division course. This is because you will do a significant research project during the semester and will need time for your own reading and research.

**Participation and attendance:**

Some participation in class discussion is expected. You do not have to say something every time we meet, but please speak up with a considered opinion or good question at least occasionally. Attendance is required. You need to be in class because not everything we discuss is in the reading and because interaction is crucial for learning about the public policy process. **Two points will be deducted from the “attendance and participation” component of the grade for each unexcused absence from a regular class meeting. Four points will be deducted for each unexcused absence from a roundtable class.**

**Ground rules for the classroom:**

1) Please turn off cell phones, pagers, and anything else that makes noise.

- 2) If you have your laptop on in the classroom, please use it only to take notes. If I find that people are doing email, surfing the web, or anything other than the course work of the moment, I will ban the use of laptops in the classroom. Do not preempt this privilege from classmates by irresponsible behavior.
- 3) The style of discussion for this class will be deliberative and respectful of one another. This is not a courtroom in which we are adversaries competing in a zero-sum game. It is a seminar in which we are scholars pursuing understanding together, with the potential for win-win outcomes.
- 4) One person at a time will have the floor. When someone has the floor, do not chat.
- 5) I understand that it is convenient for students to ask me questions of individual concern in class rather than come to office hours. Accordingly, I'll stay after class as long as it takes for everyone with a question to ask. Before class, I like to focus on setting up the technology and starting on time, so please hold your individual questions until after class. Thanks very much!

**Tests:**

Three tests on reading and lecture material are intended to motivate students to keep up with the reading, attend class, and integrate ideas and information as we proceed.

**Course paper:**

A solid understanding of the policy process and of substance in one policy area of your choice, demonstrated in a 10-12 page paper, is the achievement toward which the course builds. The paper is detailed in a separate handout.

**Interim assignments:**

These assignments are building blocks toward the course paper and are detailed in a separate handout.

**Grading scale:**

A	93-100
BA	88-92.99
B	83-87.99
CB	78-82.99
C	73-77.99
DC	68-72.99
D	58-67.99
E	<58

**Final grade components and their weights:**

Attendance & Participation	10%
3 Tests (10% each)	30%
Interim assignments:	
Library assignment	2%
Proposal	2%
Annotated bib	10%
Policy community	10%
Roundtable	<u>6%</u>
Total for interim assignments	30%
Paper	<u>30%</u>
	100

**Academic honesty:** Academic honesty is, of course, required. You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate Catalog pertaining to academic honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. (The policies can be found at <http://catalog.wmich.edu> under Academic Policies, Student Rights and Responsibilities.) If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. If you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty, please talk with me *before* submitting an assignment or test.

**The schedule:** The following schedule is my best effort at precision, but it is subject to small changes as we proceed through the semester. I will add some readings as we go along and I find timely material. I may also seize some opportunity – such as a visiting lecturer or videoconference – that presents itself, or reschedule topics a little. Please do the readings indicated in the schedule *before* the class meeting in which we discuss them.

## Schedule

Week	Topics and reading assignments
1: Sept 6, 8	Introduction to course / What is public policy? Introduce research paper James E. Anderson, <i>Public Policymaking</i> , Ch 1, pp 1-9
<b>Part I: Ideas in the policy process</b>	
2: Sept 13, 15	“Public philosophy” in the policy process, Liberal public philosophies E-learning: Excerpts from Hoffmann, <i>Politics and Banking</i> .
3: Sept 20, 22	Conservative public philosophies / <b>Test 1 on Thursday</b> (on Part I) E-learning: Ball and Dagger, “Conservatism,” Ch 4 in <i>Political Ideologies</i> (New York: Pearson Longman, 2004).
4: Sept 27	Library session: meet in Waldo library, Classroom A, main level. <b>Library assignment due in library or at next class meeting.</b>
<b>Part II: Actors in the policy process</b>	
4: Sept 29	Actors in the policy process Anderson, <i>Public Policymaking</i> , Ch 2, pp 36-40, 48-69; Ch 6, pp 222-225
5: Oct 4, 6	Actors (cont)/ Policy communities, Social security policy com'ty & policy substance Policy com'ties: Anderson, Ch 2, pp 69-75 Social security: E-learning: Hoffmann, “Social Security Policy making”; “Options for fixing social security,” <i>K'zoo Gazette</i> , April 10, 2005 <b>Policy area proposal due on Oct 6</b>
6: Oct 11, 13	Soc sec (cont) and other options for retirement income / Film Required reading on e-learning: Demorest, Hearit, Horvat, Kent, “Breathing new life into a moribund retirement policy.”  Optional reading on e-learning: Jacob S. Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State” <i>American Political Science Review</i> , May 2004, especially pp 254-256. Sarenski, “Planning for Social Security,” <i>Journal of Accountancy</i> , July 2006; Stevenson, “Vast Borrowing Seen in Altering Social Security,” <i>New York Times</i> , 11/20/04.  Film on 10/14: PBS Frontline documentary, “Can you afford to retire?” [DVD HG 179 .F75 2006]
7: Oct 18, 20	Policy making in the states / <b>Test 2 on Thursday</b> (on Part II) E-learning: James Gosling, “Comparing Federal and State Policy Making,” Ch 4 in <i>Understanding, Informing and Appraising Public Policy</i> . E-learning: <i>NY Times</i> , 2011, “Koch Brothers Money...”  Optional on e-learning: WMUK audio clip, “Money Drives What Gets Done on the Ballot in Michigan” Optional on the web: <a href="http://www.thecenterformichigan.net/">http://www.thecenterformichigan.net/</a> <a href="http://alec.org">http://alec.org</a>
<b>Part III: Steps in the policy process</b>	
8: Oct 25, 27	Steps: Overview of steps, Problem definition / Inequality Anderson, Ch 3, pp 83-90 E-learning: Readings on inequality <b>Annotated bibliography due on Oct 27</b>

9: Nov 1, 3	Steps: Agenda setting, Formulation of alternatives / Film Anderson, Ch 3, 90-107 (agendas) and 107-112 (formulation) Film on Thursday: PBS Frontline documentary: "Sick around the world" [DVD RA 393 .F76 2008]
10: Nov 8, 10	Steps: Policy adoption / Budgeting Anderson, Ch 4, 125-126 and 142-144; Ch 5 E-learning: Readings on Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction <b>Policy community map due on Nov 10</b>
11: Nov 15, 17	Steps: Budgeting (cont) /Implementation and Evaluation E-learning: Readings on budget Anderson, Ch 6, pp 209-222 (implementation); Ch 7, pp 271-297
12: Nov 22	<b>Test 3 on Tuesday</b> (on Part III); Roundtable planning / <b>No class Nov 24</b>
	<b>Part IV: Substantive policy areas</b>
13: Nov 29, Dec 1	Policy area roundtables
14: Dec 6, 8	Policy area roundtables <b>Final paper due on Dec. 8</b>
Final exam period	<b>Thursday, December 15, 2:45-4:45 pm</b> <b>Roundtables will be held during the final exam period. Attendance required.</b>