Course Context—School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)

Mission of the SPAA: The School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) is committed to improving the quality of public and nonprofit service. In a diverse and inclusive community, the mission of the SPAA is to provide learning and discovery opportunities which advance the knowledge and use of professional ethics, best theories, policies and practices for public and nonprofit organizations in order to create and support societies of respect, liberty, justice, and equality.

Values of the SPAA: As a part of the College of Arts and Sciences, the SPAA embraces the college’s values of global engagement, community participation, creativity and innovation, integrity, diversity, excellence, sustainability, and social responsibility. In keeping with our mission as a School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) committed to improving the quality of public and nonprofit service, we uniquely value: The common good; Democratic governance and liberty; Ethical leadership, decision-making and administrative practice; Advocacy for social justice; Plurality of ideas and perspectives; Collaborative teaching, research, and service; and The intersection of theory and practice.

Course Overview

Public policies are ubiquitous, regulating virtually everything in a country: the economy, market, institutions, private lives, and even relationships. They are also adopted by governments at all levels: federal, state, and local. But where do they come from? How do they evolve? What theoretical frameworks help explain the process of policy making as well the likely impacts on different groups of population? And, what are the fundamental concepts used in forming, analyzing, and evaluating policies? An advanced scholarly preparation in the field of public administration necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental frameworks, theories, and practices of public policies. The study of public policy is important for students in this field, regardless of whether one intends to actively practice in the profession or teach in the academy.

Course Description (WMU Graduate Catalog)
This course will trace the development of theory in thinking about public policy. It will explore alternative models suggesting the way that public policy is formulated and implemented. Each model reflects a different way of perceiving the relationship between government and society. The application component will require students to apply one or more of the models to a substantive policy area. Emphasis will be placed on primary sources in preparing an analytical paper.

**Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able:

1. To demonstrate understanding of the fundamental political and economic theories that inform the role of government and policy interventions;
2. To identify and recognize various frameworks of policy process and their applications to a variety of policy ideas;
3. To apply and evaluate the process of policy formation applicable to a chosen policy idea; and
4. To articulate the analysis and findings of a policy project through research, writing, and presentation.

**Prerequisites**

There is no formal prerequisite for this course. To achieve grounded understanding of the issues, however, I expect students to be familiar with basic statistical and economic concepts. Particularly useful would be such microeconomic concepts as demand, supply, market, price, consumer’s surplus, and utility. Basic familiarity with the structure of American political institutions and administrative system can also help acquire a better grasp of the theoretical concepts and their applications. I advise reviewing relevant texts if you think you need some exposure or refresher on these concepts.

**Textbooks and Readings**

Two required textbooks can be purchased from the WMU bookstore. (Please note that the Weible & Sabatier book is also available as an ebook from the Waldo Library)


Additional materials include scholarly articles, book chapters, and special reports. Readings are accessible electronically through the Waldo Library website or elsewhere. Those that are not readily available electronically are uploaded to the e-Reserves system for your easy access. In the reading list to follow, each of the readings assigned a code of LRE is included in the e-Reserve whereas rest of the readings can be accessed from the Waldo Library website or other electronic sources as described in the first class.

**Course Delivery**

This course will be structured in a seminar format in which students are expected to engage in stimulating intellectual exercises. The role of the instructor is to guide and assist students in securing diverse inputs and collectively working toward a comprehensive understanding of the issues discussed. This format will help consistently maintain a collegial environment and process seeking genuine search for answers to some of the vexing intellectual public policy issues and problems. The success of the course will depend on the commitment to learning and maintaining active participation from each and every student.

Classes will include intensive discussions, role plays, and class presentations. Not only are the readings to be completed prior to the class meeting but they are expected to stimulate further discussions. A typical session will begin with a discussion led by a pre-assigned student over the concepts, issues, observations,
experiences, and applications sparked by the readings for the week. This will also serve as a conduit to some substantive questions from both students and the instructor. While there will be short lecture/presentations by the instructor, classes will provide an opportunity to meaningfully delve into the critical theoretical discourse and practical issues of public policy.

This course may also utilize the e-Learning facility to facilitate interaction. Discussion on specific topics may also be held online where students will be expected to post thoughtful comments to spark further ideas and perspectives. Some of the course materials and learning aids will be posted online for convenient access as will be other materials related to assignments.

Assignments and Grading

1. Reflections (20%): Students will prepare four three-page reflections papers based on the readings assigned for the weeks of their choosing. This requires carefully reading the materials assigned for the upcoming class, understanding the theoretical discourse involved, and either elaborating on them or relating them to specific issues/observations. Note that this exercise goes beyond summarizing or regurgitating the materials you have just read.

2. Policy Memo (10%): This will be a five-page paper that advances the Reflections exercise by applying the concepts to solve a given policy problem. I will assign a specific policy issue scenario and ask you to apply the theoretical material covered in the following class, discuss the political and economic concepts involved, and make recommendations that you deem appropriate.

3. Policy Research Paper (40%): Students will have an opportunity to demonstrate a deeper understanding of a policy issue confronting a government agency of choice, either from employment or from substantial familiarity in some other capacity. Details are to follow with specific expectations and instructions but this 20-page paper will include an abstract, the problem, literature survey, methodology, data analysis, and conclusions. A draft copy of this paper will be due to an assigned discussant in the 11th class.

4. Presentation and Discussion (10%): Students will make a seminar presentation of the Policy Research Paper on the last day of the class. This oral exercise will provide an opportunity to clarify oneself on the issues being presented. Students will also be assigned to orally discuss the peer-review of strengths and weaknesses of a paper written by another student. Comments from this peer review as well as other class participants can be incorporated in the final paper.

5. Participation (20%): Albeit not a formal assignment, active participation is a centerpiece in this seminar course. The participation grade is divided into a) attendance (5%), b) the magnitude and quality of participation in class discussions and activities (10%), and c) an active and effective leadership of discussion in two chosen classes (5%).

Grading Scale for assignments and Activities

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
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<td>BA</td>
<td>88-93%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
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<td>CB</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>DC</td>
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<td>63-68%</td>
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As you can see from the percentage distributions, grading is not taken lightly and earning superior grades such as A and BA will necessitate mastery of all assignments.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory and recorded for grading purposes. Any excusable absence arising from
extraordinary circumstances need to be properly notified to and approved by the instructor.

**Note on Written Assignments**

I will provide more detailed information on the assignments with expectations and instructions when appropriate. But some general rules apply to each of these—as far as written assignments go. All assignments need to be typed in 8 ½ X 11 size pages with at least one-inch margin on all four sides. Use double space throughout with a 12-point font size in Times New Roman. References or bibliographic entries are to be properly formatted using the APA style (note that the full author names included in the reading list below for informational purposes would have to be edited to fully conform to the SPA style). I encourage you to consult the following style manual.


Each assignment needs to be submitted to eLearning Dropbox prior to the assigned class or by the specified due dates and times. Delayed submissions are subject to reduction of grade by one or more categories. I will not accept assignments submitted longer than seven days after the due date.

**Modifications to the Course**

Modifications to the syllabus and course schedule are likely throughout the course. Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to these changes.

Note on Class Meeting Time: Should an emergency or unforeseen circumstance arise for the instructor and/or guest speaker, it may be necessary to cancel a class meeting. Should the faculty member/guest speaker not be able to meet the class at the regularly-scheduled time, the class will be notified via E-Learning email or regular wmich.edu email, with as much advance notice as is possible. Alternative online activities or class sessions will be provided within 24 hours of the cancellation to provide content and activities as originally planned for the class meeting. Be sure to check your wmich.edu email account or the E-Learning for this course on the days of class. If a class is cancelled, the instructor/guest speaker will send an email to all students no later than 3:00 PM of the scheduled class session day, with notification to the Battle Creek site coordinator and the School of Public Affairs and Administration office in Kalamazoo. Should the university close because of weather or other unforeseen circumstances, the closure will be announced on the University website, www.wmich.edu (plus check the course location website).

**Working with External Agencies**

In this course you may be required to interface with attorneys, executives, managers, directors, and/or staff in the public and/or nonprofit sectors as part of your course assignments. You are responsible for demonstrating the highest levels of professionalism, organization and tact as you schedule appointments, prepare for, conduct, and follow-up on meetings with your community counterparts. The information you collect from individuals, agencies, and community organizations is to be used solely for the purpose of completing and presenting course assignments unless you receive expressed, written permission from the organization AND Western Michigan University (through HSIRB review and the Director of the SPAA) to use it for other purposes. Please refrain from using personal, identifying information when compiling information for class assignments unless you have written permission from the individuals, organizations, agencies and appropriate offices at WMU. This course will require the use of HSIRB protocol.

**Technology and Research Protocol**

**Telephones**

Phones should be silenced during class time. Use the break times to check/return/originate calls, texts, or emails.
Computers
Laptops, tablets, and other devices may be used in class for class content purposes only. Course assignments requiring HSIRB approval will be noted by the faculty member when the assignment is presented. Note that all students are expected to have an active CITI account with evidence of the ethics modules satisfactorily completed.

Basic University Policies

Method of Course Evaluation
Students will have an opportunity to complete a course evaluation form late in the course, using the WMU ICES or another designated WMU evaluation system. The evaluation will cover course content and faculty performance. Please respond to the ICES when requested in your wmnich.edu email. Comments and information from the forms will help in developing this course in the future.

Academic Integrity
Western Michigan University (WMU) is a student-centered research university that forges a responsive and ethical academic community. Its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs are built upon intellectual inquiry, investigation, discovery, an open exchange of ideas, and ethical behavior. Members of the WMU community respect diversity, value the cultural differences of those around them, and engender a sense of social obligation. Because of these values, all individuals are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and civil manner. This includes exemplifying academic honesty, integrity, fairness, trustworthiness, personal responsibility, respect for others, and ethical conduct. These attributes are exhibited in the University as well as in the community. Members of the University community abide by this code out of commitment to serve as responsible citizens of the University, the community, the nation, and the world. Responsibility for fulfilling the obligations of the code of honor is shared by the students, faculty, and every other member of the University community.

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog that pertain to Academic Integrity. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity, and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct (OSC). 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. You should consult with us if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test. Collaboration on homework assignments is unacceptable except when permission is explicitly granted by the instructor to submit a collaborative or combined-student piece of work. If a student is uncertain about an issue of academic honesty, he/she should consult the faculty member to resolve questions in any situation prior to the submission of the academic exercise. Violations of academic honesty include but are not limited to cheating, fabrication, falsification, forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity, and computer misuse. For more details go to http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=938.

Students who take this class are expected to submit his/her own work. If you use language, data, or ideas from other sources, published or unpublished, you must take care to acknowledge and properly cite those sources. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. All work submitted for this course must be original work. Material that has been submitted for another course cannot be used in this course.

Disability Services for Students
In compliance with and in the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we would work with you if you have a disability that is relevant to your work in this course. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor in a timely
fashion with your DSS accommodation semester request. You may contact the Office of Disability Services for Students if you need to register with the DSS office, (269) 387-2116 or at www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting

Students and instructors are responsible for making themselves aware of and abiding by the “Western Michigan University Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy and Procedures” related to prohibited sexual misconduct under Title IX, the Clery Act and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Under this policy, responsible employees (including instructors) are required to report claims of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator or designee (located in the Office of Institutional Equity). Responsible employees are not confidential resources. For a complete list of resources and more information about the policy see www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct.

Preferred Name

Western Michigan University recognizes that some students use first names other than their legal names to identify themselves. As an inclusive and diverse community, WMU allows students to use a preferred first name different than their legal name for certain purposes and records in the course of university business, communication, and education.

The legal name will continue to be used where required by law or university requirements. All student information will continue to be linked to both legal name and preferred name for the purposes of university records. For more details go to http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/policies/preferred-name.

Civility Statement

Western Michigan University is committed to creating and sustaining an environment that honors the inherent dignity and worth of all members of the WMU community. Respectful behavior expressed verbally, textually, visually, and physically should be the norm in all university communications and venues including classrooms, meetings, offices, workplaces, forums, events, social media, and residential communities. The complete statement can be found at http://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u370/2016/Civility Stmt.7-27-16_0.pdf.

Other WMU Resources

WMU’s Libraries: Can be accessed via your GoWMU account or going to www.wmich.edu/library.
Writing Center: Can be accessed at www.wmich.edu/casp/writingcenter.
WMU Graduate College: The Graduate College offers a variety of workshops and resources pertinent to the MPA program. Please access www.wmich.edu/grad.
E-Learning: Accessible through your GoWMU account. Check with the faculty member for clarity and instructions on accessing readings, submissions, discussion groups, and other course-related matters.
Readings and Curse Plan

A. The Science of Public Policy

1. Basics of Public Policy (1/10)

2. Directions and Challenges in the Field (1/17)

B. Markets and Political Economy

3. Markets and the Economy (1/24)

4. Rationality and Critics (1/31)
C. Theories of the Policy Process

6. The Formal Policymaking Process (2/14)
Mettler & SoRalle (from Sabatier & Weible). (2014). Ch. 5.

7. Alternative Views of Institutions and Rationality (2/21)
Schneider, Ingram, & deLeon (from Sabatier & Weible). (2014). Ch. 4.

8. Narration, Networks, and Subsystems (2/28)

9. Comparative Perspectives (3/14)
Baumgartner, Jones, & Mortensen (from Sabatier & Weible). (2014). Ch. 3.
Cairney & Heikkila (from Sabatier & Weible). (2014). Ch. 10.
Weible (from Sabatier & Weible). (2014). Ch. 11.

D. Policy Application

10. Social Security and Welfare (3/21)

11. Health Care (3/28)
12. Seminar Presentations (4/04)
No further readings.