

**Politics 330 Topics in Public Policy:  
Taxes, Health Care, and Immigration**

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Fall 2019

**Office: SML 317**  
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**Office Hours: W 3-4pm**  
**and by appointment**

**Description:** This course examines the American public policy process through a case study approach. We use the case studies of federal taxes, health care reform, and immigration policy to test theories in political science and to assess how democratic are American politics and policies. We explore the ways our politics produce certain policies but also how policies produce politics.



**Student Learning Objectives:** To become familiar with a number of public policies and their politics in order to answer the following questions:

1. How democratic is our decision-making?
2. Are we meeting our democratic aspirations?
3. What are the obstacles/barriers to both?

**Texts:**

Mettler, Suzanne	Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream	2014	Basic Books
Michener, Jamila	Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics	2018	Cambridge University Press
Mezey, Susan Gluck	Beyond Marriage: Continuing Battles for LGBT Rights	2017	Roman and Littlefield

**Course Requirements:** You are expected to come to class having read and thought about the assigned material. This class relies heavily on student participation. I will expect you to have read the assigned materials and will call on you to respond to the materials—with questions, comments, revelations, frustrations. Willamette's Credit Hour Policy holds that for every hour of class time, there is an expectation of 2-3 hours work outside of class. Thus, for a class meeting three hours a week you should anticipate spending 6-9 hours outside of class engaged in course-related activities. I have designed readings and assignments with this credit hour requirement in mind and you should plan accordingly.

Midterm	30%
Public Policy Project and Presentation	30%
Final Exam	20%
Class Participation	20%

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**Respect for Diversity:** In pursuit of the goal of academic excellence, I seek to develop and nurture diversity, believing that it strengthens classroom engagement, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. I do not condone discrimination against any member of the school's community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, health status, or veteran status. I welcome your ideas and suggestions about how to ensure the creation of such an inclusive learning community.

**Religious Holidays:** Willamette University recognizes the value of religious practice and strives to accommodate students' commitment to their religious traditions whenever possible. When conflicts between holy days or other religious practice and academic scheduling arise, every effort should be made to allow students to adhere to their tradition, including, when possible, excusing class absences and allowing make-up work. A student anticipating the need to miss a class for religious reasons should alert the faculty member within the first two weeks of the semester, and the two of them should determine the next course of action. Any unresolved difficulty should be referred to the Office of the Chaplains.

**Students with Disabilities:** In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access to this class, please contact me at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students must verify their eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services in the Bishop Wellness Center. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact me. I will respect any accommodation authorized by the Office of Disabilities Services.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:** Representing someone else's work as your own and other forms of cheating will result in a zero for that assignment and may result in failure of the course. See: <https://willamette.edu/arts-sciences/catalog/policies/plagiarism-cheating.php> for university policies. When you quote from a source, you must place that material in quotation marks and correctly cite the source of the quotation. When you paraphrase the words of another, you must provide the source from which you are paraphrasing. If you are ever unsure if some action constitutes cheating or plagiarism, ask me. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable defense.

**Commitment to Positive Sexual Ethics:** Willamette is a community committed to fostering safe, productive learning environments, and we value ethical sexual behaviors and standards. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct—including discrimination, harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success, and we encourage affected students to talk to someone about their experiences and get the support they need. Please be aware that as a mandatory reporter I am required to report any instances you disclose to Willamette's Title IX Coordinator. If you would rather share information with a confidential employee who does not have this responsibility, please contact our confidential advocate at [confidential-advocate@willamette.edu](mailto:confidential-advocate@willamette.edu). Confidential support also can be found with SARAs and at the GRAC (503-851-4245); at WUTalk - a 24-hour telephone crisis counseling support line (503-375-5353); and via the University Chaplains (503-370-6213). If you are in immediate danger, please call campus safety at 503-370-6911.

**Note: I will gladly address you by your chosen name and gender pronoun. Please advise me of this at any point in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. I prefer to be addressed as Professor Michaux (pronounced *Me-show*) and I use she/her pronouns.**

**Attendance:** This course meets M,W,F 1:50-2:50. If you know of a conflict and you cannot attend the class, please let me know in advance. More than 2 missed classes will affect your class participation grade. If you miss more than 2 classes and would like to make up that participation deficit, you can write a 500-word reflection on the reading for that day and turn it into me one week after the missed class. I will not usually accept reflections after the one week mark.

### **Introduction:**

8/26 (Mon): **What should democratic policymaking look like?**

**8/28-8/30: No class. I will be attending the American Political Science Association Annual meeting in Washington, D.C.**

9/2 (Mon) Labor Day! Take the day off. You can thank the labor movement for this day that worked from about 1885-1894 to make the first Monday in September a legal national holiday.

9/4 (Wed) John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. (Longman Classics, 2010) Chapter 5: Problems (on WISE)

9/6 (Fri) Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-Making* (Norton, 1997) Chapters 1-2. [Please post one comment or question on WISE under Forums by 9am—you may start a new comment or respond to someone else’s comment.]

### **Higher Education Policy**

9/9 (Mon) Mettler, Introduction and Chapter 1 (Group 1—post on Forums)

9/11 (Wed) Mettler, Chapter 3 (Group 2—post on Forums)

9/13 (Fri) Mettler, Chapter 4 (Group 3—post on Forums)

9/16 (Mon) Mettler, Chapter 5 (Group 1—post on Forums)

9/18 (Wed) Mettler, Chapter 6 (Group 2—post on Forums)

9/20 (Fri) Mettler, Chapter 7 (Group 3—post on Forums)

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

9/23 (Mon) Policy design theory

Ann Schneider and Helen Ingram, *Policy Design for Democracy* (University Press of Kansas, 1997) Chapter 5: “Social Construction of Target Populations: Degenerative Policy Designs” (on WISE)

9/25 (Wed) American Political Development

Paul Pierson, “The Study of Policy Development” *Journal of Policy History* 17 (2005) 1: 34-51 [on WISE]

## **Health Care Policy: Medicaid**

9/27 (Fri) Michener, Chapter 1

9/30 (Mon) Michener, Chapter 2 (Group 1—post on Forums)

10/2 (Wed) Michener, Chapter 3 (Group 2—post on Forums)

10/4 (Fri) Michener, Chapter 4 (Group 3—post on Forums)

10/7 (Mon) Michener, Chapter 5 or 6. [If your last name begins with A-H, read Chapter 5; if your last name begins with the letter K-W, read Chapter 6]

10/9 (Wed) Michener, Chapters 7-8.

10/11 Study day—no class. [I will give you instructions for sending me ideas about policy topics]

10/14 (Mon) Eric Patashnik and Julian Zelizer, “The Struggle to Remake Politics: Liberal Reform and the Limits of Policy Feedback in the Contemporary American State” *Perspectives on Politics* 11 (December 2013) 4: 1071-1087.

10/16 (Wed) Mid-term Exam. This is an open book in-class exam. Books, notes, outlines are allowed.

10/18 (Fri) Mid-semester day. No class.

## **Policy Project Workshop**

10/21 (Mon) Policy Research/Writing Policy Memos

## **More Theoretical Frameworks**

10/23 (Wed) Legal Advocacy—reading TBA

10/25 (Fri) Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk* (selection)

## **LGBTQ+ Rights**

10/28 (Mon) Mezey, Chapter 1

10/30 (Wed) Mezey, Chapter 2

11/1 (Fri) Discussion—please post a comment/question on Forums if you do not have a bibliography due  
Annotated Bibliographies due for those presenting the week before Thanksgiving

11/4 (Mon) Mezey, Chapter 3

11/6 (Wed) Mezey, Chapter 4

11/8 (Fri) Discussion--please post a comment/question on Forums if you do not have a bibliography due  
Annotated Bibliographies due for those presenting after Thanksgiving break

**Student Case Study Presentations**

11/11-11/22 Student Presentations

11/25-11/29: No class due to Thanksgiving break. Travel safely.

12/2-12/4: Student Presentations

12/6 (Fri) Conclusions and review—take home exam distributed.

**Final take home exam due Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. Late exams will be penalized.**

## Public Policy Project and Presentation

Melissa Buis Michaux

PPLE-330: Topics in Public Policy

Fall 2019

The annotated bibliography, class presentation and part of the final take-home exam essay are meant to be complementary activities designed to turn you into an “expert” on a public policy topic. You will develop your expertise through examination of both primary and secondary sources, meetings with me to guide you through the issues, collaborative work with your team and feedback from your classmates on the presentation. Each team of three will examine and define the “problem,” analyze the political and policy streams and propose solutions. Such solutions may be wholesale system reforms, smaller-scale implementation strategies or maintenance of the status quo. All solutions should be mindful of both the political realities and the policy imperatives.

For the annotated bibliography, each team of three should divide responsibilities for the problem, political and policy streams and then come together to write one policy proposal, informing each other of the pertinent issues, obstacles and resources in each stream. You will receive individual grades for the bibliography and one grade for the presentation and policy proposal. Take home exams are done independently as individual work.

**Topics:** You can build on the subjects selected for this course but you are not to duplicate the individual case studies. For example, in health care, we examine Medicaid policy. That would not be an appropriate topic for your policy project, but you could choose a variety of other health care-related topics like: health care for unauthorized residents; drug costs; cultural competency in health care delivery; health equity across racial and class groups; underinsurance; state initiatives designed to curb costs; reforms to Medicare to increase quality. You may also choose a topic that we have not covered in class.

**The Annotated Bibliography:** Identify primary and secondary sources in an annotated bibliography that summarizes the argument of the article, book, document, etc. you are citing. You should read broadly in your policy area to get a range of perspectives on the problems that need to be solved. Use Chicago Manual of Style bibliographic form. I would like to see at least 8 sources identified and summarized. Here is a link to more information about writing Annotated Bibliographies: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>

### **Class Presentations**

Prepare a policy proposal summary sheet in memo format (see below) where you: 1) Select an audience; 2) Identify the problem; 3) Analyze the political and policy forces at play; and 4) Propose a solution. The presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes, ideally between 10-15 minutes. Assume that we are not experts in your field, but that we have some power to bring about change. Be prepared to answer questions about the problem and your analysis. You may want to think about creative ways to illustrate the problems or issues involved.

You will receive one grade per presentation. The grade will be based upon the clarity and coherence of the presentation and policy proposal summary as well as an assessment of how well you identified and addressed the political and policy factors involved. Fellow students will be asked to provide feedback on these issues as well as the overall feasibility and persuasiveness of the solution you propose. **I need to see a draft of your proposal before your presentation.**

Note: There are sample policy proposals on WISE.

### **Policy Proposal Summary**

(Do not exceed 500 words for 1-3.)

To:

Office:

From:

Re:

1. Problem Statement:

2. Proposed Solution(s):

3. Major Obstacles/Implementation Challenges:

References, Footnotes and Exhibits

### **Take home exam**

Part of your take home exam is your final report on your policy topic. The best essays will be able to synthesize lessons from the class and theories about public policy to inform your analysis. In other words, your essay should make an argument about the nature of the policy process using one or more of the theories discussed in class. Your topic, then, is a case study that illustrates that argument. Your essays should be informed by the academic literature on your policy issue. Due Date: December 11 at 5pm uploaded to WISE.