

# Introduction to Public Policy

POSC 315 | Summer 2023  
Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 10:30 to 1:30  
July 3 - August 4  
MH 213

**Professor: David P. Adams, Ph.D.**

## Contact Information:

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- Schedule meetings throughout the week: <https://t.ly/dpa-appt>

## Catalog Description

Federal domestic policy making. Structure, functions and relationships among American national institutions, including executive, legislative and judicial branches, media, political parties and pressure groups.

## Course Description

In this course, students will explore and engage in thoughtful discussions on the processes and key players involved in creating public policy in the United States. The curriculum focuses on the structure, functions, and relationships among American national institutions, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, the media, political parties, and interest groups. We will examine the various official and unofficial influences on the policy process and the limitations imposed by institutional and structural factors.

This course delves into the historical and constitutional development of the policy process, as well as the distinct characteristics of public policy within a federal system. By understanding policy-making in the context of a constitutional republic and a federalized

governance system, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities and uncertainties surrounding agenda setting, policy making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation in the American political system.

## Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to

1. discuss and explain the key features of the public policy-making process in the United States;
2. recognize and describe the distinct stages of the public policy process;
3. elucidate the various internal and external actors that influence public policy, their interactions, and their impact on the policy process;
4. articulate the historical and contemporary structures and institutions that facilitate, expand, or constrain the public policy process;
5. differentiate and describe the various theories that attempt to explain the drivers and influences leading to public policy change or maintaining the status quo; and
6. apply their knowledge of the policy process to analyze specific policy domains impacted by multiple policy actors and diverse elements of the policy process within the context of public policy-making in the United States.

## Text Book

Birkland, Thomas A. 2020. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. 5th edition. New York: Routledge.

## General Education Information

### Requirements Satisfied

This course satisfies General Education Explorations in Social Sciences subarea D.5 for those using Catalog Years 2017 or earlier and subarea D.4 for those using Catalog Years 2018 and later. The writing assignments in this course, including the policy memo papers and current event summaries described below, meet the requirement of UPS 411.201: "Writing assignments in General Education courses shall involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas and careful and timely evaluations of writing so that deficiencies are identified, and suggestions for improvement and/or for means of remediation are offered. Evaluations of the student's writing competence shall determine the final course grade. . . ."

# General Education Student Learning Goals

Students completing courses in this subarea shall encounter the following learning goals:

1. Examine problems, issues, and themes in the social sciences in greater depth; in a variety of cultural, historical, and geographical contexts; and from different disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.
2. Analyze and critically evaluate the application of social science concepts and theories to particular historical, contemporary, and future problems or themes, such as economic and environmental sustainability, globalization, poverty, and social justice.
3. Analyze and critically evaluate constructs of cultural differentiation, including ethnicity, gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, and their effects on the individual and society.
4. Apply theories and concepts from the social sciences to address historical, contemporary, and future problems confronting communities at different geographical scales, from local to global.

## Student Policies

### University Policies

In accordance with UPS 300.00, students must be familiar with certain policies applicable to all courses. Please review these policies as needed and visit this [Cal State Fullerton website \(https://t.ly/csuf-syllabus\)](https://t.ly/csuf-syllabus) for links to the following information:

1. University learning goals and program learning outcomes.
2. Learning objectives for each General Education (GE) category.
3. Guidelines for appropriate online behavior (netiquette).
4. Students' rights to accommodations for documented special needs.
5. Campus student support measures, including Counseling & Psychological Services, Title IV and Gender Equity, Diversity Initiatives and Resource Centers, and Basic Needs Services.
6. Academic integrity (refer to UPS 300.021).
7. Actions to take during an emergency.
8. Library services information.
9. Student Information Technology Services, including details on technical competencies and resources required for all students.
10. Software privacy and accessibility statements.

Remember to refer to these policies and resources throughout the course as necessary.

## Course Policies

To ensure timely completion of this five-week summer session course, please note that late work will not be accepted. Additionally, tests are only permitted on the scheduled date as indicated in the course schedule below. If you have concerns about meeting the deadlines, please contact the professor in advance to discuss potential solutions.

## Coursework, Evaluations, and Grades

### Two Examinations

Students will take two non-cumulative exams to evaluate their understanding of the course learning objectives, as well as essential concepts in American politics, public policy making, and the policy process. Each exam will consist of 75 multiple-choice questions.

### Three Documentary Response Papers

Students will complete three documentary response papers, which serve as an opportunity to apply and further investigate concepts learned in class within the context of real-world policy domains. Detailed instructions for these assignments will be available on *Canvas*. Each response paper should be approximately 1,000 words and must be submitted through the designated *Canvas* assignment prompt.

### Attendance and Participation

Students must attend all class meetings during the one-month summer session, which meets three days a week, and actively participate in discussions related to pertinent policy topics. Attendance will be recorded during each class session, and students are expected to contribute meaningfully to the discussions. Any absences, late arrivals, or early departures must be discussed and approved in advance with the professor.

### Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Percentage
2 Exams	50%
3 Documentary Papers	40%
Attendance	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grade Scale

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Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	98.0 - 100	C	72.0 - 77.9
A	92.0 - 97.9	C-	70.0 - 71.9
A-	90.0 - 91.9	D+	68.0 - 69.9
B+	88.0 - 89.9	D	62.0 - 67.9
B	82.0 - 87.9	D-	60.0 - 61.9
B-	80.0 - 81.9	F	0.0 - 59.9
C+	78.0 - 79.9		

## Course Schedule

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1	Introduction; Overview of Public Policy (ch.1)	<i>Independence Day</i>	Policy Process Elements (ch. 2); History and Structure (ch. 3)
2	Watch Doc. 1; Official Actors (ch. 4)	Unofficial (ch. 5) Actors; Test 1 Review	<b>Test 1</b>
3	<b>Doc. 1 Response Due;</b> Agenda Setting (ch. 6); Decision Making (ch. 7)	Policy Analysis (ch. 7); Watch Doc 2	Policy Design and Tools (ch. 8).
4	Implementation, Failure, and Learning (ch. 10)	<b>Doc. 2 Response Due;</b> Watch Doc. 3	Evaluation and Philosophy of Science (ch. 11)
5	Policy Science (ch. 11); Collaborative Governance and Public Policy	Catch up day; Test 2 Review; <b>Doc 3 Response Due</b>	<b>Test 2</b>