

**Public Policy**  
EVSS-PUBA 602  
FALL 2021

MAYBANK 115  
5:30PM - 8:15PM M

👤 Dr. Matthew Nowlin

🔗 [matthewcnowlin.com](http://matthewcnowlin.com)

✉ [nowlinmc@cofc.edu](mailto:nowlinmc@cofc.edu)

🗨 **Office hours:** [By appointment](#) (on Zoom)

---

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing. **The College of Charleston requires that masks be worn while indoors and you must wear a mask at all times while in class.** Although vaccinations are currently not required, *I ask you to be respectful of the health and safety of others.* If you have not received the **COVID-19 vaccine, which is safe, free, and effective, please consider doing so immediately.** Information about the vaccine is available from the [SCDHEC website](#) and information about where and when to obtain a vaccine is also available on the SCDHEC website [vaccine locator page](#).

## Course Description

*Our responsibility is one of decision—for to govern is to choose* - John F. Kennedy

The above quote from President Kennedy came from a speech at Liberty Hall in Philadelphia on July 4th, 1962. In the audience were members of the 54th National Governors' Conference. Speaking to elected officials that were charged with making often difficult decisions, Kennedy was reminding them that making choices is at the heart of governing. How do policymakers make choices regarding public policy? This course will address this question by examining the policymaking process in the United States.

Public policy is an on-going process of actions (or inactions) and decisions (or non-decisions) by government at all levels. The policymaking process considers the interactions of decision-makers, those trying to influence decision-makers, and the venues where decisions are made. As likely future actors in the complex process of making public policy, you will likely be involved in considering, informing, and perhaps making consequential policy decisions. The aim of this course is for students in the MES, MPA, and concurrent MES/MPA programs to develop an understanding of the ways in which policy choices are developed, considered, and made in a democratic system.

The tools and frameworks discussed in the course will help you to be able to identify the major components and important facets of the policymaking process as well as enhance your capacity to critically analyze important policy issues.

The course is divided into three sections, 1) **Foundations**: includes some of the foundational aspects of policymaking in the US such as democracy, equality, institutions, and actors; 2) **Theories of the Policy Process**: covers the major policy process theories that scholars have developed; and 3) **Applied Policy Research**: discusses how knowledge is applied to address pressing societal problems and includes policy design, implementation, analysis, and evaluation.

Laptops are allowed, but should only be used to access the readings. Phones should be put away during class. *I encourage you to take notes by hand, with pen and paper. [You learn better that way.](#)* I recommend taking notes using the [Cornell Method](#).

## NASPAA Competencies and Course Learning Objectives

Students who graduate from NASPAA accredited MPA programs should develop the ability to: lead and manage in public governance, participate in and contribute to the policy process, apply skills in analysis and critical thinking to solve problems and make decisions, articulate and apply a public service perspective, and communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry. **This course is designed with a special emphasis on providing students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to participate in and contribute to the policy process.** To that end, learning objectives include:

- Explain the various policy process theories and frameworks
- Apply one or more of the policy process theories to a policy problem
- Analyze policy problems and their potential solutions
- Develop a detailed understanding of a policy problem or issue
- Display oral, written, and group communication skills

These objectives will be achieved through critically reading the course readings; by writing several short papers; and by completing a policy report about a particular policy issue.

## Required Texts

The following texts are **required**. Additional readings will be listed on the schedule below and available on OAKS.

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2020. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. Routledge. 5th Edition. (The 4th Edition from 2016 is also acceptable)
- Weible, Christopher and Paul Sabatier (eds). 2018. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Westview Press. 4th Edition.

- Bardach, Eugene and Eric M. Patashnik. 2020. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. SAGE Press. 6th Edition. (Older editions are also acceptable)

## Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken for each class session, and will be part of your course engagement grade. You are allowed to miss *one class without penalty*. **However, do not come to class if you feel ill. Additionally, if you have been exposed to or tested positive for COVID-19, do not come to class regardless of how you feel. In those cases, I am happy to meet with you on Zoom to discuss material you missed and wave the attendance requirement. Just let me know.**

## Course Requirements and Grading

Performance in this course will be evaluated on the basis of 10 reflection papers, draft sections of a policy report, a final policy report, a decision memo, a course reflection paper, and class engagement. *Instructions for each assignment will be placed on OAKS*. Due dates are in the schedule below. Points will be distributed as follows:

Assignment	Possible Points
Reflection Papers (10 at 20 points each)	200 points total
Policy Report Draft Sections (4 at 50 points each)	200 points total
Policy Report	100 points
Decision Memo	75 points
Course Reflection Essay	25 points
Engagement	100 points
Total	700 points

*There are 700 possible points for this course. Grades will be allocated based on your earned points and calculated as a percentage of 700: A = 90 to 100%; B+ = 87 to 89%; B = 80 to 86%; C+ = 77 to 79%; C = 70 to 76%; F = 69% and below*

## Assignments

**Specific instructions for the following assignments are posted on [OAKS](#). All work must be turned in through the Assignment folder on OAKS, and is due at class time: Monday, 5:30 PM Eastern.**

- *Reflection Papers*: You will write 10 short, about 2 pages, reflection papers that summarize and integrate the readings. Prompts will be given for each paper in [OAKS](#). Note that 12 are assigned, but only 10 will be graded. **When assigned, reflection papers are due at class time.**

We will learn about several of the leading theories of the policy process. To help facilitate learning, the reflection papers for the policy process theories will include briefly explaining some of the major components of each of the theories and discussing what you learned about

the policy process from learning about the theory. You will also need to find a peer-reviewed journal article that applies the theory and post a brief (about a paragraph) summary of the article as well as a pdf of the article on the [OAKS](#) discussion board.

- *Policy Report*: You will write a 10-12 page policy report. For the policy report you will define a problem; explore the policy history and policy mapping of the problem; consider three alternatives to address the problem; evaluate those alternatives; and make a recommendation.

You will turn in drafts of parts of the policy report throughout the semester. Instructions for the report and each part of the report is on [OAKS](#).

- **Part 1 draft DUE: Sept 20**
- **Part 2 draft DUE: Sept 27**
- **Part 3 draft DUE: Nov 22**
- **Part 4 draft DUE: Nov 29**
- **Final policy report DUE: Dec 10**

- *Decision Memo*: The decision memo is based on your policy report, and will be a two-page memo where you clearly distill for a decision-maker what you have learned and would recommend regarding your policy issue. **The decision memo is due December 10.**
- *Course Reflection Paper*: The course reflection paper will be a 1 to 2 page paper that will ask you guided questions so you can reflect on how well we met the course objectives. **The course reflection paper is due December 6.**
- *Course Engagement*: Students are expected to participate in the course by asking questions, providing thoughtful comments, and through making contributions to the group discussion portion of class. **Class discussion should be better than it would have been had you not attended.** Note that the professor has final say over what does or does not count as adequate participation.

## A Note on Feedback

Each of your reflection papers will be graded in a holistic fashion. I will examine and grade the document as whole, I am therefore not likely to make specific comments on multiple aspects of each of your papers. Any feedback will be provided on [OAKS](#). For the reflection papers that discuss the theories of the policy process, I will be looking to see that you adequately address each of the questions, and if you do you will likely get all or most of the points. For the rough drafts of sections of the policy report, I will provide feedback on how to improve the draft for the final report. If you adequately address what is asked for each of the papers, you will likely get all or most of the points. Any major issues with the assignments or your writing in general (such as grammar) that results in a significant loss of points (below 90%) will be addressed with feedback. Finally, I am happy to meet with you to discuss any individual paper or your writing as a whole.

## Late Work Policy


Late work is subject to a 48-hour grace period, and after that will be penalized 10% each day (24 hr period) it is late, up to 3 days. After 3 days the assignment will not be accepted. For example, if an assignment is due Monday at 5:30 PM, the grace period ends on Wednesday at 5:30 PM and it is late as of 5:31 PM and you lose 10%. After Thursday at 5:31 PM you lose another 10%, after Friday at 5:31 PM another 10%, and no work will be accepted after Saturday at 5:30 PM. *No late work will accepted 72 hrs after the assignment due date and time.*


## Course Schedule


**Subject To Change.** All changes will be announced through email and on the [OAKS](#) course page.


**All readings listed under *Readings* below are required.** For some weeks I have provided supplemental materials. These are not required but are strongly encouraged. Apart from the books, additional readings will also be made available on [OAKS](#) or as external links. Readings can be found under Readings for each module. I recommend doing the readings in the order listed below and on the module guide.

### Books


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

 **WS:** Weible, Christopher and Paul Sabatier (eds). 2018. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Westview Press. 4th Edition.


 **BP:** Bardach, Eugene and Eric M. Patashnik. 2020. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. SAGE Press. 6th Edition.

 Other book chapters will be available as pdfs on [OAKS](#)


### Articles

 You will be reading several peer-reviewed academic journal articles. *These will be made available as pdfs on [OAKS](#).* In addition, you will be required to find several journal articles on your own.

### Blog Posts

 I also provide several links to Paul **Cairney**'s excellent series of blog posts, [policy in 500 words](#) and [policy in 1000 words](#). The blog posts are required reading and should be discussed in your policy process papers. Professor Cairney's [website](#) also provides podcasts and a host of other resources that I recommend.

### Supplemental Materials


 When possible, I have included links to videos and other materials to supplement the readings.

## Part I: Foundations

### Aug 30: Introduction and Course Overview

- *Readings (skim after class):*
  - Birkland, Chap 1, *Introducing the Policy Process*
  - Cairney blog post [What is Public Policy and Why Does it Matter?](#)
  - Cairney blog post [12 Things to Know about Studying Public Policy](#)

### Sept 6: Democracy and the Policy Sciences

- *Readings:*
  - Dahl, Robert A., Chap 4, *What is Democracy?*
  - Dahl, Robert A., Chap 5, *Why Democracy?*
  - Levitsky and Ziblatt, Chapter 1: *How Democracies Die: Introduction*
  - SKIM: Smith and Larimer, Chap 1 *Public Policy as a Concept and a Field (or Fields) of Study* (pgs. 7-15)
  - SKIM: deLeon, Peter. 1995. "Democratic Values and the Policy Sciences." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(4): 886–905.
- *Supplemental Materials:*
  -  [How Democracies Die - Interview with Harvard Professor Steven Levitsky](#)
- *Assignments:*
  - Reflection paper 1

### Sept 13: Equality and Social Constructions

- *Readings:*
  - Dahl, Robert A., Chap 6, *Why Political Equality I? Intrinsic Equality*
  - Dahl, Robert A., Chap 7, *Why Political Equality II? Civic Competence*
  - powell, john a., Chap 1, *Post-Racialism or Targeted Universalism?*
  - Cairney blog post: [The Social Construction of Target Populations](#)
  - SKIM: Schneider, Ingram, and deLeon, *Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of Target Populations*
- *Supplemental Materials:*
  -  [Targeted Universalism](#)
- *Assignments:*
  - Reflection paper 2

## Sept 20: The Policymaking Process

- *Readings:*
  - Birkland, Chap 2, *Elements of the Policy Making System* (pages 32-37, skim the rest)
  - Cairney blog post: [The Policy Cycle and its Stages](#)
  - Cairney blog post: [The Policy Process](#)
  - Dye, Thomas R. 2013. Chap 1, *Models of Politics: Some Help in Thinking About Public Policy*
  - Birkland Chap 3, *The Contexts of Public Policy Making*
- *Supplemental Materials:*
  - Finding Sustainability podcast, [Policy processes and advocacy coalitions with Chris Weible](#)
- *Assignments:*
  - Reflection paper 3
  - Policy report part 1 draft due

## Sept 27: Institutions, Actors, and Subsystems



- *Readings:*
    - Dahl, Robert A., Chap 8, *What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?*
    - Cairney blog post [Institutions and New Institutionalism](#)
    - Birkland, Chap 4, *Official Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy*
    - Birkland, Chap 5, *Unofficial Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy*
    - Cairney blog post [Networks, Sub-government, and Communities](#)
    - Anderson, James A., *Levels of Politics*
  - *Assignments:*
    - Reflection paper 4 due
    - Policy report part 2 draft due
-

## Part II: Theories of the Policy Process

### Oct 4: Agenda Setting and the Multiple Streams Approach

- *Readings:*
  - Birkland Chap 6, *Agenda Setting, Power, and Interest Groups*
  - Cairney blog post: [Multiple Streams Analysis](#)
  - WS Chap 1: Herweg, et al., *The Multiple Streams Framework*
  - 📖 Find a peer-reviewed journal article on agenda setting and/or the Multiple Streams Approach and post it to the discussion on [OAKS](#)
- *Supplemental Materials:*
  - Video with Prof. Nikolaos Zahariadis [Multiple Streams Approach: An Introduction](#)
- *Assignments:*
  - Reflection paper 5 due


### Oct 11: Punctuated Equilibrium

- *Readings:*
  - Cairney blog post: [Punctuated Equilibrium Theory](#)
  - WS Chap 2: Baumgartner, Jones, and Mortensen, *Punctuated Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking*.
  - Find a peer-reviewed journal article using Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET)
- *Supplemental Materials:*
  -  Video with Prof. Frank Baumgartner [Punctuated Equilibrium: An Introduction](#)
  -  Video with Prof. Frank Baumgartner [Punctuated Equilibrium: Applications](#)
  - [Comparative Policy Agendas website](#)
- *Assignments:*
  - Reflection paper 6 due

### Oct 18: Fall Break



## Oct 25: Advocacy Coalition Framework

- *Readings:*
  - **Cairney blog post:** [The Advocacy Coalition Framework](#)
  - **WS Chap 4:** Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt, Weible, and Ingold, *The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Overview of the Research Program*
  - Weible, Christopher M, and Karin Ingold. 2018. “Why Advocacy Coalitions Matter and Practical Insights About Them.” *Policy & Politics* 46(2): 325–43.
  - *Find a peer-reviewed journal article using the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF)*
- *Supplemental Materials:*
  -  **Video with Prof. Christopher Weible** [Weible On ACF](#)
- *Assignments:*
  - **Reflection paper 7 due**

## Nov 1: Narrative Policy Framework


- *Readings:*
  - **Cairney blog post:** [Critical Policy Studies and the Narrative Policy Framework](#)
  - **WS Chap 5:** Shanahan, Jones, McBeth, Radaelli, *The Narrative Policy Framework*
  - Crow, Deserai, and Michael Jones. 2018. “Narratives as Tools for Influencing Policy Change.” *Policy & Politics* 46(2): 217–34.
  - *Find a peer-reviewed journal article using the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF)*
- *Supplemental Materials:*
  - [Narrative Policy Framework website](#)
- *Assignments:*
  - **Reflection paper 8 due**

## Nov 8: The Institutional Analysis and Development Framework and Social-Ecological Systems

- *Readings:*
  - **Cairney blog post:** [The Institutional Analysis and Development Framework \(IAD\) and Governing the Commons](#)
  - **Cairney blog post:** [The Social-Ecological Systems Framework](#)

- **WS** Chap 6: Schlager and Cox, *The IAD Framework and SES Framework: An Introduction and Assessment of the Ostrom Workshop Frameworks*
- Find a peer-reviewed journal article using the IAD OR the SES framework

- *Supplemental Materials:*

-  **Video with Dr. Elinor Ostrom** [Elinor Ostrom on managing “common pool” resources](#)
- McGinnis, Michael D. 2011. “An Introduction to IAD and the Language of the Ostrom Workshop: A Simple Guide to a Complex Framework.” *Policy Studies Journal* 39(1): 169–83.

- *Assignments:*

- **Reflection paper 9 due**

## **Nov 15: Applying the Theories of the Policy Process**

- *Readings:*

- Weible, Christopher M., Tanya Heikkila, Peter deLeon, and Paul A. Sabatier. 2012. “Understanding and Influencing the Policy Process.” *Policy Sciences* 45(1): 1–21.
- Cairney, Paul. 2015. “How Can Policy Theory Have an Impact on Policymaking? The Role of Theory-Led Academic–Practitioner Discussions.” *Teaching Public Administration* 33(1): 22–39.

- *Assignments:*

- **Reflection paper 10 due**
- **Be prepared to discuss your policy report**

---


## **Part III: Applied Policy Research**

### **Nov 22: Policy Design and Implementation**

- *Readings:*

- **Birkland** Chap 9, *Policy Design and Policy Tools*
- **SKIM: BP** Appendix B: Things Governments Do
- **Birkland** Chap 10, *Policy Implementation, Failure, and Learning* (pgs. **342-353**)
- Herd and Monynihan Chap 1, *Administrative Burdens: Introduction*

- *Supplemental Materials:*

-  [Administrative Burden: Policymaking by Other Means: Professor Don Moynihan \(2019\)](#)

- *Assignments:*

- **Reflection paper 11**
- **Policy report part 3 due**

## Nov 29: Policy Analysis and Evaluation

- *Readings:*

- **Birkland** Chap 8, *Decision-Making and Policy Analysis*
- Radin, Beryl A., Chap 6, *The Tools of the Trade*
- **Cairney blog post:** [Success and Failure \(Evaluation\)](#)
- deLeon, Peter. 1992. “The Democratization of the Policy Sciences.” *Public Administration Review* 52(2): 125–29.

- *Supplemental Materials:*

- [Does Head Start work? The debate over the Head Start Impact Study, explained](#)
- [Army Corp of Engineers Charleston Peninsula Study](#)

- *Assignments:*

- **Reflection paper 12**
- **Policy report part 4 due**

## Dec 6: Doing Policy Analysis

- *Readings:*

- **Cairney blog post** [Evidence-based policymaking and the ‘new policy sciences’](#)
- **BP:** Parts I-IV

- *Assignments:*

- **Course reflection paper due**

---

**Policy report DUE Friday, December 10 by 11:59 PM**  
**Decision memo DUE Friday, December 10 by 11:59 PM**

## **Important Information**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration – working together without permission – is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the [Student Handbook](#)

### **Students with Disabilities**

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the [Center for Disability Services](#) located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me at least one week before any accommodation is needed.

### **Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction**

If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

## Mental and Physical Wellbeing

At the college, we take every students' mental and physical wellbeing seriously. If you find yourself experiencing physical illnesses, please reach out to student health services (843.953.5520). And if you find yourself experiencing any mental health challenges (for example, anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, and/or loneliness/homesickness) please consider contacting either the Counseling Center ([professional counselors](#) or 843.953.5640 3rd Robert Scott Small Building) or the Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting "4support" to 839863, visit: <http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php>, or meet with them in person 3rd Floor Stern Center). These services are there for you to help you cope with difficulties you may be experiencing and to maintain optimal physical and mental health.

## Food and Housing Resources

Many CofC students report experiencing food and housing insecurity. If you are facing challenges in securing food (such as not being able to afford groceries or get sufficient food to eat every day) and housing (such as lacking a safe and stable place to live), please contact the [Dean of Students](#) for support. Also, you can go to: <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/student-food-housing-insecurity/index.php> to learn about food and housing assistance that is available to you. In addition, there are several resources on and off campus to help. You can visit the Cougar Pantry in the Stern Center (2nd floor), a student-run food pantry that provides dry-goods and hygiene products at no charge to any student in need. Please also consider reaching out to Professor ABC if you are comfortable in doing so.

## Center for Student Learning

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the [CSL](#) or call (843) 953-5635.

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit: <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>.

## Religious Accommodation for Students

It is the policy of the College to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me immediately if you will need to miss class any time during this semester.