

Introduction to Public Policy

POLI 211

SUMMER II 2021

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

Course Description

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

As stated by President Kennedy, 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.

Throughout this course we will explore the historical and social context in which policymaking occurs; how problems reach the agendas of policymakers and how policies are formed to address those problems; the adoption of specific policy alternatives; how policies are implemented; and, finally, how public policies are evaluated.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The goals for this course are to:

- Understand the public policy process in the US
- Apply various public policy models to real world policy issues
- Analyze the merits of public policy debates
- Analyze the merits of alternative policy solutions to public problems

General Social Science Education Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should be able to apply social science concepts, models or theories to explain human behavior, social interactions or social institutions. This will be assessed in the final exam.

Delivery Format

This is an asynchronous online course, and so it is largely self-paced. Students must have access to a **computer** with **high-speed internet access** throughout the course. In addition, students must have access to **OAKS** and *should check OAKS frequently (AT LEAST every other day) to*

be sure not to fall behind. Finally, students must have access to their **CofC email**. **Computer failure/unavailability does not constitute an excuse for not completing assignments by the due date.**

It is essential that students stay on top of the course assignments. I will post due dates, but it is your responsibility to make sure you don't get behind, especially in a class this short. Do not make the mistake of thinking this is an easy class because we're meeting online, or an easy class because it's meeting over the summer. The material is quite difficult, and will take a lot of effort on your part to master. *A summer class that meets face-to-face normally entails three hours of classroom time per weekday, plus reading and homework each night. The workload for this class will be the same, except our classroom will be OAKS.*

Technical Issues

If you have technical problems, please contact the Student Computing Support Desk at 843.953.8000 or email studentcomputingsupport@cofc.edu.

Contacting the Professor

If you have questions about course related material, and/or course procedures please *post your question to the Course Questions discussion board on OAKS*, so that other students can benefit from your questions and the answer. I will respond to discussion board questions within 48 hours, *if not sooner*. If you are having problems with *course material*, please feel free to email me at nowlinmc@cofc.edu.

Email Policy

Email is the best way to contact me and I am happy to answer questions and/or address concerns over email. Please note the following:

1. Please allow 24 hours for a response from me before sending a second email.
2. Assignments must be turned in through the corresponding Assignment folder on OAKS and will not be accepted by email under any circumstances, including "issues with OAKS."
3. If you are having a technical issue with OAKS, I will not be able to help you, so please contact the [Student Computing Support Desk](#).

Required Materials

- Birkland, Thomas A. 2020. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making* 5th Edition. This book is required and a print version is available at the College Bookstore. *Be sure you have the 5th edition.*
- Access to [OAKS](#). We will make extensive use of OAKS in this course and several of its tools including Discussion Boards, Quizzes, and Assignments. Tutorials for each of these tools can be found [here](#).

Navigating This Course

Course material will be organized into 4 content modules that you will be able to access on OAKS beginning each **Tuesday starting on Tuesday, July 13**. Each module will consist of:

- Readings from the *Birkland* book
- Lectures
- A policy issue that includes readings, a video, and a discussion board
- Module quiz

Each module will be made available at 7:00 AM on each Tuesday, and assignments within each module are due by *11:59 PM on each Monday*.

Assignments

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on 4 module quizzes, 16 discussion board posts, two exams and a research presentation. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be available on OAKS.

Assignment	Possible Points	% of Grade
Module quizzes	100 (total)	20%
Policy issue discussion boards	100 (total)	20%
Exam I	100	20%
Exam II	100	20%
Research presentation	100	20%
Total	500	100%

Module Quizzes

Each of the 4 modules will have a 10 multiple-choice question quiz over the readings and lectures for that module. You can use course materials for the quiz, but you must be take each quiz by yourself. *Once you begin the quiz you will 10 minutes to complete it.* Each quiz is worth up to *25 points*.

Discussion Boards

Within each module there will be a discussion board based on a policy issue. The discussion board will involve a discussion question about a policy issue that connects to concepts presented in the *Birkland* readings. To gain an understanding of the various policy issues, you will be assigned a reading and video. *You should do all the readings in the module and watch the video before you answer the discussion question.* For each policy issue discussion board you must a) provide an **response of about 3 to 4 paragraphs** to the discussion question and b) *comment* on one other students answer, **in about a paragraph**. Note that you will not be able to see or comment on another student's post until you provide your response to the question. Each discussion board is worth up to *25 points*, 18.75 points for your response and 6.25 points for your comment.

You should not make any statement to or about anyone in an email or discussion board that you would not make in person. Be respectful of your classmates. In this course we will address policy issues that are controversial. All discussion of issues will be respectful to differing views. Finally, this course will be about learning to approach policy issues as scholars and policy analysts, not as partisans for one particular point of view.

Exam I

Exam I will be available on OAKS on **Monday, July 26 at 7:00 AM and must be completed by 11:59 PM that same day**. The exam will be *four short essay* questions and cover material from Modules 1 and 2. Each answer should be **about 500 words**. *You are allowed to use course material for the exam, however, you must take the exam on your own.*

Exam II

Exam II will be available on OAKS starting **Monday, August 10 at 7:00 AM and must be completed by 11:59 PM that same day**. The exam will be *four short essay* questions and cover material from Modules 3 and 4. Each answer should be **about 500 words**. *You are allowed to use course material for the exam, however, you must take the exam on your own.*

Research Presentation

Students will create a presentation that profiles a pressing issue of concern at the federal, state, or local level. Examples include climate change, taxes, criminal justice, employment, or education. **You may not choose any of the issues used in the course (democracy, police reform, healthcare, or immigration).** The presentation should include an overview of the issue, current policies in place to address the issue, and a proposed policy solution to the issue. *You should send me an email with your presentation topic by July 23.* Students must create a PowerPoint with audio or video narration in VoiceThread for this presentation. Be creative and feel free to include pictures, interviews of public figures, etc. The presentation should be about 10 minutes and is **due by 11:59 PM on Monday, August 9.**

Grades

There are **500** possible points for this course. Grades will be allocated based on your earned points and calculated as a percentage of **500**. A: 94 to 100%; A-: 90 to 93%; B+: 87 to 89%; B: 83 to 86%; B-: 80 to 82%; C+: 77 to 79%; C: 73 to 76%; C-: 70 to 72%; D+: 67 to 69%; D: 63 to 67%; D-: 60 to 62%; F: 59% and below.

Course Content

The following modules will be on OAKS and made available on the dates indicated. Course content and schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced through email.

Module 1: Studying Policy and Policymaking in Context

Available 7:00 AM on July 13

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland chapter 1: *Introducing the Policy Process*
 - Birkland chapter 2: *Elements of the Policy Making System* (pgs., 32-37; skim the rest)
 - Birkland chapter 3: *The Historical Contexts of Policy Making*
 - Dahl chapter 4: *What is Democracy?* (Available on [OAKS](#))
- *Policy Issue: **Democracy***
 - *Reading:* CQ Researcher *Voting Rights*
 - *Video:* [American Insurrection](#)
- *All assignments due by 11:59 PM on July 19*

Module 2: Actors, Institutions, and Agenda Setting

Available 7:00 AM on July 20

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland chapter 4: *Official Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy*
 - Birkland chapter 5: *Unofficial Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy*
 - Birkland chapter 6: *Agenda Setting, Groups, and Power*
- *Policy Issue: **Healthcare***
 - *Reading:* CQ Researcher *Health and Society*
 - *Video:* [The Healthcare Divide](#)
- *All assignments due by 11:59pm EST on July 26*

Email research presentation topic by July 23

Exam I: July 26

Module 3: Policy Types and Decision-Making

Available 7:00 AM on July 27

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland chapter 7: *Policies and Policy Types*
 - Birkland chapter 8: *Decision-Making and Policy Analysis*
- *Policy Issue: **Police Reform***
 - *Reading:* CQ Researcher *Police Under Scrutiny*
 - *Video:* [Policing the Police](#)
- *All assignments due by 11:59 PM on August 2*

Module 4: Policy Design and Implementation

Available 7:00 AM on August 3

- *Readings:*
 - Birkland chapter 9: *Policy Design and Policy Tools*
 - Birkland chapter 10: *Policy Implementation, Failure, and Learning*
- *Policy Issue: Immigration*
 - *Reading:* CQ Researcher *Immigration Overhaul*
 - *Video:* [Zero Tolerance](#)
- *All assignments due by 11:59 PM on August 9*

Research Presentation due August 9

Exam II: August 10

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 at [or 843.953.5640](#) 3rd Robert Scott Small Building) or the Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting "4support" to 839863, visit [, 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 [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 .

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.