

**PUBLIC POLICY & ADMINISTRATION**  
**POLSCI 2U03**  
**Winter 2023**

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## **Course Description**

This course introduces students to major issues in Canadian public policy and public administration, including the relationship between politics and public policy making. We will examine how and why governments make the decisions that they do, paying attention to the links between the political environment, the process of agenda-setting, political decision-making (as compared to policy decision-making), and the political, institutional, and ideational factors affecting policy outcomes. In the first part of the course, we explore the context of policymaking. The part will focus on the role of political actors and organized interests, how institutions structure political action and policy decision-making, and the influence of ideas and ideology. In the second part of the course, we will build upon this theoretical foundation to focus on the “stages” of the policy process and theories of policy change. We will explore how policy issues emerge, how policy agendas become set, the factors under consideration in program or policy development, and how outcomes are evaluated. Tutorial sessions will focus on discussions of major course topics,

## **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Define and explain the policy process, and the ways in which public policy is shaped by institutions, interests, and ideas
- Assess the governing process with reference to inputs (policy) and outputs (administration)
- Describe the constituent elements of the policy cycle and identify the different types of policy actors in Canada
- Analyze current political and public policy issues from different perspectives
- Carefully synthesize and analyze information from a variety of academic and grey-literature sources; and
- Communicate your ideas clearly and succinctly, both in writing and orally

## **Class Format**

The class is scheduled for one lecture session per week on Mondays plus a tutorial.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- There are no required texts for this course.
- The required readings for the course will be posted on Avenue to Learn. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the readings in advance of the date in which each topic will be addressed. As the course will employ a problem-based format, students will need to be fully prepared in order to have the optimum learning experience for those sessions.
- The readings also form part of the examinable content for the course. Students are also encouraged to locate and consult sources of information in addition to the assigned readings.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

Your grade for this course will be based on a mix of online quizzes, short assignments, and participation in tutorial sessions.

Each component is weighted as follows:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Grade Value</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Online quizzes (each worth 15%) - 3 in total (top 2 grades will count towards your final mark)	30%	February 1 <sup>st</sup> – February 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 8 <sup>th</sup> – March 10 <sup>th</sup> April 3 <sup>rd</sup> – April 5 <sup>th</sup>
Policy Actor Map	20%	Due Friday, February 10 <sup>th</sup>
Briefing/Decision Note Assignment	20%	Due Friday, March 17 <sup>th</sup>
Policy Instrument Advice	20%	Due Friday, April 14 <sup>th</sup>
Tutorial Participation	10%	Ongoing

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Online Quizzes (30%)**

Throughout the semester, you will be expected to complete at least **two (2) of three (3)** online quizzes. These quizzes will test you on the course content, including course readings, approximately every four weeks. The quizzes will test only on the material covered in the period since the previous quiz. These quizzes will be approximately 15 questions in length, and will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer. **Budget approximately 1 hour to complete each quiz.**

For your first two quizzes, you will have a window of three days to complete each quiz. Quiz 1 and 2 will “Go Live” on the Wednesday morning at 9AM. For your third quiz, you will have a window of two and a half days to complete the quiz. Quiz 3 will “Go Live” Monday after class (12:30PM) and will be available until Wednesday at 11:59PM. **NOTE: once you begin the quiz you must complete it.** The quizzes will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity, and whatever questions were completed to that point will be logged for marking.

**\*\*I recommend\*\*** that you complete all three (3) quizzes during the semester. In this case, only your top two quiz marks will count towards your final grade.

### **Course Assignments:**

The three main assignments in the course may be completed individually or in a group of two students belonging to the same tutorial group. By submitting work with another student, both students accept and agree that the grade for the assignment will be shared by each student and that the assignment will be graded as a single document as a whole – contributions by each student will not be assessed individually. In addition, students agree and accept that all responsibility for the assignment, including both late submissions and academic dishonesty provisions, will be applied to both students in the event that there are any issues associated with the submission of the assignment.

### **Policy Actor Map (20%)**

Students will choose a policy problem that is of current relevance to a government (federal, provincial or municipal) in Canada and submit a “policy map” outlining all of the relevant government and non-government departments, actors and/or organizations within the policy subsystem who have an interest in the policy problem as well as identify their preferred policy options associated with their interests. The policy map will present a written summary of the role of various policy actors and their interests and positions along with an explanation of their objectives and strategies. It will be 3-4 double spaced pages in length.

### **Briefing/Decision Note (20%)**

Policy briefing notes convey crucial information and recommendations to policy decision-makers in government and other leadership positions. For this assignment, you will be required to prepare a 2-page briefing note, typed and double spaced, using standard 12-point font (Times New Roman). The briefing note is expected to provide a synopsis of a complicated issue facing the government and present a range of options, including a recommendation for action. Materials for the briefing note assignment will be posted on the Avenue to Learn. You are not to do any outside research for this assignment.

### **Policy Instrument Advice (20%)**

Students will choose an issue of current relevance to a national/federal, provincial or municipal government and identify and explain at least four different policy instruments or tools that could be used to address the problem as well as suggest ways or means of measuring whether the various instruments could accomplish the government’s policy goals. Students should include both the broad definition of the measures as well as specific data to support how to measure the success or failure of the policy option.

### **Tutorial Participation (10%)**

The tutorial participation component of your grade is based on the quality of your contributions to the tutorial discussions and activities. Contributing to tutorial does not mean talking all the time. It means: a) reading the required readings and coming to class prepared; b) making thoughtful and relevant comments; c) being courteous to your fellow students and respectful of opposing points of view; and d) not sitting quietly or monopolizing the discussion.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (January 9 – 13): Introduction**

Paul Cairney. "[What is Public Policy?](#)" Blog post & podcast.

Jamila Michener. 2018. "Medicaid, Political Life, and Fragmented Democracy," in *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

## **Part I: The Policy Context**

### **Week 2 (January 16 – 20): Institutions**

\*\*Tutorials Begin

***Tutorial Topic:*** *What are institutions? How do institutions structure political decision-making? How have institutions structured social policymaking in Canada?*

Kiera L. Ladner. 2005. "Up the Creek: Fishing for a New Constitutional Order," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38(4): 923-953.

### **Week 3 (January 23 – 27): Actors & Interests**

***Tutorial Topic:*** *Who can access the policy process? How is 'knowledge' and 'expertise' defined in public policy? How does 'knowledge' and 'expertise' shape policy outcomes?*

Kathryn Harrison. 2010. "The Struggle of Ideas and Self-Interest in Canadian Climate Policy," in K. Harrison and L. McIntosh (eds.) *Global Commons, Domestic Decisions: The Comparative Politics of Climate Change*. MIT Press.

### **Week 4 (January 30 – February 3): Ideas and Ideologies**

***Tutorial Topic:*** *Can we separate out political attitudes and ideologies from policy making? How do different ideas take hold in shaping policy frames?*

***Tutorial Activity:*** *Time to work on your Policy Actor Map*

Christopher Cochrane. 2010. "Left/Right Ideology and Canadian Politics," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 43(4): 583-605.

Clark Banack. 2020. "Ethnography and Political Opinion: Identity, Alienation, and Anti-establishmentarianism in Rural Alberta," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 54(1): 1-22

**Quiz #1:** Complete by Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:59PM

## Part II: The Policy Cycle & Theories of Policy Change

### Week 5 (February 6 – 10): Policy Stability and Policy Change

**Tutorial Topic:** *What factors determine whether a policy problem results in change? What factors shape the speed, scope, and style of policy change?*

Keith Banting and Debra Thompson. 2021. "The Puzzling Persistence of Racial Inequality in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 54(4): 870-891.

**Policy Actor Map:** Due Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM

### Week 6 (February 13 – 17): The Policy Cycle

**Tutorial:** *Is the policy cycle a useful concept to understand how public policy gets made? What are 'windows of opportunity' and how do they shape policymaking?*

Paul Cairney. "[Policy concepts in 1000 words: The Policy Cycle and its Stages.](#)"  
Blog post and podcast

Carmen Ho. 2022. "Benevolent Policies: Bureaucratic Politics and the International Dimensions of Social Policy Expansion," *American Political Science Review* 116(2): 615-630.

### Week 7 (February 20 – 24): READING BREAK

### Week 8 (February 27 – March 3): Agenda Setting & Issue Framing

**Tutorial Topic:** *Why, when, and how do some issues become policy problems? Who decides how and when a policy issue becomes a part of the agenda?*

**Tutorial Activity:** *Time to work on your Briefing/Decision Note*

Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram. 1993. "Social Construction of Target Populations," *American Political Science Review* 87(2): 334-347

Benjamin Cashore and Steven Bernstein. 2020. "[Why Experts Disagree on How to Manage COVID-19: Four Problem Conceptions, Not One.](#)" *Global Policy Journal*.

### Week 9 (March 6 – 10): Policy Formulation

**Tutorial:** *Should policy be based on the insights of experts or the preferences of citizens? Why does neither option fully satisfy decision-makers? How do the preferences of policymakers affect outcomes?*

Mireille Paquet. 2020. "Immigration, Bureaucracies, and Policy Formulation: The Case of Quebec," *International Migration* 58(1): 166-181.

Eric Montpetit and William D. Coleman. 2009. "Policy Communities and Policy Divergence in Canada: Agro-Environmental Policy Development in Quebec and Ontario," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 32(4): 691-714.

**Quiz #2:** Complete by Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM

### **Week 10 (March 13 – 17): Decision-Making**

**Tutorial:** *Are individuals (including policymakers) rational actors? How does evidence get used in decision-making, and in what ways is evidence made political?*

Brian Head. 2015. "Toward More 'Evidence-Informed' Policy Making?" *Public Administration Review* 76(3): 472-484.

Moses Hernandez. 2012. "The Politics of Knowledge in Policy Analysis" *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 10(2), 153-160.

**Briefing/Decision Note:** Due Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM

### **Week 11 (March 20 – 24): REFLECTION WEEK**

No classes or tutorials.

### **Week 12 (March 27 – 31): Implementation**

**Tutorial:** *What tools (policy instruments) do governments have to choose from? How does 'tool choice' affect the how different groups/citizens experience public policy decisions?*

**Tutorial Activity:** *Time to work on your Policy Instrument Advice.*

Donald Moynihan, Pamela Herd, Hope Harvey. 2014. "Administrative Burden: Learning, Psychological, and Compliance Costs in Citizen-State Interactions," *Journal of Public Administration, Research and Theory* 25(1): 43-69.

Leah Stokes. 2016. "Electoral Backlash against Climate Policy: A Natural Experiment on Retrospective Voting and Local Resistance to Public Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 958-974.

### **Week 13 (April 3 – 7): Evaluation**

**No Tutorials This Week** (Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> is Good Friday)

Allan McConnell. 2010. "Policy Success, Policy Failure and Grey Areas In-Between," *Journal of Public Policy* 30(3): 345-362.

**Quiz #3:** Complete by Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM

### **Week 14 (April 10 – 12): Taking Stock of the Policy Process**

Course wrap up, evaluation, and discussion.

**In-Class Activity:** *Time to work on your Policy Instrument Advice & get feedback.*

**Policy Instrument Advice:** Due Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM

## Course Policies

### Submission of Assignments

Written work must be submitted electronically via A2L. Turnitin will be enabled for the course. Please see the information on Turnitin on page 11 if you have questions.

### Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### Late Assignments

Students will have a 2.5 day window in which to complete each quiz. The quizzes are designed to keep you on track with the course; there will be **no extensions** for online quizzes. Quizzes not completed within the available days will receive a mark of zero.

For the **three assignments**, this course employs an ***automatic & graduated*** grace period. Students who cannot submit their paper in time are automatically allowed **3 extra days** to hand-in their work, without penalty (*you do not need to email your professor to get an extension*). Starting on day 4, marks will begin being deducted based on the following schedule:

Days Late	Penalty	Cumulative Deduction
1	0	.
2	0	.
3	0	.
4	2%	2%
5	3%	5%
6	5%	10%
7	10%	20%
8	<i>No Longer Accepted</i>	<i>No Grade</i>

Submissions made on the 8th day or later will not be accepted and a mark of **zero** will be entered. There will be **no extensions**.

## **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## **Policy on Children in Class**

Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff and faculty parents.

- 1) All breast/chestfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breast/chestfeeding relationship.
- 2) For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving them with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
- 3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
- 4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you work to keep babies and children quiet(ish) while in class, and you can do what you need to attend to your child.

## **Courses with an On-Line Element**

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **Online Proctoring**

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster

account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.