SEP/ POLSCI 701: Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis

Term: Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Greig Mordue

Office: ETB 515

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:00 – 2:00 pm (or by appointment)

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Seminar: Thursdays, 10:00am – 1:00pm

Classroom: ETB 535

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The processes associated with developing, implementing, influencing and assessing public policy can be extraordinarily complex. Public officials and the people who guide them confront difficult challenges. Often, they are forced to balance competing interests or conflicting agendas. Much of the time, the information they require to solve a problem is less than complete, or even if enough information is available, they might not have sufficient authority to make the changes they consider necessary. Further, sometimes, the things they want to do are simply not possible: the technology does not exist, the numbers do not add up, or there is a serious disconnect between the outcomes people say they want and the sacrifices they're prepared to make to get there.

In this course, an in-depth description of the public policy process will be provided. Students will develop an understanding of the process by reviewing and debating current public policy issues and emerging trends. They will apply a series of techniques and exercises to develop and refine their capacity to identify societal problems or opportunities, develop options, assess those options and present them to decision makers.

The public policy process will be considered from various perspectives including, for example, politicians, officials or bureaucrats, national, provincial and local levels of government, political parties, interest groups and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, because government action or inaction can have an inescapable effect on the affairs of business, this course will also provide students with an opportunity to a) gain increased understanding of how various policies affect both the day-to-day and long term trajectories of business, and b) learn how they can join the discussion and influence the process. Ultimately, they will:

- Better understand the role that public policy plays in facilitating or hindering their work
- Realize the importance of their participation in the policy process
- Learn how to how to engage with government and other stakeholders, and
- Enhance their ability to play an effective role as professionals

FORMAT

The course will adopt a mixture of learning strategies including brief lectures, discussions, debates, exercises, presentations and individual projects. Following a brief introduction to the designated topic, students often will take the lead in discussing key issues. Students will have many opportunities to explain and defend their own work as well as gain and provide feedback. The instructor will help to inform and frame discussions to keep the class focused on important public policy concepts and approaches.

SPECIAL GUESTS

To broaden perspective and enhance understanding of specific issues, experienced and respected practitioners have also been invited to lecture and respond to students' questions. Guests may include people with knowledge of regulatory development and compliance, health care policy, economic development and investment attraction and trade policy. They bring a range of experience and perspective with experience at all levels of government in elected and non-elected capacities. Guest may include former politicians, political staffers, consultants, and leaders of trade associations or private companies.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend class. A richer understanding of the material is possible by doing so. Students are expected to come to class having completed the required readings and prepared to conduct meaningful discussions about them.

AVENUE TO LEARN

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

RULES & POLICIES

Written Work and Late Submissions

An important part of good public policy is the communication of the policy. Therefore, all written work will include consideration for grammar, clarity, and organization, as well as content and analysis. More details about the marking will be discussed in class.

Assignments must be submitted in class on the due date. Do not submit by email and do not slide it under the office door. Late assignments will be penalized five percent per day (weekends will count as one day).

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

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 behavior 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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy.

The following illustrates only two forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.

2. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements. Academic accommodations must be arranged before classes or academic work begins, and for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances

Students who require academic accommodation due to an Observance must submit a RISO form to their Faculty office, electronically or in person, normally within ten working days from the beginning of each term in which they are anticipating a need for Accommodation. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances.

E-mail Communication

All e-mail communication sent from students to instructors, 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 CONTENT

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.

Evaluation

Assignments	Value	Week Due
Historical Review	20	3
Presentation of Historical Review	5	4 or 5
Briefing Note	20	8
Press Release	10	9
Presentation Documents (Presentation Script + Q&A)	20	10
Performance (of Presentation and response to questions)	10	10 or 11
Leadership	15	All
TOTAL	**100**	

Note: There will be checkpoints prior to submission / presentation of most components described in 'Evaluation' above.

Schedule

The intention is to follow the course schedule as described below. However, at certain points it may make good sense to make modifications. Students will be notified accordingly.

Week	Overview & Theme
1 Sept 12	**Introduction** **+** **An Example of Historical Review**
NOTE:	**SEP / POLSCI 701 WILL NOT OCCUR SEPTEMBER 19. (OTHER EVENTS PLANNED FOR STUDENTS IN SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING PRACTICE AND TECHNOLOGY.)** **THE COURSE PICKS UP ON MONDAY SEPTEMBER 26**

2
 	
Sept 26
	Theories of the Policy Process (Part 1)
	
	All Read basic discussion of theories of public policy
	      Petridou, E. (2014), Theories of the Policy Process: Contemporary Scholarship and Future Directions. Policy Studies Journal, 42: S12–S32. doi: 10.1111/psj.12054
	
	Some students will access the following papers which explain specific public policy theories. Note: Only the students assigned specific public policy theories need to make a detailed examination at these … and only then, the one they are assigned.
	
	      Sabatier, Paul A., and Hank Jenkins-Smith. 1988. "An Advocacy Coalition Framework Model of Policy Change and the Role of Policy Orientated Learning Therein." Policy Sciences 21: 129–68.
	
	      Kiser, Larry, L., and Elinor Ostrom. 1982. "The Three Worlds of Action: A Metatheoretical Synthesis of Institutional Approaches." In Strategies of Political Inquiry, ed. Elinor Ostrom. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 179–222.
	
	      Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. 1993. Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." American Political Science Review 87 (2): 334–47.

3 Oct 3	**Theories of the Policy Process (Part 2)** **+** **Public Policy Theories** **+** **Understanding the Policy Making Process** **Policy Process** *As per Week 2, some students will access the following papers which explain specific public policy theories.* ***Note****: Only the students assigned specific public policy theories need to make a detailed examination at these … and only then, the one they are assigned.* Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 1991. "Agenda Dynamics and Policy Subsystems." Journal of Politics 53: 1044–74. Berry, Frances Stokes, and William D. Berry. 2007. "Innovation and Diffusion Models in Policy Research." In Theories of the Policy Process, ed. Paul A. Sabatier. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 223–60. Mintrom, M. (1997). Policy Entrepreneurs and the Diffusion of Innovation. American Journal of Political Science, 738-770. **2) The Legislative Process**
4 Oct 10	**Words Matter: Writing a Briefing Note (Part 1)** **Developing a Briefing Note:** Readings TBD
5 Oct 24	**Words Matter: Writing a Briefing Note (Part 2)**
6 Oct 31	**Selling your Policy** Formulating a press release Familiarize yourself with press releases. Go to: http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/news-releases-list/ (***Note***: Use the search tools to look at ones from government)
7 Nov 7	**Regulation and Accountability – the Government Hand-Off (Guest Speaker: Barbara Sullivan)** Readings are: Why is Health Care Regulation so Complex? http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2730786/

	Example: Regulation of Titles in the Profession of Psychology http://hprac.org/en/reports/resources/PsychENG_ReportFINAL.pdf
8 Nov 14	**Dissecting the Briefing Note** Students present draft briefing notes and receive feedback based on the eight-point checklist
9 + Nov 21	**Building Coalitions** **+** **Government and Industry Relations** (**Guest Speaker: To be confirmed**) Readings are: Scott Thurlow (2010) Some Observations on the State of Lobbying in Canada. Available at: http://www.revparl.ca/33/2/33n2_10e_Thurlow.pdf R. Paul Wilson (2015). Research Note: A Profile of Ministerial Policy Staff in the Government of Canada. Canadian Journal of Political Science, 48, pp 455-471. doi:10.1017/S0008423915000293. Peruse Lobbyists Registration Annual Report. Available at: https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/eic/site/012.nsf/vwapj/OCL-AR15-16.pdf/%24FILE/OCL-AR15-16.pdf
10 Nov 28	**Final Presentations** Students present statements and be prepared to question/challenge presenters
11 Dec 5	**Final Presentations** Students present statements and be prepared to question/challenge presenters