

SEP/ POLSCI 701: Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis

Term: Fall 2020
Instructor: Dr. Greig Mordue
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Office Hours: By appointment
Email: mordueg@mcmaster.ca
Seminar: Monday, 8:00 am – 11:00 am EST
Classroom: Via Zoom

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 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 join each class. A richer understanding of the material is possible by doing so. Students are expected to join the 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

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>% Value</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
• Historical Review	20	Oct 19
• Presentation of Historical Review	5	Oct 19 or Oct 26
• Briefing Note	20	Nov 16
• Press Release	10	Nov 23
• Presentation <u>Documents</u> (Presentation Script + Q&A)	20	Nov 30
• <u>Performance</u> (of Presentation + Questions ... Technical & Attack)	10	Nov 30 or Dec 7
• Leadership & Reflection(s)	15	Every Week
<i>TOTAL</i>	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.

Session (Week of ...)	What
1 (Sept 14)	Lecture: Introduction; assignment explanations (Review, Briefing Note, Press Release, Presentation, etc.)
2 (Sept 21)	Lecture: Automotive case study (example of Historical Review) Student Explanation: Students discuss individual areas of study Assignment Explained: 5 Policy Theories assigned to individuals or teams
3 (Sept 28)	Student Presentations: 5 Policy Theories presented (in teams) Student Explanation: Students discuss refined individual area of study
4 (Oct 5)	No full Class ... Students book 1:1 with professor to discuss progress on Historical Review
-- (Week of Oct 12)	No Class (Reading Week)
5 (Oct 19)	Assignment Due: Students hand in Historical Review Lecture: Understanding the Policy Making Process (the actors, how a Bill becomes a Law etc.) Student Presentations: Group A Present Historical Review
6 (Week of Oct 26)	Student Presentations: Group B Present Historical Review Lecture: The purpose and style of a well-crafted Briefing Note
7 (Week of Nov 2)	Guest Speaker: Mathew Wilson Other: Students book individual time with professor to discuss Briefing Note
8 (Week of Nov 9)	Student Presentations: present draft of Briefing Note ... get feedback (adjust as necessary) Lecture: The purpose and style of a well-crafted Press Release
9 (Week of Nov 16)	Assignment Due: Students Hand in Briefing Note Guest Speaker: Alister Smith
10 (Week of Nov 23)	Assignment Due: Student hand in Press Release Note: Professor posts the press release in advance of the next week for students to read and consider in advance of final presentations and &A)

Session (Week of ...)	What
11 (Week of Nov 30)	<p>Assignment Due: <u>All</u> Students hand in Presentation + Q&A</p> <p>Student Presentations: <u>Group B</u> members make Presentation, then responds to questions (two types):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical 2. Attack (purpose of Q&A)
12 (Week of Dec 7)	<p>Student Presentations: <u>Group A</u> members make Presentation, then responds to questions (two types):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical 2. Attack (purpose of Q&A)