

**The Evergreen State College**  
**Masters Program in Public Administration**  
**Foundations of Public Policy Fall 2024 Mondays 6:00p – 9:20p, SEM II, E2109**  
**Draft Syllabus as of September 5, 2024 – subject to change**  
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I think of “public policy” as the sexy alter ego of the field of public administration. The policies created by legislators provide a framework within which administrative action occurs. Legislators work with the public and interest groups to determine which “problems” deserve attention, and design interventions—programs—that aim to resolve the identified problems...as well as finding the funds to pay for them. They work through the political system to generate agreement about both the funding and policy, then provide oversight to have some degree of confidence that the policy was implemented as intended....and is at least minimally effective. And ideally, the policy will be consistent with our values and preferences.

The reality is nuanced. Crafting policy is hard. Public problems are often intractable and messy (and that was before the current highly polarized era) and there’s rarely enough money. Models describing the policy process don’t provide any magic buttons to push, but they do provide a variety of helpful frames for making sense of a complex reality. And the analysis, presentational and political skills gained in studying policy are helpful no matter what sector (public, nonprofit or private) or role you may find yourself in.

This introductory course will provide an overview of the concepts and issues in the field of public policy. Our attention will be devoted to both how policy is created in practice, and models describing it, and how to perform the ex-ante policy analysis that helps decisionmakers better understand a given policy arena and options for interventions that may improve the state of the world. We will examine the political and economic rationales offered for public intervention in our society and economy, analyze the many factors influencing the policy process, and critique the models crafted to describe it. You will gain skills in the analysis of policy problems, and how to communicate your analysis results with various audiences. Policy analysts have a vital role in the policy process through their *ex-ante* analysis of proposals to act on public problems, and their evaluation of new and old programs. We will take a deep dive into the details of a few policy areas, as well as a few elements of the policy system that are often overlooked, including social movements, equity issues, and the global/international arena. Our goal is to provide guidance for future policy analysts in our representative democracy, a system in which marginalized groups still find it difficult to gain entrée to the policy process.

### **Learning objectives**

1. Improve your capacity to apply critical thinking skills and creativity to the practice of public policy.
2. Develop an in-depth understanding of complex policy issues in several policy arenas.
3. Gain an understanding of the major steps in the policy design and development process and models used to describe it.
4. Develop skills in the analysis of different types of policy issues and government programs, including analysis options for a variety of analytical tasks.
5. Improve your policy communication skills, with an emphasis on writing and speaking skills, and your capacity to effectively communicate policy options and recommendations to decision-makers.
6. Understand what it is like to work as a policy analyst in a government or civic agency and what techniques can be used to increase your effectiveness in that role.

We will read a few texts and a series of shorter articles, governmental reports, and research studies, and discuss these in class. Lectures, films, guest presentations and workshops will be elements of our class sessions. Class materials will be available on Canvas prior to each class session. Students will write several short papers and prepare one longer paper. There will be a few “class preparation” assignments that will not need to be submitted. Each student will deliver a 5-minute presentation on your paper and findings on the last day of class.

AI. The arrival of online AI programs such as ChatGPT is having a substantial impact on the practice of policy analysis. These programs are large language models based on web available data from up to two years ago. They are fast, powerful, and far from completely valid and reliable, since they have the annoying habit of “hallucinating” or MSU (Making \*\*\*\* Up—alas, a common practice in the policy world). Yet they will change the role of the policy analyst because any decision maker will be able to generate a quick policy analysis on a given question within ten seconds. My point: while it’s fair game to use AI programs to help craft your responses to the assignments in this class, it is not acceptable to have them write your papers for you. You’re only cheating yourself if you do so. Put in the time and effort, and improve your skills at argumentation and rhetoric.

*MPA Mission Statement: Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We think critically and creatively; communicate effectively; work collaboratively; embrace diversity; we value fairness and equity; advocate powerfully on behalf of the public; and imagine new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities. “Be the change.”*

Course Equivalencies: 4 credits, Public Policy Analysis.

Format: Unless otherwise stated, all papers should be typed, double spaced, 12-point font, and follow APA format and citation style. [See APA Style <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx> or the Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide at [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/grammar/](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/). All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors.

Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant. You can contact our graduate programs writing support at: [EvergreenWritingAssistant@gmail.com](mailto:EvergreenWritingAssistant@gmail.com). Additional writing resources can be accessed through the campus Writing Center: <https://www.evergreen.edu/writingcenter/resources>

Participation & Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class meeting in its entirety. Participation includes focusing on class content, speaking in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, notify me prior to a class.

In the event of a class absence, make-up work may be assigned. Makeup work must be completed by the end of the quarter in question for course credit. After reoccurring absences (being late to class; regularly missing more than one class), you may be denied credit. Finally, if you do miss a class, you are expected to do the reading for that class meeting and turn in any assignments that were due that class date.

Late Assignments: If there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact me via email no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options. Late assignments must be completed by the revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

Credit: Students will receive 4 graduate credits at the end of the course if all requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning objectives, and assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance.

Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples’ work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the [MPA Handbook](#) and [College statement on academic honesty](#) for more information.

Failing to meet course requirements (ex. not completing one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late, or multiple absences) may constitute denial of credit at the discretion of the faculty. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

Evaluation: A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required. All final evaluations are to be submitted via our online evaluation system no later than one week after the last class.

Holidays for Reasons of Faith or Conscience: Please inform me in writing within the first two weeks of class if you will miss specific class sessions because of holidays of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted as part of a religious denomination, church, or organization. If you let us know within that time-frame, we will offer you reasonable accommodations, and the absence(s) will be excused. For more information, please refer to the Evergreen policy at: <https://www.evergreen.edu/policy/religious-observance>.

Technology Use & Learning Styles: We all have different ways of learning. Faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc. However, I am limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. Surfing the internet, checking social media, reading e-mail, playing with cell phones are not appropriate behaviors in a learning community. I reserve the right to ask for no technology in the classroom if it becomes a distraction. Also, please shut your laptops when we have guest speakers.

Reasonable Accommodations. These will be provided for any student who qualifies for them through a working relationship with Access Services. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). If the student is already working with the office of Access Services the faculty should have received a letter clearly indicating the student has a disability that requires academic accommodations. If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations in order to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: Contact faculty before class and Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's [Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

Permission to Record Lecture, Workshop and Other Similar Discussion: If a participant in class would like to obtain an audio or video recording of another participant in class speaking, discussion, lecture or other related communications in class, and this falls beyond the scope of Reasonable Accommodations, then this participant would need written permission, via email or other acceptable forms of documentation, and would need to give a reasonable time period in advance of the recording; usually a week (5 business days) and written consent would need to occur before the recordings begin.

Conduct & Conflict Resolution: Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Possessing respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards. The procedure to resolve conflict is outlined in the MPA Student Handbook: <https://www.evergreen.edu/mpa/studenthandbook/conflictresolution>. Included on this page is the Evergreen State College Conflict Resolution Process Matrix. We will abide by the [social contract](#): WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy. We will abide by the [student conduct code](#) (including academic integrity and plagiarism): Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process. We will abide by the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#)

Guest Policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with my approval in advance of the requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Guests must abide by all social contract conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus.

Inclement Weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with for announcements of campus closures. Students can call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Faculty may decide to cancel a class meeting even if campus is open and we will send an all-class email prior to 3:00 pm the day of class. Students are responsible for checking email and ensuring viable transportation options are available to them <https://evergreen.edu/emergencyresponse>

Communicating: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly. It's unlikely that you'll catch me in my office if you phone. Send me an email and we can set up an in-person or Zoom appointment to chat.

## Readings. Books

Smith, K. and C. Larimer (2017). *The Public Policy Theory Primer 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* New York: Routledge. (earlier editions ok)

Pennock, A. (2018). *The CQ Press Writing Guide for Public Policy.* Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

Optional: Bardach, E., & Patashnik, E.M. (2015). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving (5th ed).* Washington, D. C.: Congressional Quarterly Press. (earlier editions ok).

## Articles

Bail, C., et al. (2018). "Exposure to opposing views on social media can increase political polarization." *PNAS*: Vol. 115, No. 37, pp. 9216: 9221.

Behn, R. (2005). "The Craft of Memo Writing." Boston: Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Breyer, S. (2024). "Choosing pragmatism over textualism." *New York Review of Books*, May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Bryson, J. (2004). What to do when Stakeholders matter. *Public Management Review*, 6(1), 21-53.

Cairney, P., & Jones, M. D. (2016). Kingdon's multiple streams approach: what is the empirical impact of this universal theory?. *Policy Studies Jjournal*, 44(1), 37-58.

Coates, Ta Nehesi (2014). "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic* June 2014.

Cohn, J. (2010). "How they did it." *The New Republic*, May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Cole, D. (2024). "The Supreme Court Power Grab." *New York Review of Books*, August 15<sup>th</sup>.

de Figueiredo, John, and Brian Kelleher Richter. (2014). "Advancing the Empirical Research on Lobbying." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 163-185.

Durning, Dan (2004). Review of *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society* by. Hajer and Wagenaar and Morcol, *A New Mind for Policy Analysis.* *Policy Sciences*, Dec., Vol. 37, No. 3/4 ,pp. 357-365.

*Economist* (2016). "The Post Truth World." *The Economist.* September 10<sup>t</sup>.

Gasper, Des. (1995). "Analyzing Policy Arguments," in *Arguing Development Policy - Frames And Discourses*, eds. R. Apthorpe and D. Gasper, London: Frank Cass, 1996.

Giorno, Taylor (2023). Federal lobbying spending tops \$1 billion in first quarter of 2023. Washington, D.C.: Open Secrets. Available at: <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2023/05/federal-lobbying-spending-tops-1-billion-in-first-quarter-2023/>.

Hofstadter, Richard (1964). "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" *Harper's Magazine*, November, pp. 77-86.

Ingram, Helen, Anne L. Schneider, and Peter deLeon. (2007). "Social Construction and Policy Design," In Sabatier, Paul, *Theories of the Policy Process.* Cambridge, MA: Westview Press.

Ingram and Schneider (2006). "Policy Analysis for Democracy." In *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, Martin Rein, Michael Moran, Robert E. Goodin, Eds., New York: Oxford University Press.

Kraft, M. and S. Furlong (2021). *Public Policy, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Selected chapters.

Lakoff, George (2011). "Framing: The Role of the Brain in Politics." UC Berkeley. Available at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/07r5v60p>. Downloaded 5/22/23.

Levy, Ro'ee (2021). "Social Media, News Consumption, and Polarization: Evidence from a Field Experiment." *American Economic Review*, 111(3): 831-870.

Mackinac Center (2014). A brief Explanation of the Overton Window. <https://www.mackinac.org/OvertonWindow>.

Mintrom, Michael (2010). "Doing Ethical Policy Analysis." In *Public Policy: Why ethics matters*, J. Boston, A. Bradstock, and D. Eng, Eds. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Pelosi, N. (2024). *The Art of Power*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Reinicke, Wolfgang. (1997). "Global Public Policy." *Foreign Affairs*, Nov. - Dec., Vol. 76, No. 6, pp. 127-138.

Rittel, Horst W. J. and Melvin M. Webber. (1973). "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." *Policy Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 155-169.

Salamon, Lester (2001). "The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action." Chapter 1 of *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance*. New York: Oxford.

Sautter, C. (2019). "U.S. Elections on the Brink." In C. Nelson and J. Thurber, *Campaigns and Elections American Style*. New York: Routledge.

Schneider, A. and H. Ingram (1993). "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *The American Political Science Review*, Jun., Vol. 87, No. 2. pp. 334-347.

Tarrow, Sidney. (1996). "Social Movements in Contentious Politics: A Review Article." *The American Political Science Review* Dec., 1996, Vol. 90, No. 4.

Wilentz, S. (2014). "The Dred Scott of our time." *New York Review of Books*, July 17<sup>th</sup>.

Winston, D. (2019). "Creating a Winning Campaign Strategy." In C. Nelson and J. Thurber, *Campaigns and Elections American Style*. New York: Routledge.

### **Class Preparation and Analysis Assignments.**

**Class Preparation 1.** For the first night of class, complete the Pew Political Typology quiz at <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/?group=645745eff9445d155b1635>.

The authors of the quiz make several assumptions for their political typology model. Does their model overstate or understate any particular factors? Did your "score" on the quiz surprise you in any way? No paper required; jot down some notes for our class discussion on this topic. **Due: September 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 1.** Rittel and Webber's classic paper drew attention to, and provided a vocabulary for, social and environmental problems of a nature and scale that feel overwhelming and possibly unsolvable. What would you identify as the "wicked" problem which is *least* likely to experience demonstrable progress within the next 10 years? Add a sensitivity analysis: what factors might change the arc of that wicked problem toward resolution? **Due: October 7<sup>th</sup>.**

**Class Preparation 2.** Kingdon's policy model emphasizing the multiple streams of problems, policies and politics, and key terms he uses ("policy window"; "policy entrepreneur") are now part of the common parlance of the policy arena. Is his model still useful, evocative? What does he miss? What other model do you find helpful in making sense of policy examples you've followed? (Have a page of notes; be ready to discuss this). **Due October 14<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 2.** Complete a bill analysis of a bill proposed before the U.S. Congress or Washington state legislature. It may be an analysis of a proposed bill or one already enacted. Follow the template provided on Canvas, where sample bill analyses will be posted. Additional details on the assignment will be covered in class and posted to Canvas. **Due October 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**Class Preparation 3.** Use the model in the paper by Gasper to think through possible policy arguments relevant for your final policy brief. **Bring your notes to class. For October 28<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 3.** Submit a one paragraph proposal for your policy brief (final paper--see Assignment \*). Define the problem; explain why this is a public policy problem. **Due October 28<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 4. Public Policy Observation.** Attend in person a government or non-profit public meeting of your choice (not something you’ve attended before or are attending for work). Check the agenda in advance to ensure they will be discussing a policy at the meeting. Assess where the organization is in their policy process around that issue and what factors are playing a role in decision making. To what extent is the issue a public policy issue? How have formal or informal policy analysis influenced the process, if at all? Over what time span has the action on this issue occurred? Collect data on the timing of key events and include a brief chronology in your paper (with an online or other timeline showing the date of key events). **2-3 pages. Due: November 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 5.** Write an op-ed about a topic related to your final paper. Carefully follow the suggestions in the Pennock text regarding the length and format of the piece. [After you finish your op-ed, ask yourself, what if anything did you notice or learn about your final project during the process of writing it?] **Due: December 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

**Assignment 6.** Final paper. Research and write a policy memo of no longer than 5 pages, directed to an appropriate organizational or legislative leader. Explore an important issue in some depth and provide recommendations to policy makers. Additional details on this assignment will be provided in class and posted to Canvas. Due: **December 9<sup>th</sup>.**

**Presentation:** Prepare a 5-minute presentation summarizing your findings; **be prepared to deliver it December 9<sup>th</sup>.** Include visuals as appropriate. Please post to Canvas by December 4<sup>th</sup>, 9 p.m.

### Tentative Class Schedule

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Prep & Assignments Due
1 Sept. 30	Public Policy in a Polarized, Post-Pandemic Era. Is rational policy possible in a post-truth world? Still With Us: The “Paranoid Style.” What is in/out of the Overton Window now?	Hofstadter, 1964; Smith and Larimer, Ch. 1,2; Mackinac Center, 2014; Economist 2016	<b>Class Prep 1.</b>
2 Oct. 7	Rationales for Public Action; categories of public intervention. “Framing” and public policy. Are there more policy “messes” now? Social Media: Villain or Scapegoat?	Smith and Larimer, Ch. 3, 4 Rittel and Webber, 1973 Salamon, Ch. 1; Lakoff 2011. Bail, et al 2018; Levy, 2021 p.1-5	<b>Assignment 1.</b>
3 Oct. 14	Models of the Policy Process The “diagnosis” metaphor and process. Writing skills. How to tell a policy “story” Bill Analysis workshop	Smith and Larimer, Ch. 5 Cairney and Jones, 2016 Pennock, Ch. 1, 2; Optional: Behn, 2005; Pennock Ch. 3-7	<b>Class Prep 2.</b>
4 Oct 21	Policy Analysis I: Foundations, ethics, stakeholder analysis. WIGO? Bill Analysis debrief	Kraft & Furlong, Ch. 4, 6, 13 Smith and Larimer, Ch. 6. Bryson, 2004; Mintrom 2010	<b>Assignment 2.</b>
5 Oct. 28	Policy Analysis II: Making Policy Arguments Types of policy documents; Policy and the Networked Society; Case: The ACA	Gaspar, 1995; Pennock, Ch. 8, 9,10; Cohn, 2010; Durning, 2004;	<b>Class Prep 3. Assignment 3.</b>
6 Nov. 4	Pre-Election Special: Finally, Election Day! Politics and Policy: Win Elections, Gain Power Legislative Process; Lobbying and Policy	Ingram and Schneider, 2006; Giorno, 2023; Winston, 2019: Sautter, 2019; de Figueiredo and Richter, 2014; Pelosi, 2024	
<b>Nov. 11</b>	<b>Veteran’s Day: NO CLASS SESSION</b>		
8 Nov. 18	The Deciders: The U.S. Supreme Court	Wilentz, 2024; Cole 2024; Breyer, 2024; Pennock, Ch. 11	<b>Assignment 4.</b>
<b>Nov. 25</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 25-29)</b>		
9 Dec. 2	Social Movements, Contentious Politics, & Equity in Social Policy; Op-Ed workshop; Check in on final paper	Schneider and Ingram, 1993; Tarrow, 1996; Coates, 2014	<b>Assignment 5.</b>
10 Dec. 9	Final Presentations and Class Wrap-Up	Final Presentations	<b>Assignment 6.</b>