

POLICY STUDIES 102

INTRODUCTION TO POLICY STUDIES

Instructor: Shawna E. Sweeney
Policy Studies Department
UMASS Dartmouth
Policy Studies: <http://www.umassd.edu/cas/policystudies/welcome.cfm>

Office: 128 Chase Road
Office Hours: Tu. 1-2:15pm; Th. 3-4pm
E-mail: ssweeney@umassd.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is a survey of the policy studies discipline, including the key concepts and process models used to analyze public policy in the United States. The course also introduces students to the major sub-fields of policy studies such as the policy making process, policy analysis, policy implementation, and program evaluation. The course will explore these concepts, models, and analytic sub-fields by applying them to a variety of federal, state, and local policy areas, as well as global policy areas. These include U.S. social welfare policy, global issues of poverty and social welfare, environmental policy, and civil rights policy.

Though a good part of the course will focus on important domestic policy issues, the policy implications of contemporary social problems, which have become global in nature will also be discussed in this class. As an example, environmental problems today, such as water and air pollution, increasingly spill over national borders and affect the decision-making process of many national governments. Similarly, the trade and investment policies of multi-national corporations (MNCs), and the policies of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), wield considerable influence over the formulation of international and national policy making on social welfare and anti-poverty policy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The class is designed to develop and document skills in three areas: (a) to demonstrate a substantive understanding of the major concepts and process models used to analyze public policy-making, (b) to develop a knowledge of the major actors (formal and informal) and their roles in the policy-making process, and (c) to develop a basic substantive knowledge of key policy areas, such as welfare, civil rights, and environmental policy.

REQUIRED TEXT

Thomas R. Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*, 11th Edition (2004)

COURSE OUTLINE

I. POLICY STUDIES: WHAT IS IT? WHY DO IT?

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 1
Dates: September 8, 13

Library Reserve Reading: Birkland, Chap. 1
McCool, *Public Policy, Theories, Models, & Concepts*,
pp. 1-8

NO CLASS ON SEPTEMBER 6TH - - NEW STUDENT CONVOCATION

II. MODELS OF PUBLIC POLICY MAKING

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 2
Dates: September 15, 20

III. THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS: DECISION-MAKING

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 3
Dates: September 22, 27

Library Reserve Reading: Lindblom & Woodhouse, *The Policy-Making Process*,
3rd edition, Chaps. 2 and 4.

IV. POLICY AREAS

A. POVERTY & SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 5
Dates: September 29, and October 4, 6, 13

1ST EXAMINATION – October 4th

B. GLOBAL ISSUES OF POVERTY & SOCIAL WELFARE

Required Reading: Dye, Chapters 7 and 9
Dates: October 18, 20, and 25, and November 1

Library Reserve Reading: To be announced

- **Short in-class film:** Title to be announce

NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 27TH

C. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 10

Dates: November 3, 8, 10, and 15

2nd EXAMINATION – November 8th

D. CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 11

Dates: November 17, 22, 29, and December 1

VI. AMERICAN FEDERALISM

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 12.

Dates: December 6, 8, and 13th

3rd EXAMINATION – December 8th

VII. POLICY ANALYSIS AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Required Reading: Dye, Chap. 14

Dates: December 15

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated and graded on the basis of the following:

1. Attendance and Participation (10%): Both combined are worth 10% of the course grade. This includes regular attendance, thoughtful student discussion of the class readings, as well as grades received on informal in-class assignments that I may assign during the semester.
2. Examinations (90%): A majority of the final grade will consist of three in-class examinations worth 30% each, which review topics covered in the text and lectures. The examinations will consist of multiple choice, true-false, and short answer questions.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

1. Class Attendance and Participation. I expect regular student attendance and participation in class discussions. Though this is predominantly a lecture class, there will be some time for class discussion on key issues and course readings. I expect students to

read assigned materials before class and come to class fully prepared to discuss the materials in class.

Students should feel free to ask questions and to express their opinions. Student debate of issues discussed in class is encouraged since the exchange of ideas is an important tool for learning. However, students should respect each other and not belittle opinions and ideas. Please be advised that monopolization of class discussion at the expense of your classmates, especially if such actions consistently derail the course agenda, is not acceptable. Though we do not have a rigid schedule, per se, I reserve the right to cut off discussion in order to keep us on track.

It is important to note that the course schedule is not set in stone. I will try to keep the class on schedule. However, I may want to have the freedom to take extra time to emphasize topics that students find more interesting or that I find more important. In the event that a topic is of particular interest to students, we may decide to spend more time discussing and exploring this topic than the time allocated in the course schedule.

Excessive absences will result in a lower grade. To be specific, I will allow three absences over the course of the semester to allow for illnesses and other problems that may keep students from attending class. After those absences are used, students will be assigned zeros for all absences. Documented, extended illness on the part of a student will constitute an exception to this rule, as will any documented excuses related to University sponsored activities.

An attendance sheet will be provided at the beginning of each class. *Students are responsible for insuring that they sign the attendance sheet.* If you do not receive an attendance sheet in class, it is your responsibility to sign in after the lecture.

2. Appropriate class behavior: Students are expected to treat each other with the respect with which they would want to be treated. The same courtesy should be extended to the instructor. I expect all students in this class to respect the rights of others to enjoy an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. The types of behavior that students should be cognizant of and avoid include:

- Talking during class (even whispering carries in a classroom).
- Reading material during a lecture
- Electronic equipment being used inappropriately during class
- Sleeping during class

Students are also advised that they must obtain the permission of the Professor before using any recording devices within the classroom. Modern communication devices such as cell phones, PDAs, beepers, wireless email receivers, and portable music players are a significant distraction to your colleagues, and equally important, to your professor.

Please turn off your personal communication devices before entering the classroom.

2. Late Examinations and Make-Ups. Under normal circumstances, examinations that are taken late will be penalized one grade level for each day they are late. For example, an "A" examination that is taken one day late would be reduced to an "A-". Two days late would reduce it to a "B+", etc. It is possible on exceptional occasions to take a late examination or to make-up a missed examination. However, there must be a legitimate excuse such as illness, death in the family, extracurricular university activities, and so forth. Where possible, you should discuss this with the professor in advance.

2. Drops and Incompletes. You may drop any course within the guidelines established by the University. You will not be penalized simply for dropping a course. However, it is the student's responsibility to drop a course. It is my policy that anyone who merely stops attending class, fails to turn in course work, but remains enrolled in the class will receive an "F." Moreover, University policy prohibits professors from awarding an "I" to any student who fails to complete their course work, unless the student specifically requests an Incomplete before the last week of classes. I am receptive to awarding Incompletes under exceptional circumstances (such as late papers and make-ups above). However, these must be arranged prior to the end of the semester.

3. Class Cancellation. It is not uncommon for one or two classes to be cancelled unexpectedly during the semester due to snow or to due to professional or personal exigencies (meetings, dead battery, flat tire, instructor's illness):

- a. Where possible, I will try to notify students of any class cancellation by email the evening before the class meets.
- b. It is not always possible to give advance notice of a class cancellation. In these cases, the rule is simple. If the instructor is not in the classroom within 15 minutes of the beginning of class, the class is cancelled.

4. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty (see attached university policy).

In addition, please note **Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 271, Section 50. Sale of research papers, etc.; taking of examinations for another at educational institutions:**

"Section 50. Whoever, alone or in concert with others, sells to another, or arranges for or assists in such sale for another, a theme, term paper, thesis or other paper or the written results of research, knowing or having reason to know that such theme, term paper, thesis or other paper or research results or substantial material therefrom will be submitted or used by some other person for academic credit and represented as the original work of such person at an educational institution in the commonwealth or elsewhere without proper attribution as to source, or whoever takes an examination for another at any educational institution in the commonwealth, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both."

In other words, in Massachusetts it is a *criminal offense* to commit plagiarism, or to assist others in plagiarism, which includes taking an examination for another person or allowing another to take an examination for you.



BOOKS ON RESERVE

1. Thomas A. Birkland, *An Introduction to the Policy Process*.
2. Daniel McCool, *Public Policy, Theories, Models, & Concepts*.