

PPA/Pol 660: Public Policy Processes

Meeting Time: 6:00pm-8:50pm Wednesdays: *We will meet online via Microsoft Teams on the 20th and 27th of January. Starting the 3rd of February we will meet in person in BSB 105.*

Instructor: Dr. Ryan P. Scott, rpscott@colostate.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9am-12:00pm via [Microsoft Teams](#), schedule appointments at rpscott.youcanbook.me

Learning Objectives:

Policy process courses can tend to be about theory or practice. However, the point of theory concerning the policy process is to provide an understanding of how the policy process works, so that policymakers can make informed decisions about how to navigate policy situations. In this course, we will engage theories, but focus on how we can leverage those theories towards policy recommendations. If you have a desire to understand policy processes, help guide decision makers through policy process, or hope to be a decisionmaker yourself navigating the policy process, this is a course for you!

Students who take this course will:

- Comprehend key concepts and theories of the policy process
- Analyze policy process using theories and models
- Evaluate empirical policy problems using policy theories
- Recommend policy action based on theoretical understandings of the policy process.

Learning Environment:

This course will aim, beyond achieving the primary objectives, to fulfill the CSU Principles of Community:

Inclusion: We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value and affirm all members of our community, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents and contributions.

Integrity: We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.

Respect: We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge.

Service: We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents, and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional, and global communities.

Social Justice: We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies and procedures that promote justice in all respects.

As a three credit class, I expect each week you will spend 6-9 hours meeting, working on assignments, completing readings, and responding to discussion posts. Our goal is to create a positive and engaging environment. Come to class (digitally or in person given COVID-19). Participate. Be respectful of others opinions. Assume the person on your left and right both believe very differently from you on every subject we

discuss. Moreover, engage with them constructively. Listen. Think. And respond in an appropriate manner. As a graduate course, the expectation is you will attend class either virtually (as necessary) or in person.

I would additionally like each of you to *bring your experiences into the classroom*. For example, when we discuss issues, be sure to think about how the issue informs your experiences, but also listen to how your classmates might have engaged with that concept in their experiences. Be sure to actively consider your own biases, prejudices, and experiences--maybe you can learn a new way of thinking from the person next to you. As such, treat class as *a confidential space where experiences can be shared honestly and openly*. Respect each other's professional roles, however, in this course, you are a student. Treat your classmates as trusted colleagues and fellow learners. *None of us are experts*, we are all attempting to learn how the policy process works so we can make a public service impact.

Readings

There will be one required textbook for the course:

- Cairney, P., 2019. *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues*. Second Edition Palgrave Macmillan.

All other readings will be posted on canvas.

If you are really interested in the theories of this course or studying for phd exams, the book below is a good optional resource.

- Weible, Christopher M., and Paul A. Sabatier. 2017. *Theories of the policy process*.

Graded Assignments

Weekly Reading Survey (10%)

Each week I want to make sure you have a basic grasp of the readings and literature prior to class. Each week you will complete a reading survey. These are intended to motivate you to complete the reading and provide direction towards the learning objectives within the reading while also providing starting points for in-class activities. Many times we will use survey questions within the quiz to motivate class activities. The quizzes must be submitted online prior to class, and will be a mix of short answer and multiple choice questions. Students whose responses reflect engagement with the reading will receive full points. Quizzes can be submitted online and you are certainly allowed to make use of your notes/use the quizzes to help you build notes.

Weekly Discussion posts (20%)

Each week you will submit a post-class discussion post where you reflect on a question developed during the class period, and synthesize a response based on our discussions in class. The objective of these posts is to demonstrate achievement of the learning objectives for the module while practicing application of course content into practical understandings of the policy process. Your discussions will be scored out of three points on a credit/no credit basis. Students with a quality, original submission will receive a 2. Students with a quality submission who also comment meaningfully on a classmates post will receive a 3. What defines a quality post? Your posts should engage the readings from the week, in-class discussion, and the case content to demonstrate mastery of learning objectives.

Strategy memos (3x 20% each)

Your major assignment for the course will consist of three strategy papers, submitted throughout the semester, where you critically apply policy theories to an applied policy case. The major learning objectives for this assignment are to

- a) demonstrate mastery of individual module learning objectives.
- b) connect learning objectives to analysis of a policymaking case
- c) suggest strategies for managing the policy process that reflect scholarly understandings of the policy process.

You will each submit three strategy memos where you must write to a client about the implications of policy theory for managing the policy context. For each strategy paper assignment there will be potential prompts or motivating questions to consider and an applied case. Each of your three memos will focus on a case (available on canvas), which we will use as a class for considering the implications of theories for policy decisions.

You should structure your strategy briefs as policy memos to a specific decision maker, characterizing the necessary elements of the policy process as defined by at least one of the previous course modules. Each memo should include an executive summary, introduction, analysis, discussion and conclusion and recommendation section. Each brief should be no more than 1500 words. Citations should be given in text in APA or Chicago format. You are encouraged to use graphs, figures, logic models, diagrams etc, though this is not required. Strategies on how to write memos are available on the canvas course page.

Strategy memo presentation (10%)

Each student in the course will prepare one presentation based on their strategy memo where they present their policy recommendation to the class. Situate your presentations around a call to action and use theory and evidence to support your call. These presentations should be no longer than 8 minutes, and should include a basic description of the problem, your application of theory to the question at hand, and why your proposed strategy is a best course of action for a given decision, demonstrating your connection of theory to empirical evidence. You will sign up for one presentation during the class, during one of the presentation or finals weeks. As part of your presentation, I'd like you to be very clear about what theory you engage and how that supports your proposed action. Finally, be prepared to answer questions from classmates about how your response might interact with various elements of the policy process.

Assessment and Grading

This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity Policy as found on the Student' Responsibilities page of the [CSU General Catalog](#), and in the [Student Conduct Code](#). At a minimum, violations will result in a grading penalty in this course and a report to the Office of Student Resolution Center. Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Because academic integrity, and the personal and social integrity of which academic integrity is an integral part, is so central to our mission as students, teachers, scholars, and citizens, I will ask that you affirm the CSU Honor Pledge as part of completing your work in this course.

I will grade your work according to the following rubric.

A+	100%	to 98%	Exemplary Graduate Work
A	< 98%	to 94%	Excellent Graduate work
A-	< 94%	to 90%	Graduate work that exceeds expectation
B+	< 90%	to 86%	Graduate work meeting expectations
B	< 86%	to 82%	Generally meets expectations, with deficiencies
B-	< 82%	to 79%	Below expectations for graduate work
C	< 79%	to 75%	Less than acceptable quality for graduate studies
F	< 75%	to 0%	No credit earned

Important information for students on COVID-19:

All students are required to follow public health guidelines in any university space, and are encouraged to continue these practices when off-campus(es). Students also are required to report any COVID-19 symptoms to the university immediately, as well as if they have potentially been exposed or have tested positive at a non-CSU testing location. If you suspect you have symptoms, please fill out the COVID Reporter (<https://covid.colostate.edu/reporter/>). If you have COVID symptoms or know or believe you have been exposed, it is important for the health of yourself and others that you complete the online COVID Reporter. Do not ask your instructor to report for you; if you report to your instructor that you will not attend class due to symptoms or a potential exposure, you are required to also submit those concerns through the COVID Reporter. If you do not have access to the internet to fill out the online COVID-19 Reporter, please call (970) 491-4600.

If you report symptoms or a positive test, your report is submitted to CSU's Public Health Office. You will receive immediate, initial instructions on what to do and then you will also be contacted by phone by a public health official. Based on your specific circumstances, the public health official may:

- choose to recommend that you be tested and help arrange for a test
- conduct contact tracing
- initiate any necessary public health requirements or recommendations and notify you if you need to take any steps

If you report a potential exposure, the public health official will help you determine if you are at risk of contracting COVID. For the latest information about the University's COVID resources and information, please visit the CSU COVID-19 site (<https://covidrecovery.colostate.edu/>).

Schedule

A full schedule of modules, readings, and assignments is available at <https://colostate.instructure.com/courses/121604/modules>

		Objectives
Jan 20	What is Public Policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define public policy and the policymaking process; Develop strategies for case based learning Characterize link between theory and practice in policy process via generalizability, prediction, and usefulness Recognize traditional stages of the policy process and explain why stages might fail to be useful for prediction and generalizability.
Jan 27	Power and policy Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and define multiple dimensions of power Evaluate exercise of power through actors, resources, and ideas Connect equity of process and outcomes to exercise of power in the policy process.
Feb 3	Bounded Rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe individual decisionmaking models Apply boundedly rational frameworks to understanding decision situations Characterize the role of fast and slow systems in policymaking
Feb 10	Interests, Actors, Decisions and Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the role of constructions in approaching policy designs Evaluate feedback between group identities and decisions Characterize limits to rational choice decisionmaking and opportunities for understanding policy through alternative lenses
Feb 17	Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify four new institutionalisms Apply multiple theories of institutions to policy making situations
Feb 24	Structures and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify structural factors: resources, demographics, technologies, opinions, networks that shape policy outcomes and produce feedback Situate a policy process within the broader political economy of policymaking Recognize policymaking as complex system imbued by negative and positive feedbacks
Mar 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy Paper 1 Submission, Group 1 Presentations 	
March 10	Collective Action and Rational Choice Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply market and rational choice principles to choice of public policies Synthesis evidence on the potential for solutions to collective action problems. Recognize key rules informing success of collective action solutions
March 17	Networks and Polycentricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe benefits and drawbacks of multi-level governance systems Explain policy process in multi-level systems Apply polycentric concepts to US Federal system politics
March 24	Policy Punctuations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the rate of change in policy processes Link rate of change to structural, institutional, and behavioral rationales Apply subsystem approaches to policy making, actor orientation, and outcomes

March 31	Beliefs and the ACF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify levels of beliefs in policy subsystems • explain the formation and function of advocacy coalitions • Recognize the potential for policy brokers and learning to facilitate policy change
April 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy Paper 2 Submission, Group 2 Presentations 	
April 21	Ideas in policy process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterize the role of ideas in the policy process as drivers and limiters of policy outcomes • Recognize that ideas themselves have power and can serve as embedded institutions • Evaluate how alignment between ideas, entrepreneurs, and events can facilitate policy change.
April 28	Learning and Diffusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish methods of policy transfer leading to policy isomorphism • Evaluate the potential for collective learning as a facilitator in policy processes. • Synthesize perspectives on the links between evidence and policy adoption.
May 5	The future of policy processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate emerging evidence about process research • Hypothesize the impacts of emerging research for practicing public policy
May 12, 8:30-10:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy Paper 3 Submission, Group 3 Presentations 	