

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

—Audre Lorde, 1982

PUBLIC POLICY 476: APPLIED LEARNING SEMINAR¹
Fall Term 2023 | 1110 Weill Hall | Mondays 11:30-12:50 pm EST

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Stephanie Sanders, Ph.D.

4227 Weil Hall | (734) 615-4402 | stepsand@umich.edu

Virtual Office Hours

By appointment on Thursdays - 1:00-3:00 pm

Sign up for a 15 minute time slot [via this appointment page](#) or by request at an alternative time.
The meeting Zoom link is embedded in the calendar invitation.

Course Overview

This course focuses on structural inequality and the role of policy history and its lasting implications in the United States. Students will examine major institutions as hubs for generating and perpetuating inequality. Through a multidisciplinary approach encompassing fields like sociology, public health, and economics, the course explores the intricate ways inequalities impact individuals, communities, and systems. Collectively we will discuss frameworks for critical policy analysis, policy responses and interventions, and practice hearing and bringing in additional voices into the policy debate.

A. Course Objectives. By participating in this course students will:

1. Comprehend the historical and contemporary influence of public policy on U.S. structural inequalities.
2. Identify diverse frameworks as tools to advance equitable policy solutions.
3. Utilize communication skills—reflection, empathy, inquiry, and attentive listening—to contribute to policy discussions and advance effective policy solutions.

Course Guidelines

A. Attendance, Assignments, and Grading

This course features regular in-class assignments, alongside low-stakes writing tasks. These activities, including the final assignment, aim to bolster students' critical thinking abilities and the application of concepts. The course content also highlights real-world policy issues that encourage the use of multidisciplinary frameworks to address complex questions that have no easy or right answers.

¹Please include “PUB PUL 476” in the subject line of all email’s to Prof. Sanders

1. **Attendance/Participation.** Our classes are designed to be interactive and cultivate an engaging learning environment. As such, students should come to class prepared, having completed the course readings, and are prepared to contribute to discussions.

Students are expected to be present for every class. Of course, I understand that emergencies or other unexpected circumstances arise that make attendance that day impossible (e.g., illness, death, family emergency). If this is the case, **students should notify Prof. Sanders of the absence by email as soon as possible and prior to class.** There are no opportunities for make-up work and any provisions will not apply to nonemergencies (e.g., oversleeping, working on a campaign, sick pets). Unexcused absences will count against your final grade.

2. **In-class Assignments.** The primary avenue for accumulating points in this course is through in-class assignments, which emphasize the value of class attendance and active participation. **In-class assignments hold substantial weight, accounting for 40% of your final grade.** Extensions for assignments are not typically provided. Late submissions will incur a daily deduction of five points for each day overdue. Arrangements for late work must be discussed prior to the assignment deadline, which mirrors professional practices in a job or internship setting.
3. **Questions for Guest Faculty Discussants.** Students are expected to submit 2-3 thoughtful questions in advance of the guest discussant's visit. Questions should draw from class discussions and connect to course readings. **Questions for guest faculty discussants constitute 20% of the overall course grade.**
4. **Study Group Discussion Lead and Response Paper.** Students are divided into 12 randomized study groups to increase engagement and encourage diverse perspectives. **Each group consists of 6-7 students, with one designated discussion leader responsible for guiding the group's efforts.** After the initial week of class, study groups will present a 15-minute overview of the assigned readings. Check the Canvas site's "files" section for assigned groups. Before their designated discussion date, study groups are required to submit a response paper. **Response papers make up 15% of the course grade** and should be between two to three pages long, and double-spaced with a 12-point font.
5. **Policy Memo.** Study Groups are tasked with preparing a policy memo for the final assignment. Team leads should email Prof. Sanders, for topic approval, no later than Nov. 3 at 12:00 p.m. Memos are due NO LATER than December 4 by 1:00 p.m. **Policy Memos account for 25% of the course grade.**

Grading. This is a pass-fail class, in which your active participation determines your grade. ***Students must earn at least 76 points in the class for a passing grade.*** As the instructor, I reserve the right to modify the syllabus, with the stipulation that any changes will be communicated to the entire class clearly and in writing.

- B. **Point of View.** In our structured, small, and large group discussions, we will have numerous opportunities to explore thought-provoking subjects and challenging topics. It is important to approach these interactions with the recognition that differing perspectives may arise. As we embark on this journey, it's worth acknowledging that our conversations might sometimes be challenging and not always easy; we may stumble and make mistakes in our communication and attentive listening. At times, we will need patience, empathy, or a number of other qualities in combination, as we engage with the text, our peers, and our own ideas and experiences. Above all, a fundamental aspect of our interaction is to consistently uphold respect for one another. Students should make every effort to strive for intellectual humility, critique ideas (not the people who express them), listen to understand (rather than judge), and respect others' opinions and perspectives as we deepen our understanding of multiple perspectives – whatever our backgrounds, experiences, or positions.
- C. **Pedagogy.** I have made two pedagogical choices for this course. First, in response to research evidence that they are [harmful to student learning](#), I have decided to **ban the use of laptops and other electronic devices from the lecture portions of class** (students may use laptops during group work). If students have a specific need to use an electronic device in the classroom, feel free to meet with me to address it. In order to reduce disturbances, the first few rows of the classroom are designated as **laptop-free zones**, offering students a focused learning environment.

Second, your work in this course should demonstrate your learning and your ability to apply that learning through critical thinking, analysis, and the development of your own ideas. And, although there are many AI tools that exist to support your ability to be efficient in this application, to be effective in the development of these tools, it is my opinion that Public Policy students should be skilled in their own right. The development and demonstration of those foundational skills are part of this course. **Hence, I strongly encourage students to embrace the challenge of thinking through and developing responses to assignments without the support of AI.**

Policies

- A. **Ford School Inclusivity Statement.** Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:
- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
 - be open to the views of others
 - honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
 - appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
 - value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
 - keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature

- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community

B. Ford School Public Health Protection Policy. In order to participate in any in-person aspects of this course--including meeting with other students to study or work on a team project--you must follow all the public health safety measures and policies put in place by the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, the University of Michigan, and the Ford School. Up to date information on U-M policies can be found [here](#). It is expected that you will protect and enhance the health of everyone in the Ford School community by staying home and following self-isolation guidelines if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19

C. Student Mental Health and Wellbeing: The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, both those relating to the pandemic and other issues such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, can directly impact students' academic performance and overall wellbeing. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

You may access the Ford School's embedded counselor Paige Ziegler (contact information TBD) and/or counselors and urgent services at [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) and/or [University Health Service](#) (UHS). Students may also use the Crisis Text Line (text '4UMICH' to 741741) to be connected to a trained crisis volunteer. You can find additional resources both on and off campus through the [University Health Service](#) and through [CAPS](#).

D. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The University of Michigan recognizes disability as an integral part of diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for students with disabilities. Students who are experiencing a disability-related barrier should contact Services for Students with Disabilities <https://ssd.umich.edu/>; 734-763-3000 or ssdoffice@umich.edu). For students who are connected with SSD, accommodation requests can be made in Accommodate. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your SSD Coordinator or visit SSD's Current Student webpage. SSD considers aspects of the course design, course learning objects and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SSD, instructors, and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

E. Academic Integrity: The Ford School academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. We hold all members of our community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the Ford School promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misconduct. Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Plagiarism involves representing the words, ideas, or work of others as one's own in writing or presentations, and failing to give

full and proper credit to the original source. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action. The Ford School's policy of academic integrity can be found in the [MPP BA](#), and [PhD Program](#) handbooks. Additional information regarding academic dishonesty, plagiarism and misconduct and their consequences is available [here](#).

- F. **Use of Technology:** Students should follow instructions from their instructor as to acceptable use of technology in the classroom, including laptops, in each course. All course materials (including slides, assignments, handouts, pre-recorded lectures or recordings of class) are to be considered confidential material and are not to be shared in full or part with anyone outside of the course participants. Likewise, your own personal recording (audio or video) of your classes or office hour sessions is allowed only with the express written permission of your instructor. If you wish to post course materials or photographs/videos of classmates or your instructor to third-party sites (e.g. social media), you must first have informed consent. ***Without explicit permission from the instructor and in some cases your classmates, the public distribution or posting of any photos, audio/video recordings or pre-recordings from class, discussion section or office hours, even if you have permission to record, is not allowed and could be considered academic misconduct.***

Pay close attention to all announcements in class and on the Canvas site. I plan to communicate important class information and announcements through the official Canvas site.

- G. **Religious/Cultural Observances.** Students who have religious or cultural observances that coincide with this class should notify Prof. Sanders by email within the first 2-weeks of class. I strongly encourage students to honor cultural and religious holidays! However, if I do not hear from students by Friday, September 8, I will assume that there are no conflicts.
- H. **Additional Policies.** Please review additional information and policies regarding [academic expectations and resources](#) at the Ford School of Public Policy.

Course Schedule

The course schedule outlines the sequence of topics, readings, assignments, and important dates throughout the semester. It serves as a roadmap for your learning journey, providing clear guidance on what to expect during each class session. Regularly refer to the schedule to stay organized, plan your study time, and ensure timely completion of assignments. Any updates or modifications to the schedule will be communicated in advance.

Week 1: Aug . 28 | Introduction to Course

Week 2: Sept. 4 | Labor Day Holiday, No Class

Frameworks for Critical Policy Analysis

Week 3: Sept. 11 | Levels of Racism

Required Readings

- Jones, C. (2000). [Levels of racism: a theoretic framework and a gardener's tale](#). American Journal of Public Health, 90(8), 1212.
- Braveman, P. A., Arkin, E., Proctor, D., Kauh, T., & Holm, N. (2022). [Systemic and structural racism: Definitions, examples, health damages, and approaches to dismantling](#). Health Affairs, 41(2), 171-178.

Required Assignments

- Group 1: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- In-class discussion prompts

Week 4: Sept. 18 | Critical Race Theory

Required Readings

- Lantz, P. (2021) [The Tenets of Critical Race Theory Have a Long-Standing and Important Role in Population Health Science](#). Milbank Quarterly Opinion.
- [Advancing Equity and Racial Justice Through the Federal Government](#). The White House.

Guest Faculty Discussant

- [Attai Quereshi](#), Ford School Lecturer
The role of negotiations in public policy discourse

Required Assignments

- Group 2: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- Submit questions for guest faculty discussant

Week 5: Sept. 25 | Critical Race Theory & Individual Freedom (Yom Kippur)

Required Readings

- Alexander, T., Baldwin Clark, L., Reinhard, K., & Zatz, N. (2022). [CRT Forward: Tracking the attack on critical race theory](#). UCLA School of Law Critical Race Studies.
- [The CRT Forward Tracking Project: How to Explore the Data](#). (4-minute video)
- [CRT Forward Tracking Project Map](#).

Required Assignment

- Group 3: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- In-class assignment (handout)

Week 6: Oct. 2 | Critical Race Theory & Voting Rights (Sukkot)

Required Readings

- Naylor, B. (2022) [The Senate is set to debate voting rights. Here's what the bills would do](#). NPR.
- Arce, J. (2021). [La Historia Uncovered: The History of Voting Rights in Latino Communities](#). UnidosUS. (47-minute video)

Required Assignments

- Group 4: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- In-class assignment (handout)

Advancing Public Policy Interventions

Week 7: Oct. 9 | Immigration Policy

Required Readings

- Brown University (2018). [U.S. Immigration Policy. Past and Present, an interactive timeline with videos and images](#).
- Jennifer Lee: [Racial foundations of immigration policy](#) (2021). U-M Center for Racial Justice. (1-hour 30-minute video)
- Department of Homeland Security (2023) [Fact Sheet: U.S. Government Announces Sweeping New Actions to Manage Regional Migration](#). Homeland Security.

Required Assignments

- Group 5: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- In-class assignment (handout)

Week 8: Oct. 16 | Fall Break - No Class

Week 9: Oct. 23 | Framing Social Problems

Required Readings

- Frameworks (2018). [Framing and Policy Making: How does framing help advance our public policy goals?](#)
- Jones, M., & Crow, D. (2018) [Mastering the art of the narrative: using stories to shape public policy](#).
- Ripley, A. (2019). [Complicating the Narratives](#). *Medium*. (1- hour 3-minute audio)

Recommended Reading

- Adichie, C. N. (2009). [The danger of a single story](#). TEDGlobal. (18 minutes video)

Required Assignments

- Group 6: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- In-class discussion prompts

Week 10: Oct. 30 | Combating Structural/Systemic Racism

Required Readings

- Review policy genealogies from [slide deck](#).
- Hardy, B. L., Logan, T. D., & Parman, J. (2018). [The historical role of race and policy for regional inequality](#). *Place-based policies for shared economic growth*, 23.
- Brown, K. S., Kijakazi, K., Runes, C., & Turner, M. A. (2019). [Confronting structural racism in research and policy analysis](#). Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Recommended Readings

- The White House (2021). [Fact Sheet: U.S. Efforts to Combat Systemic Racism The White House](#).
- Smith, D. (2023). [Racial Equality in Foreign Policy](#). Center for Strategic & International Studies. (1-hour 6-minute video)

Required Assignments

- Group 7: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- In-class assignment (handout)

Week 11 Nov. 6 | Work on Policy Memos with Study Group

Week 12: Nov. 13 | Criminal Justice Reform

Required Readings

- Brave New Film (2021). [Racially Charged: America's Misdemeanor Problem](#). (35-minute video)
- Stroud, H., Eisen, L. & Subramanian, R. (2023). [A Proposal to Reduce Unnecessary Incarceration Introducing the Public Safety and Prison Reduction Act](#). (Read the report and fact sheet)

Guest Faculty Discussant

- Thomas Costello, [Wayne County Conviction Integrity Unit](#)
The role of the criminal justice system in achieving justice

Required Assignments

- Group 8: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- Answer 2 of 3 discussion prompts in preparation for guest discussant

Week 13: Nov. 20 | Housing Affordability

Required Readings

- Blakemore, E. (2019) [The Thorny History of Reparations and the United States](#). History.
- Coates, T. N. (2015). [The case for reparations](#). In *The Best American Magazine Writing 2015: Columbia University Press* (pp. 1-50). Columbia University Press.
- Ashcroft, R. (2020). [Color OLaptopf \(American\) Law with Richard Rothstein](#). Renegade Inc. (26-minute video)

Recommended Reading

- de Beaumont Bold Solutions for Healthier Communities (2021) [Economy Policy and Practice Brief](#). Healing Through Policy initiative.

Required Assignments

- Group 9-10: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- In-class assignment (handout)

Week 14: Nov 27 | Reducing Economic Inequality

Required Readings

- Peterson Institute for International Economics (2020). [How to Fix Economic Inequality?](#) An Overview of Policies for the United States and Other High-Income Economies.
- Cooper, D., Mokhiber, Z., & Zippere, B. (2021). [Raising the federal minimum wage to \\$15 by 2025 would lift the pay of 32 million workers](#). Economic Policy Institute.
- [Economists in support of a federal minimum wage of \\$15 by 2024](#). Economic Policy Institute.

Recommended Readings

- Introcaso, D. (2021). [Deaths of despair: the unrecognized tragedy of working class immiseration](#).

Guest Faculty Discussant

- [Cortney Sanders](#), Senior Advisor in the Office of the Acting Commissioner at the U.S. Social Security Administration (Joining via Zoom)
The role of public policy in achieving equity

Required Assignments

- Group 11-12: Study Group Response Paper and Discussion Lead
- Submit questions for guest discussant

Week 15: Dec. 4 | Policy Memo Due

Required Assignment

- Submit Policy Memo (study group)