

Public Policy 320: Politics, Political Institutions, and Public Policy
Fall 2016
Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30-10:00

Professor:	Charles Shipan	GSI:	Katherine Eyster
Offices:	4128 Weill and 7764 Haven	Office:	3202 Weill
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 10:00-11:00 (4128 Weill) Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 (7764 Haven)	Office Hours:	Monday 3:00-4:00 Thurs. 10:00-11:00
E-mail:	cshipan@umich.edu	E-mail:	keyster@umich.edu

Course Description

This course provides students with an introduction to the policymaking process in the United States. The goal of the course is to give students the tools that will allow them to understand how policies are created and why we get the specific policies that we have. To this end, our focus will be on the factors that affect the creation of public policies, rather than on an assessment of how well these policies are working. In other words, we will focus on the policy *process*, rather than on policy *outcomes*.

The course will be divided into four sections. In the first section we will address foundational issues concerning the study of public policy and will introduce the general framework that will be used throughout the course, which is that public policies result from the interplay of preferences and institutions. In the second section we will turn to an examination of how preferences influence policy choices. In the third section we will analyze the role of political institutions in policymaking. Finally, although we will be considering a wide range of policies throughout the course, in the last section we will apply the framework that we have developed throughout the semester to a series of policies.

For the most part, we will focus on domestic policymaking in the US at the national level. But to provide a broader context for understanding public policy, we also will turn our attention to foreign policy in the US, policymaking in other countries, and policymaking in the US states.

Grading

Your grade for this course will be determined by four factors:

- Midterm (30%)
- Final exam (30%)
- Short papers (20%)
- Participation (20%)

Exams: Both exams will be in class and closed book and will consist of a mixture of short and long essays. If you need to reschedule an examination, you must provide a substantial reason for doing so (e.g., a note from a physician or a written statement from a coach) and contact

the professor or GSI *prior* to missing the exam. Please note that the final exam will be at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 22.

Papers: In addition to learning a framework for understanding policy, it is also essential to learn to communicate about policymaking in an effective manner. To this end, you will write four policy-related memos during the semester. We will provide a separate handout with more details about these memos.

Participation: Your participation grade will be based on both discussion sections and lectures. Positive participation includes being prepared, being willing to use this preparation to contribute during lectures and discussion sections, and any other activities that add to the learning environment of the class overall. Being unprepared for lecture or section, consistent tardiness or absences, working on non-course-related materials during lecture or section, and any other behavior detrimental to the learning environment will lower your participation grade.

Lectures

Due to the size of the course and the goal of constructing a framework for understanding policymaking, I will usually lecture during our Tuesday and Thursday classes. But I encourage students to ask questions during these sessions; additionally, we will often have discussions of various points that I raise during lecture. The more engaged you are, the more you will get out of this class.

PowerPoint slides for each lecture will be made available on Canvas after each class.

Discussion Sections

Discussion sections provide a valuable opportunity for you to take part in a variety of activities related to the class, activities that will increase your understanding of the material and improve your ability to succeed in the course. Such activities will include working on the writing assignments, developing oral communication skills, discussing the readings, going into more depth on lecture topics, preparing for the exams, and so on. Your activities in section will go toward your participation grade. Sections will meet weekly unless otherwise noted. You should attend only the section for which you are registered, unless you receive permission to do otherwise.

Readings

The following two books are required and are available at local bookstores and online:

Elaine Kamarck, *How Change Happens – Or Doesn't*
Robert Spitzer, *The Politics of Gun Control*, 6th ed.

Other readings will be available either on Canvas or online. I also strongly recommend that you read a national daily newspaper that covers national-level politics and policymaking.

COURSE SCHEDULE

You should read each article or chapter prior to class on the day it is listed. Readings marked with ** are available on Canvas; those marked with ## are available online.

Please note that I will likely add new readings to the syllabus and change some of the existing readings as the semester proceeds. I will always announce any changes in class.

Part 1: Foundations

Sept. 6 – Introduction to Public Policy

- Spitzer, Preface and Introduction

Sept. 8 – Studying Public Policy, part 1

- Kamarck, Preface and ch. 1
- Spitzer, ch. 1
- **Theodoulou, “How Public Policy Is Made”
- ##O’Hare, “A Typology of Government Action”

Sept. 13 – Studying Public Policy, part 2

- Spitzer, ch. 2

Sept. 15 – Studying Public Policy, part 3

- Kamarck, ch. 2, 3, and 4

Part 2: Preferences and Public Policy

Sept. 20 – Public Opinion, part 1

- Kamarck, ch. 6
- **Cook, ch. 9

Sept. 22 – Public Opinion, part 2

- **Citrin and Wright

Sept. 27 – Public Opinion, part 3

- Kamarck, ch. 7
- **Aronow and Miller

Sept. 29 – Interest Groups, part 1

- **Nestle, ch. 2, 7, and 12
- Spitzer, ch. 3

Oct. 4 – Interest Groups, part 2

- Spitzer, ch. 4

Oct. 6 – Interest Groups, part 3

- ## “Making a Killing: The Business and Politics of Selling Guns” (*New Yorker*)
- ## “The abortion rights movement is bolder than it’s been in years. That’s Cecile Richards’s plan.” (*Washington Post*)

Oct. 11 – Elections, part 1

- Kamarck, ch. 8
- **Wilson, pp. 155-172

Oct. 13 – Elections, part 2

- ## Gilens, “Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness”

October 18 – Fall Break!

Part 3: Institutions and Public Policy

Oct. 20 – Congress, part 1

- **Baumer and Van Horn, ch. 5

Oct. 25 – Congress, part 2

- Kamarck, ch. 5

October 27 – Midterm Exam

Nov. 1 – Congress, part 3

- Spitzer, ch. 5
- ##Draper, “Inside the Power of the NRA”
- ##Chishti and Hipsman, “With Little Debate, Congress Enacts Broad Range of Immigration Changes in Spending Bill”

Nov. 3 – Congress, part 4

- ##Ornstein and Mann, “When Congress Checks Out” (*Foreign Affairs*)
- ##Howell and Pevehouse, “When Congress Stops Wars” (*Foreign Affairs*)

Nov. 8 – President, part 1

- **Baumer and Van Horn, ch. 6

Nov. 10 – President, part 2

- **Rosati and Scott, ch. 3

Nov. 15 – President, part 3

- ##Klein, “The Unpersuaded” (*New Yorker*)

Nov. 17 – Policy Diffusion, part 1

- **Shipan and Volden

Nov. 22 – Policy Diffusion, part 2

- **Goss

Nov. 24 – Thanksgiving

Part 4: Case Studies

Nov. 29 – Health Care

- ##Ezra Klein, “The Lessons of ‘94”
- ##Oberlander, “Long Time Coming”
- **Obama

Dec. 1 – Immigration

- **Walsh
- **Massey

Dec. 6 – Guns

- Spitzer, ch. 6
- ##Chapman, *Over Our Dead Bodies*, ch. 1 and 4

Dec. 8 – Death Penalty

- **Baumgartner, DeBoef, and Boydston, Ch. 7

Dec. 13 – Conclusion

Dec. 22, 8:00 a.m. – Final Exam

Additional Important Considerations

Attendance: Each student will be responsible for all announcements and materials covered in lectures and discussion sections.

Grade Grievances: We will go to great lengths to make sure that the grading of exams and assignments is as fair and consistent as possible. Still, on rare occasions you might find that you disagree with a grade that you received on an exam or assignment. In such cases, you will have the opportunity to discuss and potentially contest this grade. If you choose to take advantage of this opportunity, the procedure that you must follow is spelled out in the document “Grade Grievance Procedure,” which is available in Files/Handouts on Canvas.

Laptops and other electronic devices: You should refrain from using your phone during class. If you prefer to use a laptop to take notes during class, you may do so. You should know, however, that studies clearly indicate that students who take notes by hand tend to do better on exams than those who take notes on computers. In addition, if you are going to use your laptop to take notes, then please use it *only* for that purpose (i.e., not for Facebook, shopping, etc.). Using your laptop for non-class-related purposes is disrespectful to the person giving the lecture or running the discussion section and distracting to the students sitting around you. If students end up using laptops during class for purposes unrelated to the class, I reserve the right to change this policy and prohibit laptops.

Arrangements for Students with Disabilities: If you think you will need an accommodation for a disability, please contact Professor Shipan or Katherine Eyster *at least two weeks* prior to the time when the accommodation will be needed, and ideally during the first two weeks of the semester. Details about how to proceed are provided in the document “Arrangements for Students with Disabilities,” which is available in Files/Handouts on Canvas.

Plagiarism and Cheating: My experience at the University of Michigan has been that the vast majority of students act honorably and with complete integrity when taking exams and completing assignments. You should be proud to be a part of a student body that behaves with such integrity! Out of fairness to all of the students who are behaving ethically, I have absolutely no tolerance for any type of cheating, including plagiarism. Any student who is found to have cheated on any test or assignment will **fail this course**. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating does not provide an excuse or justification for engaging in such behavior. To familiarize yourself with these issues you should read this statement on academic misconduct (<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies/section11#112>) and look at these examples (<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/examples.html>).

Religious and Academic Conflicts: In keeping with the University of Michigan's policy of respecting students' religious commitments, all attempts will be made to accommodate conflicts arising out of religious observances. For more information on this policy, see the document "Religious and Academic Conflicts," which is available in Files/Handouts on Canvas.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing: The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. For information about support services that are available, see the document "Student Mental Health," available in Files/Handouts on Canvas.

Email policy: I will reply to emails that I receive during regular working hours (i.e., Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) as soon as possible, generally the same day. For emails received outside of those working hours, I will generally reply during the next working day.

Inclusivity: 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