CORE-GP.1022

Introduction to Public Policy

Fall 2018

Instructor Information

Instructor: Mona Vakilifathi
- Email: mvakilif@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: T 4-6pm [Puck Building 3094]

Teaching Assistant: Lorellee Kampschnieder
- Section: M 5:35-6:35pm [Waverly Building (WAVE) 367]
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Teaching Assistant: Clara Wheatley-Schaller
- Section: M 9:10-10:10pm [12 Waverly Place (12WV) L120]
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Lecture: M 6:45-8:55pm [12 Waverly Place (12WV) L120]

Learning Objectives

Goal 1

The first goal is to provide students an overview of the political actors and institutions involved in U.S. federal, state, and local public policy. We will reference legal, political science, public administration, and public policy research to discuss the four venues of domestic public policy – lawmakership, rulemaking, implementation, and litigation. For each venue, we will (1) introduce the pivotal actors and institutional rules, (2) discuss the interaction of actors and institutions within the context of two case studies or simulations, and (3) engage with relevant practitioners in a panel and reception event to discuss current events and potential careers in public policy.
Goal 2

The second goal of this course is to train students how to write a stakeholder analysis, policy memorandum, op-ed, and press release. We will reference economics, political science, public administration, and public policy research to research a client’s policy goal(s), identify the relevant stakeholders, formulate policy recommendations for a client, decide on a policy recommendation for a client, and prepare a public relations strategy to promote the policy recommendation.

Learning Assessment Table

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Course Website

The course website is available on NYU Classes under the “Fall 18 – Public Policy (Vakilifathi)” tab. The readings are available on the course website. The lecture slides will be uploaded one hour before each lecture. The assignments will be uploaded to the website at least two weeks in advance of its due date.

Required Readings

The required readings for this class consist of book chapters, journal articles, government or policy reports, documentaries, news articles, case studies, and simulations. These materials are posted on the course website on NYU Classes under the “Resources” tab and the “Readings” folder. In cases where the case study is not available for free, refer to the hyperlink to purchase (and instantly access) the case study online.

If you are unfamiliar with American politics, I highly recommend The Logic of American Politics (8th edition or earlier editions) – Sam Kernell, Gary Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck (2017). This book is available at the Bobst Library.

Assignments

The op-ed assignment consists of a writing sample for submission to an online or print publication. The memoranda and press release assignments consist of: (1) a writing sample for potential employment as a policy advisor to an elected official or interest group, and (2) a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to the content of the writing sample. The presentation assignment consists of a PowerPoint slide deck and presentation.

I provide a course calendar below in the “Course Schedule” section to include every assignment’s prompt release date, rough draft(s) due date, peer review comments, and final draft due date. Each assignment, the prompt and/or worksheet, will be posted on the course website under the “Assignments” tab at least two weeks in advance of its due date. Assignments will be graded and returned to students within one week of a student’s submission.

Students are expected to submit an op-ed to advocate a position for or against any public policy topic. The student will submit (1) two rough drafts of the op-ed, (2) peer review letters, and (3) a final draft of the op-ed. The assignment is posted during Week 1, the first rough draft is due on Friday of Week 2, the peer review letters are due on Monday of Week 3, the second rough draft is due on Friday of Week 3, and the final draft is due on Friday of Week 4.

[2] Stakeholder Analysis Memorandum [20%]
Students are expected to submit (1) a one-page memo to provide a summary of the assigned client’s policy goals and an overview of the relevant political actors and (2) a stakeholder analysis for an assigned public policy topic. In addition, students must complete (3) peer review comments and (4) a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 2, the rough draft is due on Friday of Week 5, the peer review comments are due on Monday of Week 6, and the final draft is due on Friday of Week 6.

[3] Strategic Options Memorandum [20%]
Students are expected to submit (1) a two-page memo to provide four policy options for an assigned client that advance the client’s policy goal related to an assigned public policy topic. In addition, students must complete (2) peer review comments and (3) a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 5, the rough draft is due on Friday of Week 7, the peer review comments are due on Monday of Week 8, and the final draft is due on Friday of Week 8.

Students are expected to (1) attend a workshop on creating client presentations, (2) submit a PowerPoint slide deck based from the student’s Strategic Options Memorandum and (3) present the slide deck in recitation. The workshop will occur outside of lecture and recitation.
during Week 6 and Week 7. The schedule for the workshop will be announced via e-mail during Week 1. The assignment is posted during Week 6, and the slide deck and presentations will be due on Monday of Week 10 or Week 11.

Students are expected to submit (1) a two-page memo to provide one policy recommendation for an assigned client that advance the client’s policy goal related to an assigned public policy topic. In addition, students must complete (2) peer review comments and (3) a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 9, the rough draft is due on Friday of Week 11, the peer review comments are due on Monday of Week 12, and the final draft is due on Friday of Week 12.

Students are expected to submit (1) a one-page press release to publicize an assigned client’s pursuit of a policy recommendation related to an assigned public policy topic. In addition, students must complete (2) peer review comments and (3) a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 11, the rough draft is due on Friday of Week 13, the peer review comments are due on Monday of Week 13, and the final draft is due on Friday of Week 14.

E-mails
I will respond to e-mails within twenty-four hours after an e-mail is received, excluding weekends. If you have a question about an assignment the night before its due date, please e-mail me before 5pm EST that day.

Late Assignments
Assignments due on a Monday must be submitted by the beginning of recitation on its due date through NYU Classes. Assignments (rough drafts) due on a Friday must be submitted by 5pm EST on its due date through NYU Classes. Assignments (final drafts) due on a Friday must be submitted by 12pm EST on its due date through NYU Classes. If an assignment is submitted five minutes after its deadline, the assignment will be considered one day late. Late assignments will be deducted five percent from the assignment grade per calendar day.

If you have religious commitments or an unexpected family/personal emergency, please e-mail me before the assignment’s due date. The student may be asked to provide documentation to prevent the aforementioned grade penalty.
**Re-grading Assignments**

If a student would like a re-grade of an assignment, the student must e-mail me a one-page (maximum) response stating their reasons for a re-grade within two weeks of receiving their grade. I will re-grade the entire assignment, which may result in a lower or higher grade than the original grade within one week of receiving the student’s re-grade letter.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

**Wagner Writing Center**

Students are strongly encouraged to e-mail me or the assigned Teaching Assistant or schedule a meeting for additional feedback on their assignments throughout the semester. If you would like additional feedback or training on policy writing, please visit the Wagner Writing Center or the NYU Writing Center.

**Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

**NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with assignments to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.
Course Schedule

Please complete the assigned readings before the assigned lecture.

Week 1: No Class [9/3/2018]

- Readings: None
- Recitation: None
- Prompt Release: Op-ed
- Assignment Due this Friday: None
- Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday): Op-ed (online quiz)

Week 2: Course Overview; Stakeholder Analysis Memorandum [9/10/2018]

- Readings:
  - “Paul A. Sabatier, An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning Therein” from The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Public Policy and Administration – Cairney (2016)
  - Case Study: Combat and Collaboration in Seattle’s Historic Minimum Wage Debate

- Recitation: Op-ed

- Prompt Release: Stakeholder analysis memorandum

- Assignment Due this Friday: Op-ed (rough draft #1)

- Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday): Op-ed (peer review letters)
Week 3: Lawmaking (Institutions + Actors) [9/17/2018]

- **Readings:**
  - “Introduction to the Legislative Process in the U.S. Congress” – Congressional Research Service (2017)
  - “Policy Entrepreneurs and the Diffusion of Innovation” – Mintrom (1997)

- **Recitation:** Op-ed

- **Prompt Release:** None

- **Assignment Due this Friday:** Op-ed (rough draft #2)

- **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday):** None

Week 4: Lawmaking (Case Studies) [9/24/2018]

- **Readings:**

- **Recitation:** Op-ed

- **Prompt Release:** None

- **Assignment Due this Friday:** Op-ed (final draft)

- **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday):** None
Week 5: Strategic Options Memorandum [10/1/2018]

- **Readings:**
  - Case Study: Combat and Collaboration in Seattle’s Historic Minimum Wage Debate

- **Recitation:** Op-ed (optional individual appointments with TA)

- **Prompt Release:** Strategic options memorandum

- **Assignment Due this Friday:** Stakeholder analysis memorandum (rough draft)

- **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday):** Stakeholder analysis memorandum (peer review)

Week 6: Rulemaking (Institutions + Actors) [10/9/2018]

- **Readings:**
  - “Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control” – McCubbins et al. (1987)
  - “Presidentially Directed Policy Change: The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs as Partisan or Moderator?” – Haeder and Yackee (forthcoming)

- **Recitation:** Stakeholder analysis memorandum (peer review)
• **Prompt Release**: Client presentation (attend pre-scheduled Presentation Skills Bootcamp outside of class during Week 6 or Week 7)

• **Assignment Due this Friday**: Stakeholder analysis memorandum (final draft)

• **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday)**: None

**Week 7**: Rulemaking (Case Studies) [10/15/2018]

• **Readings**:
  
  - Case Study: Negotiated Rulemaking Exercise: Woodstove New Source Performance Standard
  - “War on the EPA” – Frontline (2017)
  - “Obama’s Mighty EPA Falls Into Pruitt’s Hands” – Restuccia and Guillen (2016)
  - “What It’s Like Inside the Trump Administration’s Regulatory Rollback at the EPA” – Buford (2017)
  - “With a Shrinking EPA, Trump Delivers on His Promise to Cut Government” – Dennis et al. (2018)

• **Recitation**: Stakeholder analysis memorandum (optional individual appointments with TA)

• **Prompt Release**: None

• **Assignment Due this Friday**: Strategic options memorandum (rough draft)

• **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday)**: Strategic options memorandum (peer review)

**Week 8**: Lawmaking and Rulemaking Panel [10/22/2018]

• **Readings**: None

• **Recitation**: Strategic options memorandum (peer review)

• **Prompt Release**: None

• **Assignment Due this Friday**: Strategic options memorandum (final draft)
• Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday): None


• Readings:
  • “New York’s Investment in Evidence-Based Policymaking” – Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative (2016)
  • “Cost-Benefit and Other Analysis Requirements in the Rulemaking Process” – Congressional Research Report (2014) [optional]
  • Case Study: Combat and Collaboration in Seattle’s Historic Minimum Wage Debate

• Recitation: Strategic options memorandum (optional individual appointments with TA)

• Prompt Release: Policy recommendation memorandum

• Assignment Due this Friday: None

• Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday): Client presentation (due next week in recitation)

Week 10: Implementation (Institutions + Actors) [11/5/2018]

• Readings:
  • “Agencies by Presidential Design” – Howell and Lewis (2002)
  • “Groups, the Media, Agency Waiting Costs, and FDA Drug Approval” – Carpenter (2002)

• Recitation: Client presentation (attend pre-scheduled recitation in Week 10 or Week 11)
- **Prompt Release**: None

- **Assignment Due this Friday**: None

- **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday)**: Client presentation (due next week in recitation)

**Week 11**: Implementation (Case Studies) [11/12/2018]

- **Readings**:
  - “The Education of Michelle Rhee” – Frontline (2013)
  - Case Study: Michelle Rhee and the Washington D.C. Public Schools
  - Case Study: Hurricane Katrina: Preparing for “The Big One” in New Orleans (A)

- **Recitation**: Client presentation (attend pre-scheduled recitation in Week 10 or Week 11)

- **Prompt Release**: Press release

- **Assignment Due this Friday**: Policy recommendation memorandum (rough draft)

- **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday)**: Policy recommendation memorandum (peer review)

**Week 12**: Policy Communication and Mobilization [11/19/2018]

- **Readings**:
• Case Study: Combat and Collaboration in Seattle's Historic Minimum Wage Debate

• Recitation: Policy recommendation memorandum (peer review)

• Prompt Release: None

• Assignment Due this Friday: Policy recommendation memorandum (final draft)

• Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday): None

Week 13: Litigation (Institutions + Actors) [11/26/2018]

• Readings: Guest Lecture (TBA two weeks in advance of lecture)

• Recitation: Policy recommendation memorandum (optional individual appointments with TA)

• Prompt Release: None

• Assignment Due this Friday: Press release (rough draft)

• Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday): Press release (peer review)

Week 14: Litigation (Case Studies) [12/3/2018]

• Readings:
  
  • “The Case Against 8” – HBO Films (2014) [available via NYU Libraries]
  • “Big Sky, Big Money” – Frontline (2012)
  • “The Pro-Money Court: How the Roberts Supreme Court Dismantled Campaign Finance Law” – Earley and Billig (2014)

• Recitation: Press release (peer review)

• Prompt Release: None

• Assignment Due this Friday: Press release (final draft)
• **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday):** None

**Week 15:** Implementation and Litigation Panel [12/10/2018]

• **Readings:** None

• **Recitation:** Press release (optional individual appointments with TA)

• **Prompt Release:** None

• **Assignment Due this Friday:** None

• **Assignment Due Next Recitation (Monday):** None