



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

**CORE-GP 1022
Introduction to Public Policy**

Fall 2021

Instructor Information

- Andrew Barnhill
- Email: andrew.barnhill@nyu.edu
- Office Address: Puck 300 and Washington, DC
- Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00-4:30 and by appointment. I will typically be available to meet immediately before class and I am happy to arrange other times.

Course Information

- Lecture: **Section 1:** Mondays, 4:55-6:30 | **Section 2:** Mondays, 6:45-8:20
- Recitations: See Schedule in Albert
- Class Location: GCASL Lecture Hall, Washington Square

Course Description

The first goal of the course 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 – lawmaking, rulemaking, implementation, and litigation. For each venue, we will (1) introduce the institutional rules and pivotal actors and (2) discuss the interaction of actors and institutions within the context of a case study.

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

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Identify and explain the relationship between interests, ideas, and institutions in a policy process.
2. Clearly articulate and frame a policy issue in a way that calls attention to it and mobilizes action.
3. Develop the competence to identify the key stakeholders on an issue.
4. Develop the capacity to evaluate and recommend a policy response to a specific policy problem using criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, and political feasibility.
5. Develop the capacity to orally communicate policy recommendations.

Course Requirements

Assignment	Points
Class Participation	5
Reading Checks	15
Op-Ed	15
Stakeholder Analysis	20
Options Memo	20
Strategy Memo	20
Client Presentation	5

Grades

What grades are not: They are not a reward or punishment; they are not a measure of effort; they do not represent the essence of who a student is as a person; they do not define what a student can or cannot achieve. I have written equally stellar recommendation letters for “C” students and “A” students.

What grades are: They are a tool that is generally used for two interrelated purposes:

- (1) *To assess academic performance during the study of a particular subject or skill.* During this course, students have the responsibility for learning the subject or skill and for demonstrating that they have achieved that learning.
- (2) *To provide information for students so they can make decisions about changes they may need to make in order to demonstrate they have achieved that learning.* Learning the subject is what matters, and grades are used to show to what degree the student has shown that he or she has learned the subject.

Overview of Assignments

Class Participation

Active and engaged participation in class and recitation will result in better learning outcomes and represents 5% of the total course grade. There are a number of case studies and simulations that require preparation and engagement. Failure to do so will be taken into account in determining your participation grade. Peer review is an important part of the recitation sections and process for writing.

The course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants.

- a) Participation begins with effective reading and listening. Class participants are expected to read and discuss the readings on a weekly basis. That means coming prepared to engage the class with questions and/or comments with respect to the reading. You will be expected to have completed all the required readings before class to the point where you can be called on to critique or discuss any reading.

Before approaching each reading, think about what the key questions are for the week and about how the questions from this week relate to what you know from previous

weeks. Then skim over the reading to get a sense of the themes it covers and, before reading further, jot down what questions you hope the reading will be able to answer for you. Next, read the introduction and conclusion. This is normally enough to get a sense of the big picture. Ask yourself: Are the claims in the text surprising? Do you believe them? Can you think of examples that do not seem consistent with the logic of the argument? Is the reading answering the questions you hoped it would answer? Finally, ask yourself: What types of evidence or arguments would you need to see in order to be convinced?

In class itself, the key to quality participation is listening. Asking good questions is the second key element. What did you mean by that? How do you/we know? What's the evidence for that claim? Share your thoughts and reactions in ways that promote critical engagement with them.

- b) Students are also expected to follow the news, reading at least one major US newspaper daily and a newsweekly (*The Economist*, *Time*, *Newsweek*). You should also be familiar with the main journals in public policy and policy analysis. Depending on your particular area of expertise, these could include general journals like *Public Administration and Development*, *Policy Sciences*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Journal of Public Policy*, etc.
- c) There will be several case exercises and discussions. They may require some additional preparation that will count towards your participation grade.

I do not take attendance in lecture. As a matter of professional courtesy, you should inform your TA, writing coach, and group members if you will miss recitation. You are adults and I trust you to evaluate the best use of your time.

Reading Checks

As an effort to support our reading and engagement with lecture material, the semester will include a variety of brief reading checks including but not limited to the following forms (quizzes, journal entries, in-class exercises).

Op-Ed

Your first major assignment for the course is the writing of an op-ed on a U.S. policy issue. There will be a presentation on the op-ed assignment in your first recitation section during the second week of classes. You are encouraged to read the information and watch the asynch video on the Op-Ed Assignment Tab in the main Brightspace site prior to your first recitation and come to that recitation with any questions. For additional guidance on writing an op-ed, see the Writing Resources folder under the "Resources" tab on the course website. The due dates and deliverables for the op-eds are in the recitation schedule that you will receive from your TA.

Stakeholder Analysis

Students are expected to submit (1) a stakeholder analysis and (2) a summary of the assigned client's policy goals and the relevant stakeholders for an assigned topic. The assignment will be discussed in detail during lecture along with the class discussion of policy actors.

Memoranda

Students are expected to submit (2) memoranda on a policy issue during the course of the semester. These assignments, as well as the topic restrictions, will be discussed during recitation. One assignment is an options memo where the student will define the potential responses to a public policy problem. The other assignment is a strategy memo where the student will provide a plan for their proposed solution to the policy problem.

Presentation

Students will (1) attend a workshop on creating client presentations, (2) submit a PowerPoint slide deck on the Student's Options Memo, and (3) present the slide deck in recitation. You will receive information on signing up for the presentation workshop and for your presentation time.

General vs. Individual Student Questions

It is very common for students to email the instructor and teaching assistants the same questions about the course. In order for Professor Barnhill and the teaching assistants to maximize time spent on individual questions and minimize time spent on repeating general questions, please post general questions regarding the course lecture, recitation, and assignments on the discussion board under the "Discussion Board" tab on the class website. For individual questions about the course lectures or other topics, please email Professor Barnhill. For individual questions about the course recitation or assignments, please email your assigned Teaching Assistant. Professor Barnhill and the Teaching Assistants will make every effort respond to emails within 24 hours after an email is received.

Writing

Writing is an important part of being a policy analyst and advocate. Professor Barnhill will devote one lecture period to a writing workshop. For some useful thoughts on how to approach policy writing, see Michael O'Hare's memo to his students in the spring 2004 issue of the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (available in the Writing Resources folder on Brightspace). Also see the guidelines for memo writing, sample memos, a sample of the guidance to policy staffers at the US Department of Health and Human Services on how to write memos, and see the guidelines for writing op-eds. For further exploration of policy communication, see Catherine F. Smith, *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Making Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). For an enjoyable and valuable (although not uncontested) critique of PowerPoint presentations as disastrous to effective communication, see Edward Tufte, *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint* [NYU Classes] and the excellent *Better Presentations* by Jonathan Schwabish.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and the NYU community. 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 Professor Barnhill. 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 Professor Barnhill.

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 your TA in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with assignment deadlines to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

Required Texts

All required readings are available on Brightspace unless otherwise indicated. There are also two suggested books that will be referenced throughout the semester:

Shilts, Randy. *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Walsh, Katherine Cramer. *Talking about Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life* (Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion) University of Chicago Press, 1st Edition, 2004.

Overview

Week 1

Power, Politics, and Policy

No recitations this week

“Data-Driven Government: A New Approach”

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/20150311_data_government_omalley_transcript.pdf

“The Politics of the Brokenhearted”

<https://fetzer.org/sites/default/files/images/resources/attachment/2017-10-23/FI%20DAD%20Essay%20Palmer%20R.pdf>

Week 2

Narrating Truth and Political Ethics

Recitations: Introduction to Op-Ed Assignment

“A Political Ethic of Alterity: Liberalism or Agonistic Democratic Politics.” Religion & Culture Forum, June 4. Available at: <http://voices.uchicago.edu/religionculture/2017/06/04/a-political-ethic-of-alterityliberalism-or-agonistic-democratic-politics-a-response-by-luke-bretherton>

Stephen Macedo: “Hauerwas, Liberalism, and Public Reason: Terms of Engagement?” Law and Contemporary Problems (Vol. 75, Issue 4).

Supplemental Reading:

Joel Fleishman, Lance Liebman and Mark M. Moore. 1981. *Public Duties: The Moral Obligations of Government Officials*. Cambridge: Harvard Press.

Week 3

And the Band Played On: Institutions and Failures of Policymakers

Recitations: Peer Review of First Op-ed Draft

And the Band Played On by Randy Shilts

Lev Facher: “Do public health officials need to be political activists?” STAT.
<https://www.statnews.com/2021/04/30/public-health-officials-political-activists-hiv-crisis>

Week 4

Agenda Setting and Framing

Frank Luntz: “The Ten Rules of Effective Language” and “Political Case Studies” in *Words That Work: It’s Not What You Say, It’s What People Hear* (2007)

Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, 2007, “Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies,” *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 637-655.

Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech, 2009, *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chapter 9: “Washington: The Real No-Spin Zone,” 166-189.

Week 5

Guest Panel: How Washington Works (Part 1)

Guest Speaker: Data Driven State and Local Policy (Part 2)

Recitations: Return Op-eds and Recap Prompt for Options Mem

“Stakeholder Analysis” from *Managing Policy Reform: Concepts and Tools for Decision-Makers in Developing and Transitioning Countries* - Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2001)

Mancur Olson. *Logic of Collective Action* (1971), pp. 1-22, 132-141

Week 6

Disruption and Social Movements

Recitations: Peer Review of Options Memo

Watch *How to Survive a Plague* [no longer free on Netflix but available for rent or purchase on Amazon and the DVD is available to watch for free at the NYU Bobst Library]

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, “Rule Making, Rule Breaking, and Power,” in, Thomas Janoski Robert R., Alford, and Alexander M., Hicks, eds *Handbook of Political Sociology: States, Civil Societies, and Globalization*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). pp. 33-53.

Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2nd Ed. New York: Longman, chs. 4, 9.

Week 7

Simulation: Legislator, Bureaucrat, Lobbyist, and Activist

Recitations: Prompt Review of Client Presentation

No separate readings for the simulation. Instructions will be provided in advance.

Week 8

Writing Bills and Regulations: Policy Design

Recitations: Client Presentations

Weimer, David L. 1992. "Claiming Races, Broiler Contracts, Heresthetics, And Habits: Ten Concepts for Policy Design." *Policy Sciences* 25: 135-159.

Cass R. Sunstein, *Simpler: The Future of Government*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013) selections

Week 9

Rulemaking

Recitations: Return Options Memo and Prompt Stakeholder Analysis

For the session on rulemaking, we will review several examples of state and federal proposed rules. These will be provided to you in lecture on Week 8.

"The Federal Rulemaking Process: An Overview" – Congressional Research Service (2013) "A Brief Overview of Rulemaking and Judicial Review" – Congressional Research Service (2017)

How Legislators Engage in Rulemaking Process: "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control" – McCubbins et al. (1987) [Assigned students]

How the President Engages in Rulemaking Process: "Presidentially Directed Policy Change: The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs as Partisan or Moderator?" – Haeder and Yackee (forthcoming) [Assigned students]

How Interest Groups Engage in Rulemaking Process: "Sweet-Talking the Fourth Branch: The Influence of Interest Group Comments on Federal Agency Rulemaking" – Yackee (2006) [Assigned students]

Week 10

Strategic Litigation and Judicialization of Politics

Recitations: Stakeholder Analysis

Tamar Ezer and Priti Patel, "Strategic Litigation to Advance Public Health," *Health and Human Rights Journal*

Week 11

Making it Work: Policy Implementation

Recitations: Prompt Strategy Memo

Michael Lipsky, 2010, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, selections

Charles Sabel, 2013, "Rethinking the Street-Level Bureaucrat: Tacit and Deliberate Ways Organizations Can Learn," in *Economy in Society: Essays in Honor of Michael J. Piore*, edited by Paul Osterman, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 113-142.

Bernard Zacka, "Bureaucrats to the Rescue: Are Bureaucracies a Public Good?" *Boston Review*

Week 12

How Policy Makes Politics

Recitations: Peer Review Strategy Memo

Joe Soss and Donald Moynihan. "Policy Feedback and the Politics of Administration," *Public Administration Review* (2014).

Jim Rutenberg, "A Dream Undone," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, July 29, 2015.

Jim Rutenberg, "Nine Years Ago Republicans Favored Voting Rights. What Happened?" *New York Times Magazine* August 12, 2015

Week 13

Evaluation and Evidence Based-Policy in Local Context

Recitations: Strategy Memo

Ezra Klein Interview with Dan Kahan, "How politics makes us stupid," *Vox.com*

Anna Maria Barry-Jester, "Why the Rules of the Road Aren't Enough to Prevent People from Dying," *538.com*, (January 15, 2015).

Rebecca Goldin, 2009, "Spinning Heads and Spinning News: How a Lack of Statistical Proficiency Affects Media Coverage," *STATS*.

Jeffrey R. Kling, 2011, "CBO's Use of Evidence in Analysis of Budget and Economic Policies," Congressional Budget Office, Presentation at the Annual Fall Research Conference, Association of Public Policy Analysis & Management, Washington, D.C.

Week 14

Narrating the Public Square: Closing Reflections

Recitations: Reflection Prompts and Evaluations

Talking about Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life
(Studies in Communication, Media, and Public Opinion) 1st Edition

SYLLABUS VERIFICATION
Introduction to Public Policy
Fall 2021
Andrew Barnhill

I have received a copy of the syllabus for Introduction to Public Policy and thus I am aware of the expectations and policies of the course. I also agree to complete each out-of-class assignment and submit by the announced deadline.

Name of Student (printed): _____

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____

ASSESSMENT VERIFICATION
Introduction to Public Policy
Fall 2021
Andrew Barnhill

I have completed the Introductory Module on American Government and Politics. I agree to raise any questions on the introductory assessment to Professor Barnhill.

Name of Student (printed): _____

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____

Policy Simulation

Students are expected to complete (1) simulation during the course of the semester.

Invention (1):

Argument Developed	1	.5	0
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Arrangement (1):

Positions Embodied	1	.5	0
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Analysis (1):

Participation	1	.5	0
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Total (3): _____

Comments:

Data-Driven Policymaking Asynchronous Reflection

Upon reading the transcript from the Brookings Institution’s event, “Data-Driven Government: A New Approach to Governing,” draft a response to the following questions:

1. To what extent is the use of data in policymaking embedded in value judgments?
2. Provide an example of effective data-driven policy at the federal or state level.

Effective Use of Examples	.5	0
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Engagement with Text	.5	0
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Total (1): _____

Comments:

Self-Reflection Asynchronous Assignment

The self-reflection assignment is an exercise designed to encourage examination of one's background in public policy. This assignment is to be completed during the first or second week of the course. The student is asked to answer the following questions in a one (1) page, double-spaced paper:

1. Why am I entering a graduate program in public administration/policy?
2. What experience do I have with public policy?
3. How would I describe my comfort level with American policy?
4. In what contexts do I see myself working in the future?
5. What am I most interested in learning this semester?
6. Is there anything I would like my professor to know?

Student Completed Assignment	.5	0
Engagement with Questions	.5	0

Total (1): _____

Comments: