# NYU Wagner logo

# **CORE-GP 1022**

# **Introduction to Public Policy**

# **Fall 2023**

## Instructor Information

* Domingo Morel, Ph.D.
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* Office Hours: By appointment

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## Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Thursdays 2:00-3:40 PM
* Class Location: GCASL 361
* Recitation Session: TBD

## Course Description

This course is designed to expose students to various characteristics of policymaking in the American political system. Relying broadly, but not limited to, political science research, we will examine some of the political institutions and key actors that develop American public policy. We will consider several venues for policymaking – including agenda setting, legislation, and interest group activity – and examine how political institutions shape and constrain policymaking at the local, state, and national level.

## Course and Learning Objectives

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

1. Identify key political actors in the policymaking process and explain how institutions, interests, and ideas shape the 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 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.

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### **Learning Assessment Table**

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| **Course Learning Objective** | **Corresponding Assignment Title** |
| #1 | Op-ed Assignment |
| #2 | Stakeholder Analysis |
| #3 | Strategy memo |
| #4 | Options Memo |
| #5 | Presentation |

## Course Requirements

* Class participation: 20%
* Op-ed: 15%
* Stakeholder Analysis: 20%
* Strategy Memo: 20%
* Options Memo: 20%
* Presentation: 5%

### **Class Participation (20%):**

### **Attendance/Discussion/Participation**

Our class will benefit greatly from active participation from all class members. The unique analysis and personal experiences that each of you contributes to the discussions will help educate the rest of us. Class participation consists of the following components: (1) attending class; (2) Be prepared by doing the required readings (3) engaging regularly in class discussions.

### **Op-Ed (15%):**

One op-ed (typically 700-750 words, about 3 pages double-spaced) on an important current policy issue. The op-ed assignment will be discussed in your recitation section. This includes the op-ed prompt and rubric, and the op-ed project submission information. The due dates and deliverables for the op-eds are dependent on your recitation schedule.

**Stakeholder Analysis (20%), Options Memo (20%), and Strategy Memo (20%):**

These three assignments comprise a semester-long focus on a single policy topic. We will discuss in greater detail in class and in your recitations. Students will be able to choose their own policy topic within the following broad issues areas of U.S. domestic policy: education, criminal justice, poverty, inequality, housing, and immigration. If there is a compelling reason to choose a topic outside of these issue areas, please let me know.

**Client Presentation (5%):**

Students will (1) attend a workshop or training on creating client presentations, (2) submit a

PowerPoint slide deck regarding the Student’s Options Memo, and (3) present the slide deck in recitation. The workshop/training will occur outside of lecture/recitation. Details will be provided in recitation.

## 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](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/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.

## Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities.  Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD(212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto: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](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. You must notify me in advance of religious holidays or observances that might coincide with exams, assignments, or class times to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives. Students may also contact [religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu](mailto:religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu) for assistance.

## NYU’s Wellness Exchange

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/wellness-exchange.html) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

**Wagner Writing Center**

For students interested in receiving additional feedback and support for their writing assignments, please visit the [Wagner Writing Center](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/writing-center) or the [NYU Writing Center](https://www.nyu.edu/students/academic-services/writing-center.html).

## Required Texts

Birkland, Thomas. 2020. An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policymaking. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. (Available online – NYU Library)

All other readings available on Brightspace unless otherwise indicated. There will be a small fee associated with some of the cases we will discuss in class.

**Course Schedule**

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| **Date** | **Topic and Readings** |
| September 7 | **Course Introduction** |
| September 14 | **What is Public Policy?**   * Birkland, *Policy Process*, Chapters 1 and 2 |
| September 21 | **Political Actors and Institutions I**   * Birkland, *Policy Process*, Chapters 4 and 5 |
| September 28 | **Political Actors and Institutions II**   * Civics 101. Starter Kit: How a Bill (really) Becomes a Law. <https://www.civics101podcast.org/civics-101-episodes/howabill> * Julia Azari, “It’s the Institutions Stupid,” *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2020. (Brightspace) |
| October 5 | **Power and Interest Groups**   * Olson, Mancur. “The Logic of Collective Action.” In *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2014, pp. 452–461. (Brightspace) * Sabatier, Paul. 1988. “An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning Therein,” Policy Sciences, 21: 129-168. (Brightspace) * 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 1: “Advocacy, Public Policy, and Policy Change,” 1-28. (Brightspace) |
| October 12 | **NO CLASS – Professor at a conference** |
| October 19 | **Simulation**  Topic and materials will be presented in class. |
| October 26 | **Ethics and Policymaking**   * A Duty to Leak? Purchase Case from <https://case.hks.harvard.edu/a-duty-to-leak/>. * Rosemary O’Leary, 2010, “Guerrilla Employees: Should Managers Nurture, Tolerate, or Terminate Them?” Public Administration Review 70(1): 8-19. (Brightspace) * Sigal Samuel, “Why it’s so damn hard to make AI fair and unbiased,” Vox April 2022. <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/22916602/ai-bias-fairness-tradeoffs-artificial-intelligence> |
| November 2 | **Agenda Setting**   * Birkland, *Policy Process*, Chapter 6 * 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. (Brightspace) |
| November 9 | **Policy Design**   * Birkland, *Policy Process*, Chapter 9 * Weimer, David L. 1992. “Claiming Races, Broiler Contracts, Heresthetics, And Habits: Ten Concepts for Policy Design.” Policy Sciences 25: 135-159. (Brightspace) * Sendhil Mullainathan, “Get Ready for Technological Upheaval by Expecting the Unimagined,” *New York Times*, September 2, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/02/business/economy/get-ready-for-technological-upheaval-by-expecting-the-unimagined.html> |
| November 16 | **Implementation**   * Birkland, *Policy Process*, Chapter 10 * Sabatier, P. and Mazmanian, D., “A Conceptual Framework of the Implementation Process.” (Brightspace) * Podcast: The Ezra Klein Show, The Book I Wish Every Policymaker Would Read. June 6, 2023. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-book-i-wish-every-policymaker-would-read/id1548604447?i=1000615839464> |
| November 23 | **NO CLASS - Thanksgiving** |
| November 30 | **Rulemaking and Litigation**   * McCubbins, Nall and Weingast. “Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control” *Journal of Law, Economics*, 3(2): 243-277. (Brightspace) * Law School for Everyone. “Episode 1: Litigation and the American Legal System.” <https://nyu.kanopy.com/video/litigation-and-american-legal-system> * Epstein, L., Knight, J., & A.D. Martin. 2001. The Supreme Court as a Strategic National Policymaker. Emory Law Journal, 50: 583-612. (Brightspace) |
| December 7 | **Case Study: Education Policy**   * Podcast: This American Life, “The Problem We All Live With, Part One” <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one> * Jackson, C. Kirabo, Rucker C. Johnson, and Claudia Persico. “The effects of school spending on educational and economic outcomes: Evidence from school finance reforms.” The Quarterly Journal of Economics 131, no. 1 (2015): 157-218. (Brightspace) * Morel, D. 2023. “The state takeover of Houston public schools is about more than school improvement,” *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/the-state-takeover-of-houston-public-schools-is-about-more-than-school-improvement-202024> |
| December 14 | **Evidence Based Policymaking**   * Michael Callen, Adnan Khan, Asim I. Khwaja, Asad Liaqat and Emily Myers, “These 3 barriers make it hard for policymakers to use the evidence that development researchers produce,” Monkeycage (Washington Post), August 17, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/13/these-3-barriers-make-it-hard-for-policymakers-to-use-the-evidence-that-development-researchers-produce/> * Paul Cairney and Kathryn Oliver, “Evidence-based policymaking is not like evidence-based medicine, so how far should you go to bridge the divide between evidence and policy?” [*Health Research Policy and Systems*](https://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/) volume 15, Article number: 35 (2017). (Brightspace) * Kristin Anderson Moore, Brett V. Brown, and Harriet J. Scarupa, 2003, “The Uses (and Misuses) of Social Indicators: Implications for Public Policy,” Child Trends Research Brief #2003-01(Brightspace) |