



**NYU**

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

## **PADM-GP.2411**

# **Policy Formation and Policy Analysis**

**Fall 2020**

### **Instructor Information**

Instructor: Mona Vakilifathi

- Email: [mvakilif@nyu.edu](mailto:mvakilif@nyu.edu)
- Office Hours: M 6:45-7:45pm [Online via “Zoom” tab in class webpage]

Grader: Coryn Grange

- Email: [cg3337@nyu.edu](mailto:cg3337@nyu.edu)
- Office Hours: By appointment

Lecture: M 4:55-6:35pm [Online via “Zoom” tab in class webpage]

### **Course Goals**

#### Goal 1

The first goal is to provide students an overview of the political actors and institutions involved in the U.S. policymaking process, specifically within the context of lawmaking in Congress. We will reference political science research and congressional resources to introduce the pivotal actors in the lawmaking process, the actors’ means to achieve individual and collective goals, the institutional rules to introduce and enact legislation, and the political determinants of lawmaking.

#### Goal 2

The second goal of this course is to train students how to research, write, and analyze legislation and statutes. We will reference political science research and congressional resources to identify constituents’ preferences, formulate a member’s legislative agenda, introduce and publicize legislation, and analyze legislation within the context of the U.S. Congress.

## Learning Assessment Table

Course Learning Objective	Assignment (See Below)
Goal 1	Legislative Proposal Memorandum, Press Release, Interest Group Letter, Bill Analysis Memorandum
Goal 2	Legislative Proposal Memorandum, Press Release, Interest Group Letter, Bill Analysis Memorandum

## Course Website

The course website is available on [NYU Classes](#) under the “[SEMESTER] [YEAR] – Policy Formation (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 two weeks in advance of its due date.

## Required Readings

1. Congress: The Electoral Connection (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – David Mayhew (2004)
2. Additional book chapters, government reports, journal articles, news articles, and videos  
These materials are posted on the course website under the “Resources” tab and the “Readings” folder.

The “Introduction to Public Policy” course at NYU Wagner (or its equivalent) is a formal prerequisite for this course. As a result, you are expected to be familiar with American federal government at the graduate level. If you are unfamiliar with American federal government, please read the chapters regarding the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and federalism from *The Logic of American Politics* (current or earlier editions) by Sam Kernell, Gary Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck before attending the first lecture or in the first two weeks of this course. This book is available at Bobst Library.

## Case Studies

This course will extensively apply the course concepts to the governing strategies of Senator Charles Schumer (D, NY), Representative Jerrold Nadler (D, NY-10), Representative Max Rose (D, NY-11), Representative Tom Reed (R, NY-23), and Representative John Katko (R, NY-24). Students are expected to follow each member’s Twitter account, Facebook page, and YouTube page, constituent newsletter, and news articles. The following information provides the relevant links for each member. Using a NYU email account, create a Google email/RSS alert with the member’s title and name in the Google News search bar (e.g., [Senator Chuck Schumer](#)) to aggregate news articles for each member. In order to complete the assignments for this course, students are expected to skim members’ social media and news articles on a weekly basis.

## Senator Charles Schumer (D, NY)

- [Website](https://www.schumer.senate.gov/) (https://www.schumer.senate.gov/)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/SenSchumer) (https://twitter.com/SenSchumer)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/senschumer/) (https://www.facebook.com/senschumer/)
- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/chuckschumer/) (https://www.instagram.com/chuckschumer/)
- [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/user/SenatorSchumer) (https://www.youtube.com/user/SenatorSchumer)

## Representative Jerrold Nadler (D, NY-10)

- [Website](https://nadler.house.gov/) (https://nadler.house.gov/)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/RepJerryNadler) (https://twitter.com/RepJerryNadler)
- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/repjerrynadler/) (https://www.instagram.com/repjerrynadler/)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CongressmanNadler) (https://www.facebook.com/CongressmanNadler)
- [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/user/CongressmanNadler) (https://www.youtube.com/user/CongressmanNadler)
- [Newsletter Sign Up](https://nadler.house.gov/forms/form/?ID=545) (https://nadler.house.gov/forms/form/?ID=545)

## Representative Max Rose (D, NY-11)

- [Website](https://maxrose.house.gov/) (https://maxrose.house.gov/)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/RepMaxRose/) (https://twitter.com/RepMaxRose/)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RepMaxRose/) (https://www.facebook.com/RepMaxRose/)
- [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW0nSly4fRxysqrFFSkOcVw) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW0nSly4fRxysqrFFSkOcVw)
- [Newsletter Sign Up](https://maxrose.house.gov/forms/emailsignup/) (https://maxrose.house.gov/forms/emailsignup/)

## Representative Tom Reed (R, NY-23)

- [Website](https://reed.house.gov/) (https://reed.house.gov/)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/RepTomReed) (https://twitter.com/RepTomReed)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RepTomReed) (https://www.facebook.com/RepTomReed)
- [Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/user/CongressmanTomReed) (https://www.youtube.com/user/CongressmanTomReed)
- [Newsletter Sign Up](https://reed.house.gov/) (https://reed.house.gov/)
  - Sign up on home page under the “Newsletter” section

## Representative John Katko (R, NY-24)

- [Website](https://katko.house.gov/) (https://katko.house.gov/)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/RepJohnKatko) (https://twitter.com/RepJohnKatko)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RepJohnKatko) (https://www.facebook.com/RepJohnKatko)
- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/repjohnkatko/) (https://www.instagram.com/repjohnkatko/)
- [Newsletters Sign Up](https://katko.house.gov/contact/newsletter) (https://katko.house.gov/contact/newsletter)
  - [Newsletters](https://katko.house.gov/media-center/newsletters) (https://katko.house.gov/media-center/newsletters)

In addition, in order to complete the assignments for this course, students are expected to watch Sunday’s episodes of [“Face the Nation”](#) every week.

## Assignments

Students are required to submit the [1] Legislative Proposal Memorandum, [2] Press Release, [3] Interest Group Letter, and **either** [4A] Bill Analysis Memorandum (Committee Vote) **or** [4B] Bill Analysis Memorandum (Floor Vote).

Each assignment consists of: (1) a writing sample for potential employment as a legislative staff member or interest group lobbyist, and (2) a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to the content of the writing sample.

If a student completes assignments 1, 4A, and 4B, Professor Vakilifathi will drop the lowest assignment grade among these three assignments before calculating the student's final course grade. If a student does not complete assignment 1, the student is not eligible to receive credit for both assignments 4A and 4B.

This section provides every assignment's prompt release date and due date. Each assignment, the prompt and worksheet, will be posted on the course website under the "Assignments" tab two weeks in advance of its due date. All assignments are due at the beginning of lecture (Monday at 4:55pm EST). Assignments will be graded and returned to students within two weeks of a student's submission. However, the grader will return the grades for the Legislative Proposal Memorandum assignment one week after a student's submission, rather than two weeks, in order for the student to utilize the grader's feedback into the Press Release assignment.

If you receive a "B" (85 percent or lower) on the first two assignments in this course, you are required to schedule an in-person appointment with Professor Vakilifathi and/or the grader to review your assignments' grade and feedback.

### [1] Legislative Proposal Memorandum [30%]

Students are expected to write a two-page memorandum to provide an overview of their assigned member's constituency and a legislative proposal for the member to introduce in the 2019-2021 legislative session. In addition, students must complete a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 5 and the assignment is due Week 7 at the beginning of lecture.

### [2] Press Release [20%]

Students are expected to submit a one-page press release to publicize the introduction of an actual bill introduced by their assigned member in the 2019-2021 legislative session. In addition, students must complete a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 7 and the assignment is due Week 9 at the beginning of lecture.

### [3] Interest Group Letter [20%]

Students are expected to submit a one-page letter to declare an existing interest group's position on an actual bill introduced by a random member of Congress in the 2019-2021 legislative session. In addition, students must complete a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 9 and the assignment is due Week 11 at the beginning of lecture.

### [4A] Bill Analysis Memorandum (Committee Vote) [30%]

Students are expected to submit a two-page memorandum to provide a recommendation for their assigned member to vote for, against, or abstain on a bill introduced by a random member of Congress in one of their assigned House or Senate committees. In addition, students must complete a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 11 and the assignment is due Week 13 at the beginning of lecture.

### [4B] Bill Analysis Memorandum (Floor Vote) [30%]

Students are expected to submit a two-page memorandum to provide a recommendation for their assigned member to vote for, against, or abstain on a bill introduced by a random member of Congress on the House or Senate floor. In addition, students must complete a worksheet of two short answer questions regarding the application of relevant course readings to this assignment. The assignment is posted during Week 13 and the assignment is due Week 15 on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:55pm EST.

## **Late Assignments**

Assignments must be submitted by the beginning of lecture on its due date through NYU Classes. If an assignment is submitted five minutes after the beginning of lecture, the assignment will be considered one day late. Late assignments will be deducted five percent from the assignment grade per calendar day.

If a student would like to (1) resubmit an assignment before the due date, (2) resubmit an assignment after the due date with penalty (i.e., without a university-approved reason for late submission), or (3) submit a late assignment with penalty (i.e., without a university-approved reason for late submission), email the grader.

If a student would like to (1) resubmit an assignment after the due date without penalty (i.e., with a university-approved reason for late submission) or (2) submit a late assignment without penalty (i.e., with a university-approved reason for late submission), email Professor Vakilifathi with the documentation to verify your absence. Do not notify or email the documentation before the submission of a late assignment. If Professor Vakilifathi approves your documentation, she will partially or completely waive the late penalty for the assignment.

## Re-grading Assignments

If a student would like a re-grade of an assignment, the student must email Professor Vakilifathi a one-page (maximum) response stating their reasons for a re-grade within one week of receiving their grade. Professor Vakilifathi will not accept requests for a re-grade of an assignment after one week of the student receiving their initial grade, excluding clerical errors. Professor Vakilifathi will re-grade the entire assignment, which may result in a lower or higher grade than the original grade within two weeks of receiving the student's re-grade letter. The re-graded assignment grade will be the final assignment grade.

The student can appeal her or his final course grade to Professor Vakilifathi only if there is a clerical error. All other student requests to appeal the course grade, for whatever reasons, will not be considered.

## 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 Professor Vakilifathi. 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 Vakilifathi.

## Wagner Writing Center

Students are strongly encouraged to email the grader or Professor Vakilifathi (after emailing the grader) 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](#).

## Classroom Norms

You are expected to participate in each class with your Zoom audio and video on. Please review Wagner's [Zoom in the Classroom](#) series about classroom etiquette, participation, and more.

Students may not share the Zoom classroom recordings. The recordings are kept within the NYU Classes site and are for students enrolled in this course only.

## Attendance

Attendance in lecture is mandatory. Although attendance is not a part of a student's final course grade, Professor Vakilifathi may increase a student's final letter grade if (1) the student's final course grade is less than one percentage point from the next letter grade percentage range, (2) the student has attended 13 of the 14 lectures, and (4) the student regularly participates in

lecture activities and discussion. If Professor Vakilifathi applies a class curve to all students' grades, Professor Vakilifathi will not further increase a student's grade based on attendance or class participation.

## Lecture Absence

If you are not able to attend lecture and your absence is not a university-approved absence (e.g. illness without a doctor's note, work), you are responsible for completing the assigned reading, reviewing the lecture slides, accessing the lectures notes on your own. If you have specific questions about lecture, you can sign up for office hours with Professor Vakilifathi. (See "Office Hours" section below.)

If you are not able to attend lecture and your absence is a university-approved absence (e.g., illness with a doctor's note, illness or death of a friend or family member, religious commitment), please email Professor Vakilifathi only the documentation to verify your absence and whether you would like to review the lecture materials in a 30-minute meeting (instead of a 15-minute meeting) during office hours.

## Cell Phone Use

Cell phone use is prohibited during lecture because it not only distracts you during class but it disrupts other students (especially during group activities.) If you need to make a phone call or send a text message during lecture, please leave the (online) classroom and return after you completed your call or text. If you need to make multiple phone calls or text messages during lecture, please leave the classroom and return to the classroom the following week. If you repeatedly use your phone during lecture throughout the semester, Professor Vakilifathi and NYU Wagner Student Services will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your personal circumstances.

## 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](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](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations.

As stated in the "Attendance" and "Late Assignments" sections in this syllabus:

- If you are not able to attend lecture, please email Professor Vakilifathi only the documentation to verify your absence and whether you would like to review the lecture materials in a 30-minute meeting (instead of a 15-minute meeting) during office hours.
- If a student would like to (1) resubmit an assignment after the due date without penalty or (2) submit a late assignment without penalty, email Professor Vakilifathi with the documentation to verify your absence. Do not notify or email the documentation before the submission of a late assignment. If Professor Vakilifathi approves your documentation, she will completely waive the late penalty for the assignment.

## **General vs. Individual Student Questions**

It is very common for students to email the instructor and the grader the same questions about the course. In order for Professor Vakilifathi and the grader to maximize time spent on individual questions and minimize time spent on repeating general questions, please post general questions regarding the course lecture and assignments on the discussion board under the "Discussion Board" tab on the NYU Classes class website.

For individual questions about the course lectures or university-approved absences, please email Professor Vakilifathi.

For individual questions about the assignments, please email the grader. (If you skip this first step, Professor Vakilifathi will forward your initial email to the grader.) If the grader does not provide a sufficient response, email Professor Vakilifathi and Cc the grader.

Professor Vakilifathi and the grader are not responsible for brainstorming, editing, or writing your assignments.

Do not email Professor Vakilifathi or the grader regarding attendance or late assignments unless your absence is a university-approved absence.

Professor Vakilifathi and the grader will respond to emails within twenty-four hours after an email is received, excluding weekends.

If a student does not follow these email guidelines (i.e., emailing the instructor or grader about general questions, unexcused absences, etc.) two or more times throughout the class, Professor Vakilifathi reserves the right to reduce the student's final course grade by one letter grade category (e.g., A- to B+).



## Office Hours

You can attend office hours to ask specific, individual questions about the course or career planning in public service. You can sign up for a 15-minute meeting during office hours through the “Office Hours Sign-Up” tab on the NYU Classes class website.

In order to be fair and consistent with students, Professor Vaklifathi will only meet with students outside of office hours with a NYU class conflict. If you have a class conflict, please email Professor Vaklifathi only your NYU class schedule during Week 3 and email Professor Vaklifathi to schedule individual appointments when necessary during the semester.

The grader is expected to manage the discussion board on NYU Classes, address individual questions about the assignments, grade assignments, and provide feedback on graded assignments. As a result, the grader provides office hours by appointment to discuss specific, individual questions about the assignment prompt and assignment grade that cannot be addressed via email. In order to request an appointment, email the grader your specific question(s). The grader will provide you an answer to your question via email or will initiate an in-person appointment. If the grader provides you an answer to your question via email and you would like more detail or feedback, you may request an in-person appointment or email Professor Vaklifathi and Cc the grader. The grader will schedule an appointment with one week of the request or suggest you to sign up for office hours with Professor Vaklifathi.

## Course Schedule

Please complete the assigned readings **before** the assigned lecture.

### Week 1: Course Overview [9/9/2020]

**Note:** Due to Labor Day, there is no lecture on Monday, September 7th. Due to Legislative Day, we will meet at the same time and (online) location on Wednesday, September 9th.

### Week 2: The Lawmaking Process [9/14/2020]

- “Introduction to the Legislative Process in the U.S. Congress” – Congressional Research Service (2017)
- “Theoretical Foundations” from *Revolving Gridlock: Politics and Policy From Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush* – Brady and Volden (2006)
- “Change We Can Believe In? Using Political Science to Predict Policy Change in the Obama Presidency” – Woon (2009)
- “Pivotal Politics and the Ideological Content of Landmark Laws” – Gray and Jenkins (2017)

### Week 3: How to Read, Write, and Research Legislation and Statutes [9/21/2020]

- “Legislative Research for Congressional Staff: How to Find Documents and Other Resources” – Congressional Research Service (2015) [skim]
- “Legal Rules” and “Reading Statutes” from *Synthesis: Legal Reading, Reasoning, and Writing* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) – Schmedemann and Kunz (2014)
- “Introduction to Legislative Drafting” - U.S. House Office of the Legislative Counsel (2015)
- Example introduced legislation from Senator Schumer, Representative Nadler, Representative Rose, Representative Reed, and Representative Katko

### Week 4: Legislators and Lawmaking (Part 1) [9/28/2020]

- *Congress: The Electoral Connection* – Mayhew (1974)
- “U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration” – Fenno (1977)
- “Which Buck Stops Here? Accountability for Policy Positions and Policy Outcomes in Congress” – Jones (2011)

### Week 5: Legislators and Lawmaking (Part 2) [10/5/2020]

- “Congressional Voters” and “National Politics and Congressional Elections” from *The Politics of Congressional Elections* (9<sup>th</sup> edition) – Jacobson and Carson (2016)
- “Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections” – Ansolabehere et al. (2001)
- Example press releases from Senator Schumer, Representative Nadler, Representative Rose, Representative Reed, and Representative Katko

## **Week 6: Interest Groups and Lawmaking [10/12/2020]**

- “Representing the Preferences of Donors, Partisans, and Voters in the U.S. Senate” – Barber (2016)
- “Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees” – Hall and Wayman (1990)
- “Contributions, Lobbying, and Committee Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives” – Wright (1990)
- Example interest group letters from the American Medical Association, National Education Association, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce

## **Week 7: The President and Lawmaking [10/19/2020]**

- “The Power to Persuade” from *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Revised Edition) – Neustadt (1991)
- “How Washington Has Changed” from *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) – Kernell (2006)
- “Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory” – Moe and Howell (1999)
- “The President’s Playbook: White House Strategies for Lobbying Congress” – Beckmann (2008)

## **Week 8: Introducing Legislation [10/26/2020]**

- “Preliminary Legislative Action” from *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process* (10<sup>th</sup> edition) – Oleszek et al. (2016)
- Read materials for class exercise: (1) list of self-driving or automated legislation in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, (2) H.R. 3404 [Introduced – 7/26/2017], (3) H.R. 3388 [Introduced – 7/25/2017], (4) “All Actions” tab for H.R. 3388 (link), (5) Representative Latta’s opening statement at subcommittee hearing (2/14/2017), (6) Representative Latta’s constituent newsletter (2/21/2017), (7) Representative Latta’s op-ed (3/28/2017), and (8) Representative Latta’s press release (4/19/2017)

## **Week 9: Committee Hearing, Markup, and Report [11/2/2020]**

- “The Committee System in the U.S. Congress” – Congressional Research Service (2009)
- Read materials for class exercise: (1) H.R. 3388 [Introduced – 7/25/2017] (review), (2) Representative Latta’s opening statement at subcommittee hearing (6/27/2017), (3) Representative Latta’s press release (6/27/2017), (4) Representative Latta’s opening statement at committee hearing (7/27/2017), (5) committee hearing on H.R. 3388 (watch at least first 30 minutes of testimony), (6) Representative Latta’s press release (7/27/2017), (7) H. Rept. 115-294 [Committee Report on H.R. 3388], and (8) H.R. 3388 [Amended – 9/5/2017] (skim)

### **Week 10: Floor Debate, Amendment, and Vote [11/9/2020]**

- “Roll-Call Votes” from *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress* – Theriault et al. (2013)
- Read materials for class exercise: (1) H.R. 3388 [Introduced – 7/25/2017] (review), (2) H. Rept. 115-294 [Committee Report on H.R. 3388] (review), (3) H.R. 3388 [Amended – 9/5/2017], (4) statutes affected by H.R. 3388 (review), (5) Representative Latta’s press release (8/15/2017), (6) Representative Latta’s floor speech (9/6/2017), (7) Congressional Record H6677 (9/6/2017), (8) Representative Latta’s press release (9/6/2017), (9) Representative Latta’s press release (9/15/2017), and (10) H.R. 3388 [Engrossed in House – 9/6/2017]

### **Week 11: Class Discussion [11/16/2020]**

### **Week 12: Determinants of Legislative Productivity [11/23/2020]**

- “Conclusion” from *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-2002* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – Mayhew (2005)
- “The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96” – Binder (1999)
- “Causes and Consequences of Polarization” from *Negotiating Agreement in Politics* – Barber and McCarty (2013)
- “The Logic of Confrontation” from *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign* – Lee (2016)

### **Week 13: Legislative Oversight of the Bureaucracy [11/30/2020]**

- “Caught in the Middle: The President, Congress, and the Political-Bureaucratic System” from *The Executive Branch* – Weingast (2005)
- “Choosing Strategies to Control the Bureaucracy: Statutory Constraints, Oversight, and the Committee System” – Bawn (1997)
- “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms” – McCubbins and Schwartz (1984)

### **Week 14: Determinants of Statutory Discretion [12/7/2020]**

- “Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control” – McCubbins et al. (1987)
- “Delegation and Congressional-Executive Relations” from *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making under Separate Powers* – Epstein and O’Halloran (1999)
- “The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure” from *Can the Government Govern?* – Moe (1989)