



**NYU**

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

## **CORE-GP 1022 Introduction to Public Policy Fall 2021**

### **Instructor Information**

- Karina Christiansen, PhD
- Email: [kmc596@nyu.edu](mailto:kmc596@nyu.edu)
- Office Hours: By appointment. I will typically be available to meet after class.

### **Teaching Assistant Information**

- Based on your recitation

### **Course Information**

- Class Meeting Times: Thursdays, 6:45 p.m. – 8:25 p.m.
- Class Location: Online (access Zoom link through NYU Classes site)

## **Course Description**

The goal of this course is to deepen students' understanding of the way in which public policy is made, with a particular emphasis on the roles advocacy and ideas (sometimes shaped by policy analysis) play in that process. The course is structured around 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, (2) discuss the interaction of actors and institutions within the context of a case study, and (3) engage with tools of analysis and strategy that stakeholders employ to advance policy goals in that venue.

Throughout the cases, students will be asked to reflect on the following concerns/themes:

1. How does framing and discourse shape politics and policies?
2. How do the tools of government – the actual design and delivery of public policies – reflect the framing of target populations, causal stories about blame and responsibility, and normative assumptions of the public and decision makers?
3. How do we disentangle the dynamics of power, policy, and politics in the policy process? Or, another way, how do we explain how interests, institutions, ideas, and individuals interact to shape policy outcomes?
4. How do analysts balance (or not) concerns regarding efficiency, effectiveness, and equity? What indicators do we use to measure each of those objectives?

## Course and Learning Objectives

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 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.

## Learning Assessment Table

Corresponding Course Learning Objective	Corresponding Assignment Title
#1	Briefing memo; strategy memo
#2	Op-ed
#3	Briefing memo
#4	Options Memo
#5	Presentation

## 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 Brightspace in the “Content” tab. In cases where the case study is not available for free, refer to the hyperlink to purchase and instantly access the case study online.

Although there is no formal prerequisite for this course, you are expected to be familiar with American federal government at the undergraduate level. We will review basic information regarding the American federal government at the beginning of the course. However, if you need additional resources on the American federal government, you are expected to complete the “American Government Foundations” module on NYU Brightspace.

## Summary of Graded Components

1. Class Participation (5%)
2. Asynchronous materials and response: (15%)
3. Op-Ed: (15%)
4. Stakeholder Analysis (20%)
5. Two Policy Memos and reading response: (20% each)

## 6. Presentation: (5%)

### **Re-grading Assignments**

If a student would like a re-grade of an assignment, the student should first speak with the TA and if that does not resolve the issue email Professor Christiansen a one-page (maximum) response stating their reasons for a re-grade along with a copy of the original submission and its rubric within two weeks of receiving their grade. Professor Christiansen 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.

### **Class Participation**

Active and engaged participation in class and recitation will result in better learning outcomes and will be taken into account in the final grade (5%). 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.

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

### **Attendance**

Attendance in lecture and recitations are expected. As a matter of professional courtesy, you should inform me if you will miss lecture and you should inform your TA, writing coach, and peer group members, as appropriate, if you will miss recitation. I do not "give permission" for missing lecture. You either have a university-sanctioned reason for being absent (e.g., illness, death in the family, religious observance) or you are choosing to be absent. You are adults and I trust you to evaluate the best use of your time.

Although attendance is not a part of a student's final grade, Professor Christiansen may increase a student's final letter grade if (1) the student's final grade is less than one percentage point from the next letter grade percentage range, (2) the student has attended 13 of the 14 lectures, (3) the student has attended 6 of the 7 recitations, and (4) the student regularly participates in lecture and recitation activities and discussion.

### **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 Christiansen 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 NYU Brightspace class website.

For individual questions about the course lectures or university-approved absences, please email Professor Christiansen. For individual questions about the course recitation or assignments, please email your assigned Teaching Assistant. (If you skip this first step, Professor Christiansen will forward your initial email to your assigned Teaching Assistant.) If the Teaching Assistant does not provide a sufficient response, email Professor Christiansen and CC the teaching assistant.

Professor Christiansen and the Teaching Assistants are not responsible for brainstorming, editing, or writing your assignments. Professor Christiansen and the Teaching Assistants will make every effort respond to emails within twenty-four hours after an email is received, excluding weekends.

## Assignments

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

There will be a presentation on the overall op-ed assignment in your recitation section. This includes the Op-ed prompt and Rubric, the op-ed project submission information and video quizzes at the bottom of the page. The due dates and deliverables for the op-eds are in dependent on your recitation schedule.

### **Stakeholder Analysis (20%) and Memos (2x20%)**

These three assignments comprise a semester-long focus on a single policy topic. We will discuss in greater detail in class; assignment prompts will be posted at least 2 weeks in advance of the due date. Students will be able to choose their own policy topic within three broad issues areas that comprise the major focus areas of the course: Criminal Justice, Public Health and Healthcare, and Environmental policy. If there is a compelling reason to choose a topic outside of these issue areas, please contact Professor Christiansen.

### **Presentation (5%)**

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

### **Asynchronous Engagement (15%)**

Prior to each class, you will be expected to engage with an asynchronous material (often a podcast or a Frontline documentary) and post your reactions and analysis on the Discussion Board in NYU Brightspace. Unless otherwise noted, there will be a max of 5 distinct threads per class – other students will be expected to post their reactions in response to and in engagement

with the comments that other students have already posted. It is both an opportunity to share your own perspective and analysis, and to engage in thoughtful discussion with your classmates. During class we will break into small groups to discuss your responses and how those materials connect to the other readings/case study for the week. Come to class expected to speak about the async materials and the case studies. Each post counts as 1 point towards your Asynchronous engagement grade, full points will be conferred as long as the student takes the prompt seriously. Responses should not be less than 75-100 words, but are not expected to exceed 250 words. Before class begins, please introduce yourself and reflect on the following question: What does public service mean to you? Why are you pursuing a degree in a School of Public Service?

### **Participation (5%)**

As noted above, this class relies on students' active, thoughtful, engaged participation. Class time will be devoted to small group discussion of case materials and the application of assigned readings and async materials to the case.

## **NYU Wagner Resources and Guidelines**

### **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.

### **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 Christiansen. If you are unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with Professor Christiansen.

## **Wagner Writing Center**

Students are strongly encouraged to email your assigned workshop consultant, email your assigned workshop consultant, email your assigned teaching assistant, or meet with Professor Christiansen during office hours 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

## **Online Format Guidelines and Expectations**

This course will be taught entirely online. At the beginning of class we will go over the expectations for students and faculty for this to be a successful, enjoyable, productive learning environment, even in this difficult context. 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.

You have 24/7 support via NYU's IT services. Explore the [NYU servicelink knowledgebase](#) for troubleshooting and student guides for all NYU-supported tools (NYU Classes, Zoom, etc). Contact [askIT@nyu.edu](mailto:askIT@nyu.edu) or 1-212-998-3333 (24/7) for technology assistance, or contact [Zoom's 24/7 technical support](#) (includes a chat function), or review [Zoom's support resources](#). Your peers are another source of support, so you could ask a friend or classmate for help or tips.

If you do not have the appropriate hardware technology nor financial resources to purchase the technology, consider applying for the NYU [Emergency Relief Grant](#).

## Course Schedule

Please complete all assigned readings **before** the assigned lecture. Asynchronous materials must be completed prior to our class meetings, and a ~100-200 word reflection (unless otherwise specified) posted on the related NYU Brightspace Forum discussion board prior to meetings by **5:00pm EST** on the day of class.

## Pre-Course Review: Government Foundations Knowledge Check

- **Readings/Activity:**
  - Review “American Government Foundations” module on NYU Brightspace
    - Take “Knowledge Check” Assessment (35 Questions)
    - IF YOU SCORE BELOW 85%:
      - Review topic(s) based on “Knowledge Check” results
      - After reviewing topics, complete the “Post-Module Exam”
      - These assessments do not count towards your grade, but are meant to provide a resource for the basics of American government institutions, so that you can be successful in the course.

## Week 1: Course Overview & Introduction to Policy Analysis [9/2/2021]

- **Asynchronous Material:** None
- **Readings:**
  - Bardach, E. (2005). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. CQ press. Pages 1-10.
  - Mintrom, M., & Williams, C. (2012). Public policy debate and the rise of policy analysis. In *Routledge handbook of public policy* (pp. 21-34). Routledge.
  - Cairney, P. (2021). *The politics of policy analysis*. Springer Nature.

## Week 2: Stakeholder Analysis (Case Study) [9/9/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** None

### Readings

- **Case Materials:** Homelessness In Harvard Square: Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration In Action
  - <https://case.hks.harvard.edu/homelessness-in-harvard-square-multi-stakeholder-collaboration-in-action/>

- “An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning Therein” - Sabatier (1988)
- **How to Write a Stakeholder Analysis:** “Stakeholder Analysis” from *Managing Policy Reform: Concepts and Tools for Decision-Makers in Developing and Transitioning Countries* - Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2001)

### Week 3: Weighing Policy Alternatives [9/16/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Takeaway (NPR) – [How Local and Federal Policies are Criminalizing Homelessness](#)

#### Readings

- “Assessing Policy Alternatives” from *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives* (6th edition) – Kraft and Furlong (2018)
- Bardach, E. (2005). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. CQ press. Pages 10-52.

### Week 4: Federalism and Policy Making Venues [9/23/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Civics 101 Podcast - [Federalism](#)

#### Readings:

- [The New Federalism](#) – The Atlantic
  - <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/new-federalism/611077/>
- [How the Federal Government Can Reform the Police](#) - The New Yorker
  - <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/how-the-federal-government-can-reform-the-police>
- [A New Progressive Federalism](#) – Democracy: A Journal of Ideas
  - <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/24/a-new-progressive-federalism/>

### Week 5: Federalism in Action: Hurricane Katrina Case Study [9/30/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Frontline (PBS) – The Storm  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/storm/>



## Readings

- Case Materials: Harvard Business Publishing (small fee, make an account)
  - Hurricane Katrina: Preparing for “The Big One” in New Orleans (A)
    - <https://case.hks.harvard.edu/hurricane-katrina-preparing-for-the-big-one-in-new-orleans-a/>
  - Hurricane Katrina: Responding to an “Ultra-Catastrophe” in New Orleans (B)
    - <https://case.hks.harvard.edu/hurricane-katrina-the-looming-storm-abridged-b/>

## Week 6: Policy Framing and Communication [10/7/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Floodlines (The Atlantic) – [Part III: Through the Looking Glass](#) and [Part VI : Reckoning](#)

## Readings

- “Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas” – Stone (1989)
- “Problems” from *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – Kingdon (2002)
- “Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy” – Schneider and Ingram (1993)

## Week 7: Lawmaking Venue (Institutions + Actors) [10/14/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Civics 101 - [How a Bill \(really\) Becomes a Law](#)

## Readings

- **Case Materials:** [Ban the Box Campaign](#)
- **Overview of Lawmaking Process:**
  - “Congress” from the American Government Foundations module *[Recommended]*
  - “Introduction to the Legislative Process in the U.S. Congress” – Congressional Research Service (2017)

## Week 8: Lawmaking (ACA Case Study) [10/21/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Frontline (PBS) – [Obama’s Deal](#)

## Readings

- **Case Materials:** [Healthcare Reform: 2009-2010](#)

## Week 9: Rulemaking Venue (Institutions + Actors) [10/28/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Frontline (PBS) – [War on the EPA](#)

## Readings

- “The Federal Rulemaking Process: An Overview” – Congressional Research Service (2013)
- [What It’s Like Inside the Trump Administration’s Regulatory Rollback at the EPA](#) – ProPublica (2017)
- [EPA Year in Review \(2017-2018\)](#) – Environmental Protection Agency (2018)

## Week 10: Rulemaking (Fracking Case Study) [11/4/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Energy Policy Now – [The Local View of Fracking](#)

## Readings

- Case Material: Fracked – [Uncertainties in Negotiated Rule Making](#)

## Week 11: Policy Windows – Strategy Memorandum [11/11/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** The Meaning of Green – [Throwing Open the Climate Change Policy Window](#)

## Readings

- **Multiple Streams Framework [Theory]:** “How Does an Idea’s Time Come?” and “The Policy Window, and Joining the Streams” from *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – Kingdon (2002)
  - **Policy stream:** “The Policy Primeval Soup” from *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – Kingdon (2002)
- **Punctuated Equilibrium [Theory]:** “Punctuated Equilibria in Politics” from *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – Baumgartner and Jones (2009)

## Week 12: Implementation Venue [11/18/2021]

**Asynchronous Material: None**

### Readings

- [Are Bureaucrats a Public Good](#) – Boston Review (2017)

-----NO CLASS Thursday, November 25 – Thanksgiving-----

## Week 13: Path Dependence [12/2/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** Policy Cast: 199 How History Shapes Our Political Beliefs

<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/more/policycast/how-history-shapes-our-political-beliefs>

### Readings:

- [Why America Doesn't Have Universal Healthcare? The Answer Has Everything to Do with Race](#) – NYTimes 1619 Project
- Medicare and Medicaid: The Past as Prologue – Berkowitz (2005)
- “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics” – Pierson (2000)

## Week 14: Litigation Venue (Institutions + Actors) [12/9/2021]

**Asynchronous Material:** The Freedom to Marry doc (to rent on Amazon or YouTube)

### Readings:

- “Law is Different: The Power of Precedent” from *Law's Allure: How Law Shapes, Constrains, Saves, and Kills Politics* – Silverstein (2009)
- The Buried Promise of the Reconstruction Amendments, *The New Yorker* (2019)
  - <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/the-buried-promise-of-the-reconstruction-amendments>
- The Struggle Over the Meaning of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment Continues – *The Atlantic* (2018)
  - <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/07/the-struggle-over-the-meaning-of-the-14th-amendment-continues/564722/>