

CORE-GP 1022 – Sec 005

**Introduction to Public Policy Fall 2022**

# Instructor Information

* Kristina Arakelyan
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* Office Hours: By appointment

# Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays, 9/1 – 12/14, 6:45 – 8:25 pm
* Class Location: Silver Center, Room 407

# Course Description

This course covers a wide range of topics, from the norms and values informing democratic policymaking to the basics of cost-benefit and other tools of policy analysis. Though emphases will differ based on instructor strengths, all sections will address the institutional arrangements for making public policy decisions, the role of various actors-including nonprofit and private- sector professionals-in shaping policy outcomes, and the fundamentals (and limits) of analytic approaches to public policy.

# 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**

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| **Course Learning Objective Covered** | **Corresponding Assignment Title** |
| #1 | Briefing memo; strategy memo |

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| --- | --- |
| **Course Learning Objective Covered** | **Corresponding Assignment Title** |
| #2 | Op-ed |
| #3 | Briefing memo |
| #4 | Options Memo |
| #5 | Presentation |

# NYU Brightspace

Class announcements, updated assignments, syllabus modifications, etc., will all be made via NYU Brightspace, so please check the website regularly.

**Required Texts**

The required readings for this class consist of book chapters, journal articles, government or policy reports, documentaries, news articles, and case studies. These materials are posted on the course website on NYU Brightspace.

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.

# Course Requirements & Overview of Assignments/Graded Components

## 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%), 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; 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, Education, Labor, and Social Services. 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.

## Asynchronous Assignments (15%)

Throughout the semester, you will be required to complete three (3) asynchronous assignments—response paper, blog post, and group policy pitch. Each assignment will be worth 5%.

## Class Participation (5%)

Students are expected to actively participate in class. You should be prepared to demonstrate a willingness to offer your comments, draw attention to insights from the readings, and ask questions related to the topic of the day. Discussion of current events and media reports that relate to the topics relevant to the course is strongly encouraged. 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.

# NYU/Wagner Grading Policy

Per the Wagner grading policy, students will receive grades according to the Wagner grading scale. This information is posted here.

# Student Questions

For questions about the course lectures or university-approved absences, please e-mail me. For questions about the course recitation or assignments, please e-mail your assigned TA. If the TA does not provide a sufficient response, e-mail me and CC the TA. I will make every effort respond to e-mails within twenty-four hours after an e-mail is received, excluding weekends.

# Writing

Writing is an important part of being a policy analyst and advocate. 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*. In addition, 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*, and an excellent book *Better Presentations* by Jonathan Schwabish. You can also email your assigned workshop consultant, your assigned teaching assistant, or meet with me for feedback. If you would like additional feedback or training on policy writing, please visit the Wagner Writing Center or the NYU Writing Center.

# 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.

# 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 exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

# Technology Support

You have 24/7 support via NYU’s IT services. Explore the NYU servicelink knowledgebase for troubleshooting and student guides (Brightspace, Zoom, etc). Contact <mailto:askIT@nyu.edu> or 1-212-998-3333 (24/7) for technology assistance.

# Syllabus Modification

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus based on input, class pace, and other factors as the term progresses.

# Course Schedule

*\*\*Readings are due the day they are listed\*\**

### Week 1: Wednesday, September 7: How does government work?

#### Readings:

* Congressional Research Service. 2018. Introduction to the Legislative Process.
* Light, Paul. 2022. "What Americans still want from government reform—a midsummer update." Brookings.

### Week 2: Wednesday, September 14: How is policy made?

#### Readings:

* Kraft, Michael and Scott Furlong. 2017. In *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. Washington D.C.: Sage/CQ Press. Selections.
* Kim, Juliana. 2022. "What the Inflation Reduction Act does and doesn't do about rising prices." NPR.

### Week 3: Wednesday, September 21: How do you overcome federal bureaucracy?

#### Readings:

* Carey, Maeve P./ Congressional Research Service. 2013. The Federal Rulemaking Process: An Overview.
* Pennock, Andrew. 2018. Generating and Organizing Your Argument & The Decision Memo. In *The CQ Press Writing Guide for Public Policy*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.
* Parekh, Anand. 2022. “Federal agencies must recalibrate to fight today’s health challenge.” *The Hill*. August 8.

### Week 4: Wednesday, September 28: How does the law shape policy?

#### Readings:

* Kagan, Robert. 2001. The Political Construction of Adversarial Legalism. In *Adversarial Legalism: The American Way of Law*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
* Silverstein, Gordon. 2009. Law is Different: The Power of Precedent. In *Law’s Allure: How Law Shapes, Constrains, Saves, and Kills Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
* *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* (2018).
* Yang, Maya. 2022. "After the fall of Roe, Republican pursuit of abortion bans appears to falter." *The Guardian*. August 11.

### Week 5: Wednesday, October 5: Big Data in NYC (Case Study)

#### Readings:

* *From Compstat to Gov 2.0 - Big Data in NYC* (Columbia SIPA)
* City of New York. 2022. “Rebooting NYC: An Urban Tech Agenda for the Next Administration shows how City government can more effectively use technology to serve all New Yorkers equitably and efficiently”
* Cornell Tech. 2021. “Mayor Adams Creates More Efficient Government by Consolidating City Tech Agencies Under New Office of Technology and Innovation.”

#### Complete:

* Asynchronous Assignment #1 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, October 9th (Brightspace submission)

### Week 6: Wednesday, October 12: How do we design effective policy?

#### Readings:

* Sunstein, Cass R. 2013. Plate, Not Pyramid. *Simpler: The Future of Government*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
* Garcia, Deanna. 2022. “Soggy salad has replaced mystery meat at NYC schools on Vegan Fridays.” *Politico*. Februay 26.
* Mullainathan, Sendhil and Eldar Shafir. 2013. *Scarcity*. New York: Macmillan. Selections.
* Edin, Kathryn. 2016. “20 Years Since Welfare 'Reform.’” *The Atlantic*. August 22.

### Week 7: Wednesday, October 19: How do we effectively implement policy?

#### Readings:

* Lipsky, Michael. 2010. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Selections.
* Zacka, Bernard. 2017. “Bureaucrats to the Rescue: Are Bureaucracies a Public Good?”

*Boston Review*. September 21.

* Elliott, Andrea. 2013. “Invisible Child” [parts 1-5]. *New York Times*.
* Elliott, Andrea. 2021. “When Dasani Left Home.” *New York Times*. September 28.

### Week 8: Wednesday, October 26: Who influences policy?

#### Readings:

* Brinkerhoff, Derick and Benjamin Crosby. 2001. Stakeholder Analysis. In *Managing Policy Reform: Concepts and Tools for Decision-Makers in Developing and Transitioning Countries*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.
* Baumgartner, Frank and Bryan Jones. 2015. Chapter 2. In *The Politics of Information: Problem Definition and the Course of Public Policy in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
* Case Study: Combat and Collaboration in Seattle’s Historic Minimum Wage Debate.
* Murphy, Marjorie. 1991. The Coming of Age of Teacher Unionism. In *Blackboard Unions: The AFT and the NEA, 1900-1980*. New York: Cornell University Press.

### Week 9: Wednesday, November 2: Municipal and Labor Policy (Case Studies)

#### Readings:

* Handout with readings to be circulated prior to lecture.

#### Complete:

* Asynchronous Assignment #2 due by 11:59pm on Sunday, October 30th (Brightspace submission)

### Week 10: Wednesday, November 9: How does policy make politics?

#### Readings:

* Moynihan, Donald and Joe Soss. 2014. “Policy Feedback and the Politics of Administration.” Public Administration Review. 74(3): 320-332.
* Rutenberg, Jim. 2015. “A Dream Undone.” *New York Times*. July 29.
* Rutenberg, Jim. 2015. “Nine Years Ago Republicans Favored Voting Rights. What Happened?” *New York Times*. August 12.
* Ashford, Grace. 2022. “Noncitizens’ Right to Vote Becomes Law in New York City.” *New York Times*. January 9.
* Mays, Jeffery. 2022. “New York City’s Noncitizen Voting Law Is Struck Down.” *New York Times*. June 27.

### Week 11: Wednesday, November 16: How does timing and framing shape policy?

#### Readings:

* Stone, Deborah. 2001. Causes. In *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. New York: W.W. Norton.
* Downs, Anthony. 1972. “Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle.” *Public Interest* 28: 38–50.
* Luntz, Frank. 2007. The Ten Rules of Effective Language & Political Case Studies. In *Words That Work: It’s Not What You Say, It’s What People Hear*. New York: Hachette Books.
* Richtel, Matt. 2016. “It’s No Accident: Why Advocates Want to Speak of Car ‘Crashes’ Instead.” *New York Times*. May 23.

### Thanksgiving Break (No Class): November 23rd

Week 12: Wednesday, November 30: Flint, Michigan (Case Study)

#### Readings:

* Masten, Susan J., Simon H. Davies, and Shawn P. Mcelmurry. "Flint water crisis: what happened and why?." *Journal‐American Water Works Association* 108.12 (2016): 22-34.
* Kennedy, Merrit. 2016. Lead-Laced Water In Flint: A Step-By-Step Look At The Makings Of A Crisis. NPR.
* Bernstein, Lenny. 2016. “Flint’s water crisis reveals government failures at every level.”

*Washington Post*. January 24.

* EPA. Report: Management Weaknesses Delayed Response to Flint Water Crisis.
* EPA. Podcast: Report Overview with Charles Brunton.

### Week 13: Wednesday, December 7: Group Policy Pitch

#### Complete:

* Asynchronous Assignment #3 is due in class on December 7th.
  + Please make sure to e-mail me your slides the night before class.

### Week 14: Wednesday, December 14: Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (Case Study)

#### Readings:

* Jordan, Philip. 2022. “Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, City University of New York: Innovations in American Government Award Case Study.”
* Dickler, Jessica. 2022. “5 years ago, New York made 4 years of college free for residents. Here’s how it’s going.” CNBC. May 27.
* Startz, Dick. 2021. “Free community college: Progress is being made, but pitfalls remain.” Brookings. September 15.