



NYU

ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Topics in Public Policy

PADM-GP 4700

Spring 2023

Instructor Information

- **Instructor Name:** Former Mayor of NYC Bill de Blasio (wagner.billdeblasio@nyu.edu)
- **Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 4-6pm, Puck 3004 (sign up [here](#)) – *if you would like more than 15 minutes, please sign up for two time slots* ○ Hours may change, check the appointment link above or reach out via email ○ If you cannot make these office hours, please email wagner.billdeblasio@nyu.edu to coordinate an alternate time
- **Teaching Assistant:** Maggie Jean Knight (mjh7734@nyu.edu)
- **TA Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 12-2pm, on Zoom (drop in [here](#)), or by appointment

Course Information

- **Class Meeting Times:** Wed 6.45 PM- 8.25 PM
- **Class Location:** SILV 412
- **Brightspace:** All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. Announcements will be provided through Brightspace for any changes to assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course.
- **No electronic devices should be used in the classroom.** This includes laptops, tablets, and cell phones. Engagement tends to be higher when students have less opportunity for distraction through technology.
 - *If for any reason you require the use of an electronic device, please reach out to the Teaching Assistant.*
- [New York Times Subscription Information](#)
- [Wagner Writing Center](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Course Description

In a multifaceted and difficult world, idealism combined with an understanding of the complex and sometimes challenging systems at play is needed to energize meaningful change and approach wicked problems. This half-semester course is for aspiring policymakers who want to combine a necessary sense of optimism with real-world understanding of how things get done and the motivation to act. Each session will focus on specific examples of how practical solutions were found to seemingly intractable problems during Mayor de Blasio's administration. While the material inherently has a New York City lens, the topics, policies, and solutions can be considered from a global perspective. The assignments are intended to be an opportunity for creative policy thinking while addressing the real concerns of a government

decision-maker. Assignments will be reviewed and graded with the rigor of an actual official, as Professor de Blasio did while in office.

Course and Learning Objectives

This course is intended to give students an opportunity to dive deeper into the world of policymaking and the challenges therein. Roadblocks exist in the policy process and the dedication one brings to adapting and overcoming is necessary to the successful creation of every policy. Thus, this course will:

1. Seek to inspire and prepare students to engage in policymaking
2. Orient students to real-world policy challenges
3. Provide insight into the reality of professional and political systems
4. Open students' eyes to the endless possibilities to be agents of change

Assessment and Evaluation

Participation (40%)

- Course participation, including presence, in-class contributions, Brightspace discussions, email exchanges, and office hour attendance all contribute to your participation grade. You are not required to attend office hours but are encouraged to do so over the course of the class. Participation is based on your engagement with the course materials, displaying your preparation in advance of class and discussing the topics in-depth. To this end, you will need to prepare by reading the articles listed for each class.
- Classroom attendance is mandatory. In the event you are not able to attend a class inperson, please email wagner.billdeblasio@nyu.edu as soon as possible.

Two memos will be completed during the course. Please understand the below descriptions are evolving and future information will be announced to the class.

Mid-class Policy Memo (20%) due by February 14, 11:59pm EST.

- Please write a (two-page (excluding citations), single-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12) policy memo arguing in a realistic and compelling manner for a decision-maker to act on an idea. This idea is of your choosing and does not need to be focused on New York City or State. Your memo should convince the decision-maker of the need to prioritize your idea and should pre-emptively address practical concerns that may arise in implementation. A specific decision-maker should be identified with a specific call to action. The chosen decision-maker does not need to be an elected official. Your position should also be identified, i.e., Policy Analyst, Legislative Assistant, etc. Any citations used should be in a consistent citation style of the student's preference (Chicago, MLA, APA).
- **The below components should be addressed in your memo:**
 1. An actionable, clear policy recommendation
 2. A decision-maker that can act on the policy recommendation
 3. Urgency/priority of the policy recommendation

4. Realistic strategy
 5. Resource requirements and rationale of acquiring them
 6. Involved stakeholders, their stances, and means of winning support
 7. Possible pushback and counterpoints
- **Grading:** Your proposed policy idea will either be accepted, rejected, or accepted with required changes. If your memo is rejected, you will need to prepare a new proposal for the second memo. You will receive written feedback on your first submission with specific critiques about what to address and improve in the longer, final paper. This is intended to follow the decision-making process of an actual government entity reviewing a policy proposal.

Final Policy Memo (40%) due March 7, 11:59pm EST.

- Please write a (up to five-page (excluding citations), single-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12) action plan, elaborating on your original idea and discussing a variety of operational, financial, political, and other considerations that would need to be addressed for your idea to be put into practice. The idea is to be thoughtful and practical about answering any concerns the policymaker might have and showing them in a believable manner that your idea is the right way to go. *Keep in mind feedback given from the first memo and address any concerns that may have been flagged.* Any citations used should be in a consistent citation style of the student's preference (Chicago, MLA, APA).
- **Grading:** Your proposed action plan will be graded according to your ability to provide a realistic and actionable plan. This is intended to follow the decision-making process of an actual government entity reviewing a policy proposal.

Late Submission Policy for Assignments

Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, out of respect to those who abide by deadlines despite equally hectic schedules. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized 20% per 24-hour period.

Overview of the Semester

- Week 1: **Pre-K for All** (*January 25*)
- Week 2: **COVID-19 Pandemic** (*February 1*)
- Week 3: **Community Mental Health** (*February 8*)
- Week 4: **Guaranteed Health Care** (*February 15*)
- Week 5: **Addressing Homelessness** (*February 22*)
- Week 6: **Policing Reform** (*March 1*)
- Week 7: **Climate Change** (*March 8*)

**Reading lists may change*

Course Readings & Assignments

WEEK 1: PRE-K FOR ALL

- **Policy Idea:**

- **Read:** October 4, 2012, The New York Times “[Higher Taxes in de Blasio’s Schools Push.](#)” ○ **Read:** October 9, 2012, New York Post “[Mayor: Rich tax a rule of ‘dumb’](#)” ○ **Read:** January 21, 2014, The New York Times “[Pre-K Plan Puts Cuomo at Odds With de Blasio on Funding](#)”
- **Launch and Implementation:**
 - **Watch:** July 31, 2014, “[#ReturntoSchool2020 Pre-K for All](#)” ○ **Watch:** September 3, 2014, New York Times, “[D-Day for Pre-K](#)” ○ **Read:** May 24, 2015, Crawford, Susan P. and Lader, Mary-Catherine and Smith, Maria, “[On the Road to ‘Pre-K for All’: The Launch of UPK in New York City.](#)” Berkman Center Research Publication No. 2015-9, **Pgs. 1-12, 22-26, 29-31** ○ **Read:** April 3, 2014, New York Amsterdam News “[State Legislator Oks Pre-K](#)”
 - **Read:** August 28, 2014, The New York Times “[In First Year of Pre-K Expansion, a Rush to Beat the School Bell](#)”
 - **Read:** September 4, 2014, The Official Website of the City of New York “[New York City Launches Historic Expansion of Pre-K to More Than 51,000 Children](#)”
- **Results:**
 - **Read:** February 16, 2016, The New York Times “[How New York made Pre-K a Success](#)” ○ **Read:** September 7, 2017, The New Yorker, “[The Lessons of Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Universal Pre- K Initiative](#)” ○ **Read:** March 2019, Kai Hong, Kacie Dragan, Sherry Glied, “[Seeing and hearing: The impacts of New York City’s universal pre-kindergarten program on the health of low-income children](#)”, Journal of Health Economics, Volume 64, **Pages 93107**, ISSN 0167-6296 ○ **Read:** August 22, 2019, NYC.gov, “[Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza Celebrate Gains for NYC Students on State Exams.](#)” ○ **Read:** February 14, 2020, NYC.gov, “[Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza Celebrate Success on National Evaluation Systems of Pre-K for All.](#)”
- **NYU Related Pre-K Materials:**
 - **Reference:** <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/research-alliance/research/projects/pre-k-all-new-york-city>
 - **Reference:** <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ejroc/early-childhoodeducation>

WEEK 2: COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- **Pandemic Lockdown:**
 - **Listen:** March 13, 2020, WNYC [Ask the Mayor Interview](#)

- **Read:** March 17, 2020, The New York Times, “[Drastic ‘Shelter in Place’ May Be Next for N.Y.C. to Combat Coronavirus](#)” ○ **Read:** March 20, 2020, Bloomberg Law, “[De Blasio Insists on NYC Shelter-in-Place Order; Cuomo Resists](#)” ○ **Read:** December 9, 2020, Politico, “[School districts slow to follow New York City’s lead on reopening schools](#)” ○ **Read:** September 13, 2021, The New York Times, “[From shutdown to reopening: Here’s a look at N.Y.C. schools’ trek through the pandemic](#)”
- **COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate:**
 - **Read:** October 4, 2021, Chalkbeat, “[As vaccine mandate kicks in, 95% of NYC schools staff have received COVID shots](#)”
 - **Read:** October, 20, 2021, PBS News Hours, “[NYC requiring vaccine for cops, firefighters, city workers](#)”
 - **Read:** October 28, 2021, NPR article, “[NYC firefighters protest at the mayor’s home over vaccine mandate as deadline looms](#)”
 - **Watch:** November 1, 2021, CBSN New York Press Conference “[Mayor De Blasio’s COVID Briefing As Vaccine Mandate Begins](#)” ○ **Read:** December 9, 2021, Politico, “[De Blasio imposes sweeping vaccine requirement on New York businesses](#)”
- **Pandemic Recovery:**
 - **Read:** March 4, 2022, NYC.gov, “[City’s COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign Has Prevented an Estimated 48,000 Deaths, 300,000 Hospitalizations, and 1.9 Million Cases](#)” ○ **Read:** March 11, 2022, Daily News, “[A heartfelt goodbye to the Test & Trace Corps: They were empathy warriors](#)” ○ **Read:** March 22, 2021, NY Post, “[What I learned as a COVID-19 contact tracer in NYC](#)”
 - **Read:** April 2022, NYC Public Health Corps “[COVID-19 Health Equity Through Collective Action Phase 1 Impact Report: July 2021 to January 2022](#)”

WEEK 3: COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

- **Launch and Implementation:**
 - **Watch:** November 23, 2015, NY1 “[Thrive NYC: An \\$850 Million Overhaul of the City’s Mental Health Services](#)”
 - **Review:** (website) ThriveNYC “[A Roadmap for Mental Health for All](#)” ○ **Read:** March 22, 2019, New York Times, “[Chirlane McCray, de Blasio’s Wife, Is Questioned Over His ‘Revolutionary’ \\$1 Billion Mental Health Plan](#)” ○ **Read:** June 2019, American Journal of Public Health, “[ThriveNYC: Delivering on](#)”

[Mental Health](#)” ○ **Review:** February 2017, New York City Independent Budget Office, “[City-Funded Spending Drives New & Growing Programs Under the Mayor’s ThriveNYC Initiative](#)”

- **Reflection and Evaluation:**

- **Read:** September 2021, Office of Community Mental Health Chapter of Mayor’s Management Report, “[Expanding Community Based Mental Health Services and Support](#)” ○ **Read:** December 29, 2021, New York Daily News, “[\\$1B later and little to show for it, NYC’s mental health initiative proved disappointing: ‘We didn’t do a good job’](#)”
- **Read:** December 31, 2021, Daily News, “[Readers sound off on mental health services, the Bible and going vegan](#)”
- **Read:** McCray, Chirlane, [Consumer and Family Perspectives to Achieve Mental Health Equity](#) ○ **Review:** June 30, 2020, [NYC Government NYC WELL evaluation](#) ○ **Review:** (website) [Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health, Progress](#) ○ **Review:** (website) [Community Mental Health Data Dashboard](#) ○ **Review:** (website) [Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health news](#) ○ **Review:** (website) [Mental Health First Aid USA](#)

- **International Practices:**

- **Read:** August 2, 2016, The Guardian, “[What can the UK learn from New York’s approach to mental health?](#)”
- **Read:** July 4, 2017, Mayor of London, “[Mayor launches Thrive LDN to challenge mental health stigma](#)”
- **Review:** December 2022, [Thrive Edinburgh Adult Health and Social Care Progress](#)

WEEK 4: GUARANTEED HEALTH CARE

- **The Challenge:**

- **Read: October 30, 2020** Zieff, G., Kerr, Z. Y., Moore, J. B., & Stoner, L. (2020). [Universal Healthcare in the United States of America: A Healthy Debate](#). *Medicina (Kaunas, Lithuania)*, 56(11), 580.
- **Read:** November 6, 2020, Kaiser Family Foundation, “[Key Facts about the Uninsured Population](#)”

- **California Model:**

- **Read:** [Dr Mitchell Katz Bio](#) ○ **Review:** August 2011, [Evaluation of Health San Francisco](#)

- Read: September 2018, Health Affairs Volume 37, Issue 9. “[Universal Health Care: Lessons from San Francisco](#)” Pages 1376-1382 by Ken Jacobs and Laurel Lucia
- **Implementation in NYC:**
 - **Read:** February 21, 2018, City & State NY, “[NYC looks to San Francisco as a model for universal health care](#)”
 - **Watch:** January 8, 2019 CBS New York, “[De Blasio Guaranteed Health Care Announcement](#)”
 - **Read:** January 9, 2019, City&State New York, “[A breakdown of New York City’s new ‘universal health care’ plan](#)”
 - **Read:** January 9, 2019, Vox, “[Bill de Blasio’s plan to guarantee health care for every New Yorker, explained](#)”
 - **Read:** February 1, 2019, The Lancet, “[NYC guarantees health care to all](#)”, Volume 393, Issue 10169 ○ **Read:** February 26, 2022, “[NYC Care Reaches Major Milestone: 100,000TH Member Enrolled in Health Care Access Program, Credits Low-Cost and Free Services With Improving His Overall Quality of Life](#)” ○ **Read:** [Increasing health care access in New York City: Lessons from NYC Care](#), J. Jiménez, M. Kress, T. Long, M. Katz
 - **Review:** [NYC Cares website](#) ○ **Review:** [Metroplus Website](#)

WEEK 5: ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

- **Read:** 2017, NYC.gov, “[Turning the Tide on Homelessness](#)”
- **Read:** 2019, NYC.gov, “[The Journey Home](#)”
- **Read:** March 2022, Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, “[Family Homelessness in New York City: What the Adams Administration Can Learn from Previous Mayoralities](#)”
- **Street Homelessness:**
 - **Read:** April 5, 2016, The Official Website of the City of New York, “[Mayor de Blasio Announces Home-Stat Program Fully Operational](#)” ○ **Read:** December 21, 2016, New York Government, “[Home-Stat Initiative Houses Almost 700 Formerly Street Homeless New Yorkers](#)” ○ **Read:** December 17, 2019, New York Government “[Mayor de Blasio Announces](#)

[Plan That Will End Long-Term Street Homelessness in New York](#)” ○ **Read:** December 2021, [All Hands on Deck: A Transformative Interagency Model for Improving Street Conditions in New York City](#)

WEEK 6: POLICING REFORM

- **Neighborhood Policing:**

- **Read:** June 25, 2015, NYC.gov, “[Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Bratton Unveil New, Groundbreaking Neighborhood Policing Vision](#)” ○ **Read:** August 17, 2016, The New York Times, “[Community Policing Expands in New York, but Some Question if It Works](#)” ○ **Watch:** March 25, 2017, [NYPD Neighborhood Policing in Bedford–Stuyvesant's 79 Precinct](#) ○ **Watch:** April 6, 2017, [NYPD Neighborhood Policing in the Rockaways](#) ○ **Watch:** February 6, 2018, New York City Police Foundation, “[BuildtheBlock-Police](#)” ○ **Read:** October 22, 2018, The Official Website of the City of New York, “[Neighborhood Policing Now in Every Neighborhood in New York City](#)” ○ **Read:** October 23, 2019, NYC.gov, “[NYPD Unveils First-of-its-Kind Community Center in East New York](#)” <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nypd/news/pr1023/nypdfirst-of-its-kind-community-center-east-new-york#/0> ○ **Read:** NYC.gov, Neighborhood Policing Study Community Survey “[Rand Corporation Community Survey \(2020-2021\)](#)”

- **Police Force De-escalation Training:**

- **Read:** December 4, 2014, The New York Times, “[Mayor de Blasio Announces Retraining of New York Police](#)” ○ **Read:** December 4, 2014, The Guardian, “[NYPD officers to undergo retraining in use of force following Garner death](#)” ○ **Read:** May 9, 2019, The New York Times “[Despite Eric Garner and ‘I Can’t Breathe,’ Chokeholds Still Used](#)” ○ **Read:** August 22, 2019, PBS News “[Where Eric Garner died, changes in NYPD policing win little applause](#)”

- **Stop-and-Frisk:** ○ Review: 2021, NYCLU, “[Stop-And-Frisk Data](#)”

- **George Floyd Protests:**

- **Read:** December 2020, New York City Department of Investigation, “[Investigation into NYPD Response to the George Floyd Protest](#),” Pgs. 1-5 ○ **Watch:** December 18, 2020, NYC Mayor’s Office, “[Mayor de Blasio releases video supporting DOI investigation of NYPD protest response](#)”

- **Civilian Concerns:**

- **Review:** 2021, “[Disciplinary Matrix Memorandum of Understanding](#)” ○ **Read:** March 5, 2021, “[NYC Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Draft](#)”

Plan,” Pgs. 3-7 ○ **Read:** February 8, 2021, Police1 by Lexipol, “[NYPD, civilian review board agree to disciplinary matrix](#)”

WEEK 7: CLIMATE CHANGE

- **OneNYC Plan:**
 - **Review:** (website) [OneNYC 2050](#)
 - **Review:** City of New York, “[2021 Progress Report: Delivering on the Green New Deal](#)”
- **Divestment from Fossil Fuels:**
 - **Read:** January 15, 2021, New York City Comptroller “[Mayor de Blasio, Comptroller Stringer, and Trustees Announce Estimated \\$4 Billion Divestment from Fossil Fuels](#)” ○ **Read:** December 2020, The New York Times, “[New York’s \\$226 Billion Pension Fund Is Dropping Fossil Fuel Stocks](#)”
 - **Read:** January 8, 2018, CBS news, “[Pension funds in NYC taking steps to divest fossil fuels](#)”
- **Clean Building Requirements:** ○ **Read:** NYC.gov, [Local Law 97](#)
 - **Read:** April 18, 2019, CNBC “[New York City embraces pillar of AOC’s Green New Deal, passing building emissions bill](#)” ○ **Read:** April 18, 2019, Green Tech Media, “[New York City Set to Pass Ambitious Energy Efficiency Mandate](#)” ○ **Read:** December 22, 2021, NYC.gov, “[Mayor de Blasio Signs Landmark Bill to Ban Combustion of Fossil Fuels in New Buildings](#)”
 - **Read:** December 15, 2021, The New York Times, “[N.Y.C.’s Gas Ban Takes Fight Against Climate Change to the Kitchen](#)”
- **Green Infrastructure:**
 - **Read:** September 20, 2017, The Official Website of the City of New York, “[Leading the Charge: Mayor Announces Fast-Charging EV Hubs in All 5 Boroughs](#)” ○ **Read:** September 20, 2017, New York Post, “[De Blasio wants to install 1,000 electric-car charging stations by 2020](#)”

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 Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (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.

NYU’s Wellness Exchange

NYU’s Wellness Exchange 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.