



NYU

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

COURSE INFORMATION

- Class Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 6:45pm – 8:25pm
- Room 304, 194 Mercer St

**CORE-GP 1022 – Sec 004
Introduction to Public Policy
FALL 2023**

INSTRUCTOR

- Name & Email: Julia Konrad; jk6957@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: By appointment (preferred: Mondays, 5pm-7pm, [sign up here](#))

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.

REQUIRED VIDEOS

- [Intro to Public Policy - Course Objectives](#)
- [Intro to Public Policy - Course Components](#)

REQUIRED TEXTS

None. All are readings available on Brightspace unless otherwise indicated. There will be a small fee associated with some of the cases we will discuss in class. You will have to access these online.

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

System Requirements

This course will use a Slack channel ([linked here](#)) to host our discussion board. You'll use this message board to post your required weekly pre-class posts, to ask general questions about the course, to share relevant articles, and to create community with us all. To use Slack, I recommend downloading the [desktop version](#).

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS/GRADED COMPONENTS:

Class Participation (5%)

Students are expected to attend each session and actively participate in class. You should be prepared to share your interpretations (and critiques!) of our readings, and ask questions related to the topic of the day. I strongly encourage you to draw connections between the topics of our course and current events, as well as your own professional experiences. 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. There are university-sanctioned reasons for being absent (e.g., illness, death in the family, religious observance, or work), but otherwise, I expect you will join class on time and be prepared for our discussion each week.

Discussion Posts (5%) and Extended Reading Response (10%)

Throughout the semester, you will be required to respond to weekly reading prompts on our discussion board. Your posts should directly address the content in that week's readings. Posts should be at least one full paragraph and no more than two in length. Posts should directly address that week's prompt. You are encouraged to build off your classmates' contributions. These responses are due by Tuesday at noon before each week's lecture so that we all have time to review the week's posts before class on Wednesday evening. Because life happens, you are permitted two weeks of "skips" for which you do not need to write a post. You do not need to let me know in advance.

Additionally, you will complete one extended reading response based on one week's materials. This reading response should be one-page (single-spaced). Your response should address that week's key ideas, make connections to earlier class topics, and raise any questions these readings posed for you. The reading response is due by 11:59pm on the Tuesday before that week's class. You will submit your assignment on Brightspace, where you will find a grading rubric and example responses. On the day of your reading response, it is expected you will help facilitate our discussion. You can sign up for the week of your reading response at [this link](#).

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.

Op-Ed (15%), Stakeholder Analysis (20%), Options Memo (20%), and Strategy Memo (20%)

Your Teaching Assistant will present on each of these assignments in your recitation section. You will receive due dates and deliverables for these assignments in your recitation.

RE-GRADING ASSIGNMENTS

If you would like a re-grade of an assignment, you should first speak with your TA. If you would like further guidance after that, please email Professor John Gershman with your reasons for a re-grade, along with a copy of the original submission and its rubric. You should send that email within two weeks of receiving your initial grade. Professor Gershman will re-grade the entire assignment—which may result in a lower or higher grade than the original grade—within one week of receiving your re-grade letter. If appropriate, he may ask you to make some modifications to your work.

GENERAL VS. INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

If you have general questions about our course, lecture, or readings, please post those questions on our Slack channel on the “Course-Questions” channel so that your classmates can share in the response. For individual questions about the course lectures or university-approved absences, please email Julia. For individual questions about the course recitation or assignments, please email your assigned Teaching Assistant.

Julia and the Teaching Assistants will make every effort to respond to emails within twenty-four hours after an email 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 additional guidance on effective presentations, see Edward Tufte, **The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint**, and **Better Presentations** by Jonathan Schwabish. You can also email your assigned workshop consultant, your assigned teaching assistant, or meet with Julia during office hours 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 or other obligations in order 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 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](#).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Professors John Gershman, Maia Woluchem, and Reed Jordan for their assistance in developing this course.

OVERVIEW OF THE SEMESTER

- **Week 1 (September 6):** Why study public policy?
- **Week 2 (September 13):** Ethics and policymaking
 - **NOTE:** This lecture will be held remotely, on Zoom.
- **Week 3 (September 20):** Where states come from
- **Week 4 (September 27):** Powering and puzzling
- **Week 5 (October 4):** Paradoxes and path dependence
- **Week 6 (October 11):** Legislation
- **Week 7 (October 18):** Strategic litigation
- **Week 8 (October 25):** Rulemaking, regulations, and agencies
- **Week 9 (November 1):** Agenda setting and framing
- **Week 10 (November 8):** Advocacy strategy
- **Week 11 (November 15):** Policy design
- **NO CLASS on November 22**
- **Week 12 (November 29):** Policy implementation
- **Week 13 (December 6):** Evidence-based policymaking
- **Week 14 (December 13):** How policy makes politics

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Why Study Public Policy? – September 6

Readings:

- Ezra Klein interviews Heather McGhee (2021). "What 'Drained- Pool' Politics Costs America." The Ezra Klein Show. (1 hour, 8 mins)
 - [Listen](#)
 - OR [read the transcript](#)
- Desmond, M. (2023). "America Is In A Disgraced Class Of Its Own." The New York Times. (3 pages)
- Policymaking case study: Artificial Intelligence
 - Samuel, S. (2022). "Why it's so damn hard to make AI unfair and unbiased." Vox. (11 pages)
 - Chiang, T. (2023). "Will A.I. Become The New McKinsey?" The New Yorker. (11 pages)

[REMOTE] Week 2: Ethics and Policymaking - September 13

NOTE: This session will be held remotely on Zoom. You can find the meeting link on the Zoom tab of our Brightspace page.

Readings:

- Sullivan, E., and Segers, M. (2007). Ethical Issues and Public Policy. In Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods. New York: CRC Press. (18 pages)
- Srinivasan, A. (2015). "Stop the Robot Apocalypse: The New Utilitarians." London Review of Books. (9 pages)
- Fink, S. (2020). "U.S. Civil Rights Office Rejects Rationing Medical Care Based on Disability, Age." The New York Times. (2 pages)

- Matthews, D. (2022). "The tricky business of putting a dollar value on a human life." Vox. (7 pages)

Week 3: Where States Come From - September 20

Readings:

- Mill, J.S. (1859). On Liberty. Selected excerpts.
- Mishra, P. (2020). "Grand Illusions." The New York Review of Books. (8 pages).
- Azari, J. (2019). "It's the Institutions, Stupid." Foreign Affairs 98: 4. (8 pages).
- Weaver, V. and Prowse, G. (2020). "Racial Authoritarianism in U.S. democracy." Science. (3 pages)
- Maciag, M. (2019). "Addicted to Fines." Governing. (21 pages)

Week 4: Powering and Puzzling – September 27

Readings:

- Crosby, B. and Brinkerhoff, D. "Stakeholder Analysis." (7 pages)
- 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.
- Sabatier, P. A. (1988). "An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy Learning Therein." Policy Sciences 21:2-3. (32 pages)
- Houser, E.H. (2018). Combat and Collaboration in Seattle's Historic Minimum Wage Debate. Evans School of Public Policy, University of Washington. (22 pages)

Week 5: Paradoxes and Path Dependence – October 4

Readings:

- Stone, D. Introduction and Chapter 1 in Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. (15 + 18 pages)
- Pierson, P. (2000). "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." The American Political Science Review 94:2 (16 pages)
- Standage, T. (2021). "The lost history of the electric car." The Guardian. (12 pages)
- Ulrich, L. (2023). "Electric Vehicle Tax Credit Rules Create 'Chaos for Consumers'." The New York Times. (4 pages)
- Leighton (2021). "Overcoming behavioural bias is key to electric vehicle uptake." Automotive World. (5 pages)

Week 6: Legislation - October 11

Readings:

- Civics 101. Starter Kit: How a Bill (really) Becomes a Law. <https://www.civics101podcast.org/civics-101-episodes/howabill> (24 minutes audio)
- Olson, M. (1971). The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (31 pages)
- Jenkins-Smith, H. C., Nohrstedt, D., Weible, C. M., and Ingold, K. (2017). The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Overview of the Research Program. In Theories of the Policy Process, eds. Weible, C. M. & Sabatier, P. A.. Taylor & Francis Group. (25 pages)
- Summers, J. (2021). "Progressives Gear Up For Broad New Push On Climate Action."

- NPR WNYC. (6 pages)
- Office of Senator Ed Markey (2023). "Markey and Ocasio-Cortez Reintroduce Green New Deal Resolution." (2 pages)
- Haiar, J. (2023). "Unusual alliances emerge amid opposition to eminent domain for carbon pipelines." Nebraska Examiner. (5 pages)

Week 7: Strategic Litigation – October 18

Readings:

- Law School for Everyone. "[Episode 1: Litigation and the American Legal System.](#)" (34 minutes video)
- [Federal Courts 101.](#) (13 minutes)
- WNYC On The Media (2015). "Plaintiff Shopping." (11 minutes audio or transcript)
- More Perfect (2017). "The Architect." (35 minutes audio or transcript)
- Goldstein, E., and Gutkin, L. (2023). "Did Colleges Discriminate Against Asians? The Courts Didn't Say." The Chronicle of Higher Education. (14 pages)

Week 8: Rulemaking, Regulations, and Agencies - October 25

Readings:

- Garvey, T. (2017). "A Brief Overview of Rulemaking and Judicial Review". Congressional Research Service. (20 pages)
- Yackee, S. W. (2005). "Sweet-Talking the Fourth Branch: The Influence of Interest Group Comments on Federal Agency Rulemaking." Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory. (19 pages)
- Field, K. (2023). "A Crusade to End 'Reverse Discrimination'". The Chronicle of Higher Education (18 pages)
- Davenport, C. (2021). "Restoring Environmental Rules Rolled Back by Trump Could Take Years." The New York Times. (4 pages)

Week 9: Agenda Setting and Framing – November 1

Readings:

- Stone, D. A. (1989). "Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas." Political Science Quarterly 104:2. (21 pages)
- Downs, Anthony. 1972. "Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle." Public Interest 28: 38–50. (13 pages)
- 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.
- Ball, M. (2012). "The Marriage Plot: Inside This Year's Epic Campaign for Gay Equality." The Atlantic. (42 pages)
- Richtel, M. (2016). "It's No Accident: Why Advocates Want to Speak of Car 'Crashes' Instead." The New York Times. (2 pages)

Week 10: Advocacy Strategy - November 8

Readings:

- Alinsky, S. D. (1971). Tactics. In Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals. (40 pages)

- Kingdon, J. W. (1995). Chapter 4: Processes: Origins, Rationality, Incrementalism, and Garbage Cans and Chapter 9: Wrapping Things Up. in *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. New York: Longman. (36 pages)
- Hayward, C. R. (2020). "Disruption: What is it good for?" *The Journal of Politics* 82:2.
- HKS Case Study (2020). "Strategic Moves & Tough Choices: The Campaign Behind New Jersey's 'Ban the Box' Law." (24 pages)

Week 11: Policy Design - November 15

Readings:

- Mullainathan, S (2017). "Get Ready for Technological Upheaval by Expecting the Unimagined." *The New York Times*. (2 pages)
- Weimer, D. L. (1992). "Claiming races, broiler contracts, heresthetics, and habits: ten concepts for policy design." *Policy Sciences* 25. (20 pages)
- Shafir, E. (2011). "Living Under Scarcity." TEDxMidAtlantic. (14 minutes video)
- Mullainathan, S., and Shafir, E. (2013). *The Bandwidth Tax*. In *Scarcity*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. (15 pages)
- Sunstein, C. R. (2013). *Plate, Not Pyramids*. In *Simpler: The Future of Government*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (13 pages)
- Edin, K.J. and Shafer, H. L. (2016). "20 Years Since Welfare 'Reform'". *The Atlantic*. (9 pages)

November 22 – NO CLASS

Week 12: Policy Implementation – November 29

Readings:

- Lipsky, M. (2010). Preface. In *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (10 pages)
- Sabel, C. (2012). "Rethinking Street-Level Bureaucrats." (33 pages)
- Zacka, B. (2017). "Bureaucrats to the Rescue: Are Bureaucracies a Public Good?" *Boston Review*. (9 pages)
- Bagley, N. (2023). "How to Fix the Government". *The Atlantic*. (5 pages)
- Smith, R. H. and Poblete, G. (2023). "Your Guide to Legal Cannabis in New York City." *The City*. (12 pages)

Week 13: Evidence-Based Policymaking – December 6

Readings:

- Callen, M., Khan, A. Khwaja, A. I., Liaqat, A. and Myers, E. (2017). "These 3 Barriers Make it Hard for Policymakers to Use the Evidence that Development Researchers Produce." *Monkeycage* (Washington Post). (3 pages)
- Ludwig, Jens, Jeffrey R. Kling, and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2011. "Mechanism Experiments and Policy Evaluations." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 25(3): 17-38. (35 pages)
- Klein, E. (2014). "How Politics Makes Us Stupid." *Vox*. (14 pages)
- Evidence-Based Policymaking Collaborative. 2016. "Principles of Evidence-Based Policymaking." *Urban Institute*. (10 pages)
- Oppel Jr., R. A. and Patel, J. K. (2019). "[One Lawyer, 194 Felony Cases, and No Time](#)." *The New York Times*.
- Alliance for Quality Education (2023). "[Educational Equity](#)."

Week 14: How Policy Makes Politics – December 13

Readings:

- Moynihan, Donald and Joe Soss. 2014. "Policy Feedback and the Politics of Administration." *Public Administration Review*. 74(3): 320-332. (11 pages)
- Mettler, Suzanne. 2010. "Reconstituting the Submerged State: The Challenges of Social Policy Reform in the Obama Era," *Perspectives on Politics* 8(3): 803-824. (19 pages)
- Rutenberg, J. (2015). "A Dream Undone." *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*.
- Rutenberg, J. (2015). "Nine Years Ago Republicans Favored Voting Rights. What Happened?" *The New York Times Magazine*.