## Public Policy

## HOD 2700-07

## Spring 2022 Syllabus

Meeting time and location:

Monday, 8:00-10:50 am, 6 Magnolia Circle 203

**Instructor:**

Carolyn Heinrich, Professor of Public Policy, Education and Economics and Department Chair,

Leadership, Policy and Organizations

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Office location: 202D Payne Hall

Office hours: 11:00 am-noon Mondays or by appointment; meetings via Zoom are welcome

TA: Joe Behrendt, joseph.s.behrendt@vanderbilt.edu

**Course description**

This course focuses on how public policy is made and executed in the United States. We will study the foundations of public policy; the policy process and factors that influence policymaking at the national, state, and local levels; federalism and intergovernmental relations; regulation and rulemaking; the practice and consequences of public policy, and the substance of current public policy issues. In doing so, we will also explore a range of public-policy making entities and arenas in which policies are implemented, including local government agencies, state legislatures and state agencies, courts of varied jurisdiction, the U.S. Congress, the President, and national executive branch agencies, as well as the many organizations that partner with government in policy implementation, such as nonprofit and community-based organizations, business and trade groups, religious organizations, and others. By the end of this course, you will have a comprehensive understanding of public policy and will better understand how and why public officials and others respond to public problems in the way they do, and how you can engage in these processes to help improve our world.

**Texts and materials**

Bardach, E., and E. Patashnik. (2019). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press. (Referred to as BP in course outline/readings)

Rinfret, S.R, Scheberle, D, and M.C. Pautz. (2019). *Public policy: A concise introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press. (Referred to as RSP in course outline/readings)

Other required readings are posted on Brightspace and listed below by class meeting.

**Course requirements and evaluation**

*Course grades will be based on the following*:

Attendance and participation in weekly class discussions and (9) assignments: 5% for assignments #1-8, 10% for assignment #9 (50% total)

Midterm exam (in-class, closed book): 25%

Final policy brief and in-class debate/discussion: 25%

*Class preparation:*

Your success in this class will be based on two key things: 1) completing *all* of the required readings (as listed below by class meeting) *in advance of each class meeting*, and 2) your preparation for and engagement in class discussions.

The course and the assignments are structured the way they are because I care most that learn and *get excited* about learning this material and see its applications to our world and your own life. One half of your grade is ultimately based on the weekly assignments that are designed to help you apply and deepen your understanding of the concepts and material presented in the text and readings. If you do not read the material assigned on the syllabus, you will not do well on the in-class midterm exam, and you will be less well-equipped to engage in the class discussions. *I also encourage you to bring in examples of news and current events that relate to the topic of our class meetings, as this will be another engaging way to facilitate your class participation.*

*Grading of the nine weekly assignments and class participation*:

Weekly assignments must be submitted to Brightspace before the start of the class meeting. Please bring a copy of your assignment with you to class so that you have it for discussion. Broad grade categories are as follows:

A (5 pts.): Assignment is completed on time and fully addresses the questions/specifications and the student participates in class discussion

A-/B+ (4 pts.): Assignment is completed on time and fully addresses the questions/specifications but the student does not participate in the class discussion

B (3 pts.): Assignment is completed and the student participates in class discussion but it does not fully address the questions/specifications or it is submitted late (after the start of class)

B-/C+ (2 pts.): Assignment is incomplete yet the student participates in class discussion

C (1 pt.): Assignment is incomplete and the student does not participate in class discussion

F (0 pts.): Assignment is not submitted.

+/- may be also be added to grades based on the quality of writing, the quality of the overall response to the assignment, and the quality of participation in the class discussion.

John Bryson (U. of Minnesota) offers four “hallmarks of good participation” in class discussions that I recommend to you: (1) risk-taking (i.e., presenting an opposing view or a different interpretation of readings/information); (2) listening (i.e., trying to understand what others are saying and why they are saying it); (3) bringing in your own personal experiences when relevant to the discussions; and (4) monitoring your own participation in terms of “airtime” and quality.

*Final policy brief and in-class debate:*

In week 12, we will undertake a policy brief writing exercise in class to help you prepare for the final policy brief assignment/assessment. You will be provided with a policy brief writing guide and a grading rubric and will work in groups to evaluate an existing policy brief using this same rubric that I will use in grading your final assignments. We will discuss your assessments in class, as well as the substantive topic of the policy brief, Medicaid expansion.

The final policy brief that you will each independently write as your final exam/assessment will be due in the final class meeting on April 25. We will have a discussion on the topic of the memo—child care allowances/tax credits—in the final class, so the final assignment must be completed by the time class begins on April 25.

**Honor Code:**

All work submitted in this course is governed by the Vanderbilt University Honor Code, found in the student handbook: https://www.vanderbilt.edu/student\_handbook/the-honor-system/. If you have any doubts about how the Honor Code applies to your work in this class, please request clarification. Uncertainty about application of the Honor Code does not excuse a violation.

**Classroom Accommodations:**

Vanderbilt is committed to equal opportunity for students with disabilities, as am I. If you need course accommodations due to a disability, please contact VU Student Access Services ([https://www.vanderbilt.edu/student-access/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fw7jsnd%2Fgboxf7%2F0u4abo&data=02%7C01%7Ccarolyn.j.heinrich%40vanderbilt.edu%7Cf381d67076554082dfc408d844734726%7Cba5a7f39e3be4ab3b45067fa80faecad%7C0%7C0%7C637334609187957029&sdata=0nXgt%2FvBNFoH8pvPneWKkPn2rMWt9fiMRoG90t%2F51Eg%3D&reserved=0)) to initiate the process. After SAS has notified me of relevant accommodations, we will discuss how these accommodations may best be approached in this class, and I will facilitate the accommodations.  
  
**Mental Health & Wellness:**

If you are experiencing undue stress that may be interfering with your ability to perform academically, Vanderbilt’s Student Care Network offers a range of support services. The Office of Student Care Coordination (OSCC) is the central and first point of contact to help you navigate and connect to appropriate resources. You can schedule an appointment with the OSCC at [https://www.vanderbilt.edu/carecoordination/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fw7jsnd%2Fgboxf7%2Fgn5abo&data=02%7C01%7Ccarolyn.j.heinrich%40vanderbilt.edu%7Cf381d67076554082dfc408d844734726%7Cba5a7f39e3be4ab3b45067fa80faecad%7C0%7C0%7C637334609187957029&sdata=zCgWUF3%2F8uU7h5IaZkDGXcT3fXiVqZdKPQ%2BIXNzJwYM%3D&reserved=0) or call 615-343-WELL. You can find a calendar of services at [https://www.vanderbilt.edu/studentcarenetwork/satellite-services/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fw7jsnd%2Fgboxf7%2Fwf6abo&data=02%7C01%7Ccarolyn.j.heinrich%40vanderbilt.edu%7Cf381d67076554082dfc408d844734726%7Cba5a7f39e3be4ab3b45067fa80faecad%7C0%7C0%7C637334609187967021&sdata=bC5jzouwCcvJcSjQOXeIYtCYkBB%2F6cPKhc89AWSos0A%3D&reserved=0).  
If you or someone you know needs to speak with a professional counselor immediately, the University Counseling Center offers Urgent Care Counseling. Students should call the UCC at (615) 322-2571 during office hours to speak with an urgent care clinician. You can also reach an on-call counselor after hours or on the weekends by calling (615) 322-2571 and pressing option 2 at any time. You can find additional information at [https://www.vanderbilt.edu//ucc/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fw7jsnd%2Fgboxf7%2Fc86abo&data=02%7C01%7Ccarolyn.j.heinrich%40vanderbilt.edu%7Cf381d67076554082dfc408d844734726%7Cba5a7f39e3be4ab3b45067fa80faecad%7C0%7C0%7C637334609187967021&sdata=WHbmRHpE%2F9qmBY%2FdbW%2BXq1MTSa%2BLkcwZYLRebTg0ALs%3D&reserved=0).  
 **Mandatory Reporter Obligations:**

All University faculty and administrators are mandatory reports. What this means is that all faculty, including me, must report allegations of sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence to the Title IX Coordinator. In addition, all faculty are obligated to report any allegations of discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. I am willing to discuss with you such incidents but can only do so in the context of us both understanding my reporting obligations. If you want to talk with someone in confidence, officials in the Student Health Center, the University Counseling Center, and the Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life (when acting as clergy) can maintain confidentiality. The Project Safe Center serves as the central resource for those impacted by sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence and can assist with navigating all facets of the University’s resource and support network and other processes. In addition, officials in the Project Safe Center [https://www.vanderbilt.edu/projectsafe/](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ft.e2ma.net%2Fclick%2Fw7jsnd%2Fgboxf7%2Fs07abo&data=02%7C01%7Ccarolyn.j.heinrich%40vanderbilt.edu%7Cf381d67076554082dfc408d844734726%7Cba5a7f39e3be4ab3b45067fa80faecad%7C0%7C0%7C637334609187977017&sdata=AFEn5cUv%2FkZcawmt9VHbphm%2FqdVcDHQiLoh9fBO1tUc%3D&reserved=0) have limited confidentiality, in that they must report the incidents but can do so without providing identifying information.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIRED READINGS:**

**Week 1, January 24**

**Course introduction, The Foundations of Public Policy**

RSP, Ch. 1

**Assignment #1**: Think of a policy problem that you see is being defined in different ways by different groups. In one single-spaced page, describe the problem and the different ways it is being defined. Come prepared to discuss it.

**Week 2, January 31**

**The Policy Process and Policy Theories**

RSP, Ch. 2

A Prescription for Change: The 2010 Overhaul of the American Health Care System, Harvard KSG Case Study

* While lawmaking is often slow and arduous work, involving many actors and encouraging more participation in the policymaking process may improve representation and lead to better policies and laws. Based on this case study, do you agree with this statement? Who had power and influence over the policymaking process in this case? Come prepared to discuss this case.

**Assignment #2**: Watch this YouTube video on “Is Health Care a Right or Privilege?”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H13OVMbIdQ.

* Identify at least two key arguments or points that Michael Cannon (Cato Institute) and Dr. Hoangmai Pham (National Physicians Alliance) make in support of or against President Obama’s efforts to expand health coverage to all Americans. Did these arguments or points surface in the case study, “A Prescription for Change”? Respond in no more than one single-spaced page.

**Week 3, February 7**

**Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations**

RSP, Ch. 3

Read this short case study on VOTING, ELECTIONS AND US FEDERALISM: THE STATE GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE: http://50shadesoffederalism.com/case-studies/1320/#more-132

Read: Cost of Voting in the American States: 2020

Scot Schraufnagel, Michael J. Pomante II, and Quan Li

Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy 2020 19:4, 503-509

**Assignment #3**: Considering the evolving federalist system of the U.S., address the question: Should the “For the People Act” (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1/text?format=txt>) be passed into law by Congress? In one single-spaced page, write two arguments for passage of such a law and two arguments against it becoming law.

**Week 4, February 14**

**Rulemaking and Regulations**

RSP, Ch. 4

Waslin M. 2020. The Use of Executive Orders and Proclamations to Create Immigration Policy: Trump in Historical Perspective. Journal on Migration and Human Security, 8(1):54-67. doi:10.1177/2331502420906404

**Assignment #4**: You will be given an immigration related executive order or rule issued under the Trump administration to research and understand its implications. In one single-spaced page, describe what the executive order or rule mandates and its likely implications for those affected.

**Week 5, February 21**

**Civil Rights and Immigration Policy**

RSP, Ch. 8

Chishti, Gelatt & Meissner. 2021. Migration Policy Institute Policy Brief, “Rethinking the U.S. Legal Immigration System: A Policy Road Map”

**Guest speaker (9-10 am)**: Migration Policy Institute, Julia Gelatt, Senior Policy Analyst

**Week 6, February 28**

**Economic Policy and Public Budgeting**

RSP, Ch. 5

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/01/12/experts-are-finally-grasping-real-reason-inflation-now-its-time-act/?tid=ss_tw>

**Assignment #5**: Listen to (or read) this NPR podcast on inflation <https://www.npr.org/2018/03/09/592196593/the-uneven-effects-of-inflation>

In one single-spaced page, write about how inflation affects federal government efforts to establish budgetary priorities and plans for spending and how it affects your personal budgeting and spending.

**Spring break, March 7**

**Week 7, March 14**

**Crime and Public Policy**

RSP, Ch. 6

BP, pp. (Intro., 1. Define the Problem and 2. Assemble Some Evidence)

Johnson DR, Zhang L. 2020. Intrastate and Interstate Influences on the Introduction and Enactment of Campus Carry Legislation, 2004–2016. Educational Researcher, 49(2):114-124. doi:10.3102/0013189X20902121

**Assignment #6**: In no more than one single-spaced page and drawing on guidance from BP, define the problem(s) that you think campus carry legislation is intended to resolve and the evidence supporting it.

**Week 8, March 21**

**Environmental and Energy Policy**

RSP, Ch. 10

BP, pp. (3. Construct the Alternatives, 4. Select the Criteria)

Cleaning Up the “Big Dirties”: The Problem of Acid Rain, Harvard KSG Case Study

**Assignment #7:** In the case of the “Big Dirties,” what alternatives were considered for reducing sulfur dioxide emissions (that contribute to acid rain)? What criteria and values came into play as various alternatives were considered in the policymaking process and political debates? Address these questions in one single-spaced page.

**Week 9, March 28**

**Post-midterm exam**

**Week 9, April 4**

**Social Welfare and Health Care Policy**

RSP, Ch. 9

Herd, P. & Moynihan, D. “How Administrative Burdens Can Harm Health, " Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, October 2, 2020.

DOI: 10.1377/hpb20200904.405159

**Assignment #8:** Start an application for Medicaid through either the Health Insurance Marketplace or the Tennessee state Medicaid agency (TennCare): <https://www.healthcare.gov/medicaid-chip/getting-medicaid-chip/>. Document or describe any challenges you face in completing the application and how you feel going through the process in no more than one single-spaced page.

**Week 11, April 11**

**Education Policy**

RSP, Ch. 7

BP, pp. (Project the Outcomes and Confront the Tradeoffs)

https://www.sycamoreinstitutetn.org/history-k12-education-funding/

**Assignment # 9:** Listen to (or read) this NPR podcast on “The Promise and Peril of School Vouchers” and read:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickgleason/2021/08/04/children-in-18-states-will-have-more-education-options-thanks-to-2021-reforms/?sh=49a1b25d26a6>,

and watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWibEJvm8PU> (Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson Co. et al. v. Tennessee Department of Education et al.). Based on what we have observed to date, project the outcomes of Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee’s voucher (education savings account) program and describe the tradeoffs in no more than two single-spaced pages.

**Week 12, April 18**

**Putting it all together: Policy brief writing exercise (in class) and discussion**

BP, pp. (Stop, Focus, Narrow, Deepen, Decide! and Tell Your Story)

Policy brief writing guide

Evaluation of Policy Brief and Grading Rubric for Policy Briefs

Rose, Shanna. 2015. "Opting In, Opting Out: The Politics of State Medicaid Expansion" The Forum, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 63-82.

Lee & Porell. 2020. The Effect of the Affordable Care Act Medicaid Expansion on Disparities in Access to Care and Health Status. Medical Care Research and Review, 77(5):461-473.

https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/status-of-state-medicaid-expansion-decisions-interactive-map/

**Week 13, April 25**

**Final discussion and policy brief assignment on a Child Allowance or Child Tax Credit**

Shaefer, H. L., Collyer, S., Duncan, G., Edin, K., Garfinkel, I., Harris, D., Smeeding, T. M., Waldfogel, J., Wimer, C., & Yoshikawa, H. (2018). A Universal Child Allowance: A Plan to Reduce Poverty and Income Instability Among Children in the United States. *The Russell Sage Foundation journal of the social sciences: RSF*, 4(2), 22–42. <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2018.4.2.02>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2019. A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<https://doi.org/10.17226/25246>.

FAQ on the Child Care and Preschool Provisions in the Build Back Better Act,

December 15, 2021, Amanda Guarino, First Five Years Fund.

The Heritage Foundation BACKGROUNDER on the Biden Child Allowance,

No. 3636, July 8, 2021.

Guest speaker: TBA

**Week 14, May 2**

F**inal policy briefs due**