

**San José State University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**Political Science 130: Making Public Policy**  
**Spring 2018**

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**Office Hours:** Monday 1:00-2:30; Wednesday 1-2:30, and by appt.

**Class Days/Time:** Monday and Wednesday 9:00-10:15am

**Classroom:** Hugh Gillis Hall 116

**CANVAS Website:** <http://sjsu.instructure.com>

**Course Description**

Introduces students to the public policy making process in the American governing system. The politics of agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy implementation are examined. Students learn to analyze and evaluate public policy outcomes.

From a policy standpoint, the past decade has been one marked by both policy gridlock and profound change. Issues such immigration reform and an increase in the federal minimum wage remain deadlocked in a divided Congress. Yet at the same time millions of people are now receiving health care coverage as a result of the Affordable Care Act, Wall Street faces new regulations in the aftermath of the Great Recession, and the country continues to quietly revamp its energy sectors despite newfound headwinds from the Trump Administration. This is just a small sample of issues we'll cover this semester. There are plenty more.

What's important to recognize is that policy making in the U.S. is unfolding in a period of nearly unparalleled political polarization in Washington DC (and to a lesser extent many U.S. states), defined by deep ideological fault lines over the size and scope of government and questions about how best to create opportunity and economic security in contemporary American life.

The U.S. federal government is often criticized for being "out of touch." It is perhaps not a surprise, then, that we are also living in a period defined by historically low levels of trust

in government. This has important implications about who participates in the policymaking process, the policy decisions made, and who benefits and who loses. It's easy (and some would say convenient) for citizens to place blame on pusillanimous politicians governing out of their own self-interest. Yet in reality, the story of public policy making in the United States is more complicated than most want to recognize. Policy outcomes are a direct consequence of a complex set of interactions between governing institutions, interest groups, public opinion, elections (and how power is distributed), and changes in the informational, technological and contextual environment. We'll begin to see how all of this unfolds in the semester ahead.

### **Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

#### **PSPLO1: Breadth**

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

#### **PSPLO2: Application**

Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

#### **PSPLO3: Disciplinary methods**

Student should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.

#### **PSPLO4: Communication Skills**

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

#### **PSPLO5: Citizenship**

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

In this course students will:

**CLO1** Learn and apply social science theories of public policymaking and use them to explain the behavior, decisions, and outcomes of government policy (**Assessed by term paper, midterm exam; final exam**)

**CLO2** Demonstrate the ability to critically think about the politics of the policymaking process in the broader American federalist system (**Assess by midterm exam, final exam, term paper, and public policy simulation**)

**CLO3** Develop a deeper understanding of substantive policy issues in contemporary national politics (**Assessed by term paper, midterm exam; final exam, public policy simulation**).

**CLO4** Demonstrate knowledge of main components of policy analysis including policy formulation, cost/benefit analysis, and policy evaluation. (**Assessed by term paper, midterm exam; final exam; quizzes 1-6, public policy simulation**)

### **Required Texts/Readings**

- Kraft, Michael, and Scott Furlong. 2017. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. CQ Press.
- Additional required readings are also listed on the course schedule below. I also urge you to read a national newspaper several times a week (the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and the Wall Street Journal are excellent sources for in depth political and policy news. This is something you should do anyway, but since we will be discussing a variety of policy topics during the semester, keeping up with the news of the day will most certainly add to the quality of our discussions in class. The editorial pages of the New York Times and Wall Street Journal have typically polar opposite positions on economic issues. Reading these regularly will give you a sense of different ideological perspectives on economic matters. There are a variety of great news related websites out there as well. In short, keep yourself informed.

### **Course Requirements and Evaluative Criteria**

Your course grade will be determined by the following 6 components:

#### **Points Possible**

Midterm Exam	200 points
Final Exam	200 points
Quizzes* (6)	120 points
Policy Term Paper	160 points
Participation	40 points
<u>Public Policy Simulation</u>	<u>80 points</u>

**Total= 800 points**

Course Letter Grades will be assigned using the following scale:

A+=99-100%	A=93-98%	A-=90-92%	B+=87-89%
B=83-86%	B-=80-82%	C+=77-79%	C=73-76%
C-70-72%	D+=67-69%	D=63-66%	D-60-62%
F=59% or below			

## **Assignments**

### **Midterm Exam**

The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions drawn from assigned readings and lecture/discussion material. A study guide will be provided 1 week before the exam.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will be comprehensive and consist of both multiple choice and essay questions. Please note the date and time of the final exam listed on the course schedule below. A study guide will be provided 1 week before the exam.

### **Quizzes**

There will be six on-line quizzes during the semester to test your knowledge of the assigned readings and/or class material. Quiz dates are listed on the course schedule (see below).

### **Class Participation**

Participation is an important part of the course. Without participation from a broad cross section of students we all (yes, including the professor) don't learn as much. Participation can be earned in a variety of ways: Asking questions or making regular comments in class, actively participating in in-class group critical thinking exercises, and/or contributing to online discussions on the course Canvas page.

### **Term Paper**

A final policy term paper (10 pages) is required which asks students to analyze a policy area of your choice (but only after receiving approval by the professor). The paper project will unfold in what is essentially three parts. The first part is a topic paper. The second involves building and outline that will be used for the final paper. Each of these first two "mini" assignments will be graded on an "Ahead of schedule," "on track," or "get to work" basis. For those who achieve a "ahead of schedule" score on the topic and/or bibliography mini papers will see their scores increased by 5 points on the final term paper. Those who score a "get to work" will see their final scores lowered by 5 points.

## **Public Policy Simulation**

In the final three weeks of the semester, students will be participating in public policy simulation game. A separate memo detailing the requirements of this assignment will be distributed during week 6 of the semester. Simulation roles will be assigned shortly after the midterm exam.

## **Classroom Protocol and Policies**

### **Proper Use of Technology**

At times, we will be using our tablets, smartphones, and laptops to work on assignments and group projects in class. ***Aside from those times, your phones and computers need to be turned off and put away.*** In the classroom environment, texting, social networking, web searching—or any of the myriad things we all can do with our phones—hurts our ability to listen and communicate as effectively as possible. If you absolutely must use your phone, please leave the classroom. Students who violate this policy more than once will be asked to leave.

### **Email Communication**

The easiest way to contact me is via email. Please be aware though that I will not (unless in unusual circumstances) respond to email after normal working hours (Monday through Friday 8am-5pm). During busy times of the semester I receive a high volume of emails so please give me at least 24 hours to respond (not counting weekends for reasons just described) before sending me a follow up.

### **Late Policy**

Make-up exams are only given in cases of excused absences in accordance with the university's policy on excused absences. Circumstances that may lead to an excused student absence are subpoenas, jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, illness of a dependent, and bereavement for immediate family. If you are a member of a SJSU varsity intercollegiate athletic team, please provide me with your team schedule during the first week of the class.

**Papers that are turned in late will be penalized a full letter grade for every 24 hours past the original due date.** For example, a paper turned in 10 minutes past the scheduled time it was due will be marked down 1 full letter grade. This same penalty will apply to a paper turned in up to 24 hours past the original due date. For every 24 hours after that, a paper will be penalized an additional letter grade and so on until the start value is an 'F'. Please be aware of this policy and be sure to get your writing assignments turned in on time.

## **University Policies**

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs Syllabus Information web page at

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>. I want to particularly draw your attention to the university's academic integrity policy which can be found here <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>. Please note, all exams, quizzes, and writing assignments for this class must be your own original work and must follow the rules outlined in the university academic integrity policy.

**Additional Class Notes**

This is a course that covers a lot of material in a short period of time. I expect every student in class to participate by asking questions and actively participating in group and class discussions. Although attendance in the class is not mandatory it is obviously difficult to participate if you do not attend class. You each have a lot to bring into the class and the course becomes much more rewarding if you frequently participate.

For most class days, I will post on Canvas a PDF copy of Power Point slides that provide brief headings, charts/graphs, and/or outlines of the day's material. I'll do my best to post these the evening before each class. Canvas will also be used to take quizzes, read relevant newspaper articles and academic papers, and when the time comes, check your performance on the graded assignments.

Finally, I am more than happy to help answer any questions you have about the course at any time during the semester. If my office hours do not work with your schedule please don't hesitate to make an appointment with me outside of normal office hours. The best way to contact me to set up an appointment is via email. Of course, you can talk with me right before or right after class as well. This should be a fun and rewarding semester. Work hard and good luck!

**Political Science 130: Making Public Policy (spring 2018) Schedule\***

*\*Schedule is subject to change with fair notice and will be announced via email and/or in-class announcement.*

Week	Date	Topic, Readings, Assignments, and Deadlines
<b>Section I: Making Public Policy</b>		
1	1/24	Course Introduction and Overview <u>Readings</u> No Assigned Readings
2	1/29	Conceptualizing Public Policy and Understanding Reasons for Government Intervention <u>Readings</u> Kraft and Furlong chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation Opportunity: Watch the State of the Union Speech Wednesday Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, 6pm and join Canvas discussion with your reaction to the speech.</li> </ul>

	1/31	<u>Readings</u> Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, "After the Master Theory, Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis" <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> (2014)
3	2/5	Policy Actors and Institutions <u>Readings</u> Steven Teles, "Kludgeocracy: The American Way of Policy"
	2/7	<u>Readings</u> Martin Gilens, "Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness" <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> (2005) <b>Assignment: Quiz #1 posted on Canvas: due 2/12 9am</b>
4	2/12	Theories of Policy Making <u>Readings</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 3 Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, "The Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Public Policy" <i>American Political Science Review</i> (1993)
	2/14	<u>Readings</u> Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones, "Agendas and Instability in American Politics" chapters 1-2
5	2/19	Policy Instruments and Policy Alternatives <u>Readings</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 3 (pgs. 102-109)
	2/21	<u>Readings</u> John Kingdon, "Agendas Alternatives and Public Policies" Chapters 1, 8 (On Canvas) <b>Assignment: Quiz #2 posted on Canvas: due 3/8 9am</b>
<b>Section II. Public Policy Analysis</b>		
6	2/26	Introduction to Policy Analysis <u>Readings</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 4
	2/28	<u>Readings</u> Mark Kleiman, "How Not to Make a Hash out of Cannabis Legalization" <b>Assignment: Policy Topic Paper Due 11:59pm (Canvas)</b> <b>Assignment: Quiz #3 posted on Canvas: due 3/5 9am</b>
7		Public Policy Alternatives <u>Readings</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 5

	3/5  3/7	<u>Readings</u> Mark Kleiman, Angela Hawkin, and Ross Halperin, "We Don't Need to Keep Criminals in Prison to Punish Them" <i>Vox.com</i> Leon Neyfakh, "A Provocative New Plan to Reduce the Prison Population" <i>Slate.com</i>
<b>8</b>	3/12  3/14	Assessing Policy Alternatives <b>Midterm Exam</b>  <u>Reading</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 6
<b>Section III. Case Studies in Public Policy Making</b>		
<b>9</b>	3/19  3/21	Economic Policy <u>Reading</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 7  <u>Reading</u> Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson "Abandoning the Middle: The Limit of Bush Tax Cuts and the Limits of Democratic Control"
	3/26  3/28	<u>No Class: Spring Break!!</u>
<b>10</b>	4/2  4/4	Health Care <u>Reading</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 8  <u>Reading</u> Jacob Hacker, "The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Care Reform Happened" <b>Assignment: Term Outline and Bibliography Due</b> <b>Assignment Quiz #4 posted on Canvas due: 4/9 9am</b>
<b>11</b>	4/9  4/11	Climate Change and Environmental Policy <u>Reading</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 11  <u>Reading</u> Jonathan Chait "The Sunniest Climate Change Story You've Ever Read"

		<b>Assignment: Quiz #5 posted on Canvas due: 4/16 9am</b>
<b>12</b>	4/16	Immigration and Border Enforcement <u>Reading</u> Dara Lind, "What is Immigration Reform?" Vox.com (read each "card" 1-19)
	4/18	<u>Reading</u> Kraft and Furlong Chapter 12 <b>Assignment: Quiz #6 posted on Canvas due: 4/23 9am</b>
<b>13</b>	4/23	Catch Up/Preparation for Public Policy Simulation <u>Reading</u> Review simulation instructions, policy topics, and finish prepping role for simulation exercise
	4/25	Begin Public Policy Simulation <u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading
<b>14</b>	4/30	Public Policy Simulation <u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading
	5/2	<u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading <b>Assignment: Public Policy Term Paper Due 5/2 11:59pm (Canvas)</b>
<b>15</b>	5/7	Public Policy Simulation <u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading
	5/9	<u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading
<b>16</b>	5/14	Public Policy Simulation <u>Reading</u> No Assigned Reading  <b>Please Note: Final Exam Tuesday May 22, 7:15-9:30am</b>