

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY

Instructor: Dr. Simona Torotçoi

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Course schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-10:30

Course location: SR 5 Platanenstrasse 24

Office hours and individual consultations: by appointment at Kuckhoffstrasse 24, groundfloor

Credits: 8 ECTS, 4 US credits

Expected workload: 240 hours

Course Description

This course builds upon the introductory summer module and aims to introduce students to basic knowledge in public policy and engage them in learning activities which will be the foundation for their original thinking for a policy-making perspective. The course is an introductory step in preparing students for acquiring the necessary skills for further graduate level studies in the field of public policy and related areas (i.e., Political Science, International relations, Law).

Course Objectives

The course aims to:

- Introduce students to the core literature in the field
- Prepare the students for acquiring basic public policy knowledge and skills
- Familiarize students with the core frameworks for understanding public policies
- Enable the students to analyze different policy processes
- Expose students to different policy issues and debates in the field
- Prepare the students for acquiring the necessary graduate level public policy knowledge and skills
- Teach the students critical reading and to encourage them to think in theoretical and analytical terms

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able:

- To demonstrate understanding of the relationship between public policy, public administration and political science
- To articulate core concepts, principles, theories and approaches in the field
- To analyze actors, institutions and their behavior in the policy processes
- To independently conduct analyses of policy issues

Course Structure

The course is structured in two main blocks. The first block of the course focuses on public policy as a field of study and discipline, how different or similar it is with regards to other fields, why students chose this subject of study but also what career prospects students have in this field. It continues with the main object of policy studies - the provision of public goods, and looks more into the role of laws and institutions as frameworks for decision-making processes and policies. The students will learn how different forms of government, party and electoral systems influence the emergence of public policies, and how the bureaucracy and other forms of administration influence policy change and policy implementation. The second block focuses on one of the most important ways of policy-making: the policy cycle and its main stages.

Both blocks focus on three core components. The first component (first topic of the week) is a theoretical one and provides an introduction into core public policy concepts and theories (around 15 pages required reading). The second topic of the week provides a practical approach and explores contemporary policy issues through the theoretical lenses studied in the first session (short policy pieces, news, reports). The third component emphasizes writing both academic and policy papers.

Week	1 st Session Topic	2 nd Session Topic
W 1 – Aug. 31- Sept. 4	Introduction	Why study Public Policy?
W 2 – Sept. 7- 11	Policy analysis	Education policy
W 3 – Sept. 14-18	Public goods	Employment policy
W 4 – Sept. 21-25	Forms of government, party and electoral systems	Migration policy
W 5 – Sept. 28- Oct. 2	Participation and social movements	Housing policy
W 6 – Oct. 5-9	Public policy and bureaucracy	Health policy
W 7 – Oct. 12-16	Op-ed presentations	Wrap-up
W 8 – Oct. 19-23	Fall term break	
W 9 – Oct. 26-30	Understanding the policy cycle	Equality policy
W 10 – Nov. 2-6	Agenda setting	TBD
W 11 – Nov. 9-13	Decision-making	TBD
W 12 – Nov. 16-20	Policy implementation	TBD
W 13 – Nov. 23-27	Policy evaluation	TBD
W 14 – Nov. 30- Dec. 4	Policy termination	The policy cycle in practice
W 15 – Dec. 7-11	Final essay draft presentations	Course wrap-up
W 16 – Dec. 14-18	Completion week	

Week 1 Session 1– Tuesday, 1st of September: Introduction

- In this introductory session we will get to know each other, our career plans and research interests. We will go through the syllabus and present what the course is about and commonly agree on guiding principles and agreed behaviors throughout the course. Students are encouraged to point out aspects that need further clarification or provide suggestions on what should be included.

Week 1 Session 2 – Thursday, 3rd of September: Why study Public Policy?

- In this session we define public policy and explore how similar or different it is with political science or public administration. We will watch some short videos about the different motivations students have for studying public policy. We will go through the expectations and requirements set by recognized public policy MA programs from Europe and create an individual plan for successful MA applications.

Week 2 Session 1 – Tuesday, 8th of September: Policy analysis

- In this session we will explore some of the different types of writing in policy studies and we will reflect on our role as students and citizens in knowledge creation for policy-making or simply contributing to public debates. We will discuss how we use existing knowledge and how we work with academic sources and references.
Required reading: Vining, A. R., & Weimer, D. L. (2015). *Policy Analysis. International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 273–280.

Week 2 Session 2 – Thursday, 10th of September: Education policy

- In this class we will explore a specific type of policy analysis as applied in the case of education policy.
Required reading: Jump, J. (2019). Ethical College Admissions: The Hare and the Tortoise Graduate From College. *Inside Higher Education*. Available online at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/views/2019/11/18/new-tool-provides-insights-colleges-roi-opinion>

Week 3 Session 1 – Tuesday, 15th of September: Public goods

- Public goods represent the central element of policy-making. The aim of this session is to advance the discussion and your understanding on different goods and the role of government in the provision, protection and regulation of those goods.
Required reading: Anomaly, J. (2015). Public goods and government action. *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*, 14(2), 109–128.
Recommended reading: <https://www.economicdiscussion.net/goods/public-good-and-private-good-difference-economics/26182>

Week 3 Session 2 – Thursday, 17th of September: Employment policy

- This session builds on the previous one in which we discussed a typology of goods. The aim of the session is to enable you to articulate the learnt concepts (of public goods) and apply them in different policy contexts.

Required reading: Brown, E. (2020). Why jobless payments serve the public good. Knowablemagazine. Available online at:

<https://www.knowablemagazine.org/article/society/2020/why-unemployment-insurance-is-a-public-good>

Week 4 Session 1 – Tuesday, 22nd of September: Forms of government, party and electoral systems

- We will explore how different forms of government, party and electoral systems influence the emergence of public policies.

Required reading: Schmidt, M. (1996). When parties matter: A review of the possibilities and limits of partisan influence on public policy. *European Journal of Political Research*, 30, 155-183.

Week 4 Session 2 – Thursday, 24th of September: Migration policy

- In this session we will look at how states persons discourses and politics in general frame migration aspects and therefore lead to state-wide policies.

Required reading: Goździak E., M. (2019). Using Fear of the “Other,” Orbán Reshapes Migration Policy in a Hungary Built on Cultural Diversity. Migration Policy Institute. Available online at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/orban-reshapes-migration-policy-hungary>

Week 5 Session 1 - Tuesday, 29th of September: Participation and social movements

- The participation of those (in)directly affected in policy-making should be at the core of any democratic structure. In this session we will unpack the different forms of participation available to citizens and any other affected groups or individuals.

Required reading: Arnstein. S., R. (1969). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 35(4), 216-224.

Week 5 Session 2 – Thursday, 1st of October: Housing policy

- In this session we will have a guest lecturer(s) who will be talking about the role of social movements in housing policy.

Required reading: TBD

Week 6 Session 1 – Tuesday, 6th of October: Public policy and bureaucracy

- In this session we will explore how does the bureaucracy and other forms of administration influence policy change and policy implementation.

Required reading: Caiden, G. E. (1994). Excessive Bureaucratization: The J-Curve Theory of Bureaucracy and Max Weber through the Looking Glass. In the *Handbook of Bureaucracy*, (ed.) Farazmand, A. New York: Marcel Dekker, 29-40.

Week 6 Session 2 – Thursday, 8th of October 5: Health Policy

- In this session we will discuss the role of bureaucrats in health policy-making and implementation.

Required reading: TBD

Week 7 Session 1 (and 2) – Tuesday, 13 and 15th of October: Op-ed presentations & Wrap-up

- In this session you will have the chance to present and get feedback from your instructor and peers on your op-ed outline. The op-eds should be submitted no later than October 20, 2020.

Week 8 – October 19-23, Fall term break

Week 9 Session 1 – Tuesday, 27th of October: Understanding the policy cycle

- The policy cycle is about the steps policy makers take from facing a problem to find its solution and then looking at the problem again. In this session we will discuss whether the policy cycle is a reliable tool to understand policy making and policy change; we will try to identify its strengths and weaknesses but also the opportunities it brings along.
Required reading: Bridgman, P., and Davis, G. (2003). What Use is a Policy Cycle? Plenty, if the Aim is Clear. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 62(3) 98–102.
Recommended reading: Jann, W. and Wegrich, K. (2006). Theories of the Policy Cycle. In *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*, by Fischer, F., Miller, G., J. and Sidney, M.S., (Eds.). CRC Press: Taylor & Francis Group. Chapter 4.

Week 9 Session 2 – Thursday 29th of October: Equality policy

- TBD

Week 10 Session 1 – Tuesday, 3rd of November: Agenda setting

- Once a problem requiring a policy solution has been identified, the process of policy development includes how the problem is framed by various stakeholders (issues framing), which problems make it onto the policymaking agenda, and how the policy (or law) is formulated. Together, these steps, often not conducted in a linear fashion, determine whether a problem or policy proposal is acted on. (Source: Policy Project)
Required reading: Birkland, T. A. (2006). Agenda Setting in Public Policy. In *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*, by Fischer, F., Miller, G., J. and Sidney, M.S., (Eds.). CRC Press: Taylor & Francis Group. Chapter 5.

Week 10 Session 2 – Thursday, 5th of November: TBD

Week 11 Session 1 – Tuesday, 10th of November: Decision-making

- Otto Von Bismark still rings true today, “Laws [public policies] are like sausage. It is better not to have seen how either are made.”
Required reading: Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., and Perl, A. (1995). Public Policy Decision-Making. In *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*. Toronto: Oxford University Press. Chapter 6.

Week 11 Session 2 – Thursday, 15th of November: TBD

Week 12 Session 1 – Tuesday, 17th of November: Policy implementation

- For a long time, implementation of public policies was considered a rather mechanistic and apolitical activity: "a series of mundane decisions and interactions unworthy of the attention of scholars" (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 450). Early theories and models of decision-making and policy formulation were straightforward and top-down: administrators were expected to carry out the policies as formulated by politicians. However, insights changed as it became clear that implementation can and does lead to reformulation of policies, or to other outcomes than expected, or even to outright failure. (Source: Radboud Universiteit)

Required reading: Hill, M. and Hupe, P. (2002). Implementing Public Policy: Governance in Theory and Practice, Sage, Chapter 3.

Week 12 Session 2 – Thursday, 19th of November: TBD

Week 13 Session 1 – Tuesday, 24th of November: Policy evaluation

- Policy evaluation is conducted for checking the effects of the policies of respective ministries and for evaluating the policies in terms of necessity, efficiency, validity, etc. to improve the planning and implementation process.

Required reading: McConnell, A. (2010). Policy Success, Policy Failure and Grey Areas In Between. Journal of Public Policy, 30(3), 345-362

Week 13 Session 2 – Thursday, 26th of November: TBD

Week 14 Session 1 – Tuesday, 1st of December: Policy termination

- Evidence-based policymaking uses the best available research and information and identifies what works, highlights gaps where evidence of program effectiveness is lacking, enables policymakers to use evidence in budget and policy decisions, and relies on systems to monitor implementation and measure key outcomes, using the information to continually improve program performance.

Required reading: DeLeon, P. (1983). Policy Evaluation and Program Termination. Review of Policy Research, 2(4), 631–647.

Week 14 Session 2 – Thursday, 3rd of December: The policy cycle in practice

- This session aims to bring together all the elements and concepts discussed in the last six weeks and provide a comprehensive example on how the policy cycle can be applied to specific policy problems.
- Required reading: TBD

Week 15 Session 1 and 2 – 8-10th of December: Final essays draft presentations and Course wrap-up

- In this session you will have the chance to present and get feedback from your instructor and peers on your term papers. The term papers should be submitted no later than December 20, 2020.

Week 16 – December 14-18: Completion week

Assessment and Requirements

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation. In case of missing classes, the student will be asked to write a make-up assignment as decided by the instructor. Late arrivals should be avoided. If students are not able to attend a class, they should let the instructor know in advance. Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences, whether excused or unexcused. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Participation – 30%

Students are expected to attend all classes, prepare for each session as well as take active part in class discussions. Participation will be assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Students are expected to prepare the required reading and be prepared to (randomly) provide a 5-minute overview/summary of the required. Students are expected to submit 1-2 discussion points/questions one day (24h) prior to the session. The questions can be content and/or methodology related, or any other aspect(s) you did not understand from the reading. The aim of the discussion points is to encourage students to prepare prior to the class and direct class discussion towards important aspects raised by the students. Make sure you provide a clear context of your question and you do not repeat a point raised by your colleagues. Students whose performance in respect to participation has not been satisfactory should receive a warning in writing.

Student presentations – 15%

Twice during the module every student is expected to give an oral presentation (15-20 minutes). The first presentation will be on one of the second topics of the week. Since the second topic of the week is a contemporary policy issue the student presentation is expected to reflect how the theoretical/conceptual aspect(s) from the class is reflected in that specific policy issue/area from the second topic of the week. Students are expected to send in advance (at one working day before the presentation is taking place) an outline of the presentation, so that feedback and suggestions can be provided. Failing to send an outline will result in lowering the grade of the presentation. The second presentation will take place at the end of the course and students will present their draft final papers. This will be an opportunity to receive first hand feedback from the instructor and peers.

Midterm paper - 15%

For the final paper students submit an op-ed piece on a topic of their own preference or selected from the list provided by the tutor. The paper is between 1000-1500 words, and is evaluated on

the basis of its substance, clarity and style, and on the quality of writing (including structure and organization, development of argumentation).

Reflection papers – 15%

During the second part of the module students are expected to write 3 short reflection papers of 400-500 words each. The reflection papers should be on the topic of a specific topic and contain students' position on a specific issue as illustrated in a required reading. It may contain a summary of the main points either in the required reading, followed, of course, by students' own opinion and arguments. It may offer a critical review of the methods, evidence and arguments raised, or a substantiated critique of the academic article and a position towards its scholarly contribution. The choice for session topics is up to the student. The paper should be sent to the instructor by email one day prior to the start of the session dealing with that required reading. With the students' agreement, specific points from the papers can be discussed in the class.

Final paper - 25%

For the final paper students are required to submit a 2000 words essay guided by the following questions: What specific global policy issue interests you? Detail the nature of the problem and recommend a course of action to address the problem identified. Be sure to describe the policy problem, explain why it is challenging to address, and articulate why it should be of concern to policymakers who are confronted with other pressing issues.

Academic Integrity

All assignments should be students' original work, plagiarism is not accepted nor tolerated. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Students are encouraged to make use of the office hours and have weekly individual meetings with the course instructor and discuss issues related to their academic performance in the course (presentations, assignments, etc.), and if relevant in the program.

Readings

All readings (except the recommended ones) are mandatory and to be completed before class, as they will be the base for the class discussions. There is a possibility of some changes to the scheduled class readings. You will be notified of any changes made if the case.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

According to BCB's policy, assignments/essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.