

# PLS 2703 - Spring 2015

## Introduction to Public Policy

### 3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Dr. Ryan Burge  
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Class: MWF 11:00 am - 11:50 am in Coleman 2150  
Office Hours: MWF 12:00-2:00pm  
and by appointment

#### **Textbook**

*Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives* (4th Edition) by Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong ISBN : 9781452202747. The book is available through TRS.

#### **About this Course**

An introduction to the study of public policy, with a focus on the United States. Topics include the political environment of policymaking; theories and models of policy processes; major types of public policy; methods and techniques in policy analysis and program evaluation; and key developments, issues and debates in policy areas such education, social welfare and energy and the environment.

#### **Learning Objectives**

1. Students will evaluate how public policy is political, coupled with describing how major government institutions approach public policy issues and questions.
2. Students will compare/contrast major theories and models of the policy process and apply the theories/models in describing and explaining policymaking and its outputs and outcomes.
3. Students will identify stages and tools/instruments of public policy along with prominent types of public policies.
4. Students will evaluate and apply major evaluative criteria used in assessing public policy alternatives.
5. Students will describe major processes, methods and techniques of policy analysis and program evaluation and apply them in carrying out research on public policy
6. Students will communicate their policy research findings, conclusions and arguments both in writing and verbally.
7. Students will evaluate key developments, issues and debates in major public policy areas in the United States.

#### **Course Outline and Grades**

The grading breakdown for this course is as follows, I reserve the right to change the grading scheme.

- Three Essay Examinations (15% each)
- Policy Analysis Paper (30%)
- Policy Project Presentation (15%)
- Participation (10%)

#### **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIUs Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported

to the Office of Student Standards.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities- If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

### **Student Success Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/success](http://www.eiu.edu/success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

### **Examination Policy**

All examinations must be taken at their scheduled time. Exams will not be given “early” for travel convenience - NO EXCEPTIONS. Make-up exams will be granted at the instructor’s discretion for exceptional circumstances only (e.g., severe illness, family emergency or family death). You must contact me before the next class period following the exam and produce documentation (e.g., a doctor’s excuse, obituary, etc.) of this event. No make-up examination will be given without meeting the above conditions. Study guides will be posted on the class web page prior to each exam to help prepare students.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Week 1**

*January 12:* Pass out the syllabus/introduce the course

*January 14:* Public Policy and Politics (Chapter 1)

*January 16:* Public Policy and Politics (Chapter 1)

### **Week 2**

*January 19:* No Class - MLK Day

*January 21:* Government Institutions and Policy Actors (Chapter 2)

*January 23:* Government Institutions and Policy Actors (Chapter 2)

### **Week 3**

*January 26:* Understanding Public Policymaking (Chapter 3)

*January 28:* Understanding Public Policymaking (Chapter 3)

*January 30:* Policy Analysis: An Introduction (Chapter 4)

### **Week 4**

*February 2:* Policy Analysis: An Introduction (Chapter 4)

*February 4:* Public Problems and Policy Alternatives (Chapter 5)

*February 6:* Public Problems and Policy Alternatives (Chapter 5)

### **Week 5**

*February 9:* Assessing Policy Alternatives (Chapter 6)

*February 11:* EXAM 1

*February 13:* No Class - Lincoln’s Birthday

**Week 6**

*February 16:* Economic and Budgetary Policy (Chapter 7)

*February 18:* Economic and Budgetary Policy (Chapter 7)

*February 20:* Listen to The Giant Pool of Money - This American Life

**Week 7**

*February 23:* What is Austrian Economics? by Matthew Yglesias and The Demand Doctor by John Cassidy

*February 25:* Why Won't Americans Listen to Alan Simpson and Erskine Bowles? - Business Week

*February 27:* Ten Trillion and Counting - PBS Frontline

**Week 8**

*March 2:* Health Care Policy (Chapter 8)

*March 4:* Health Care Policy (Chapter 8)

*March 6:* Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills Are Killing Us by Steven Brill - Time Magazine

**Week 9**

*March 9:* Welfare and Social Security Policy (Chapter 9)

*March 11:* Welfare and Social Security Policy (Chapter 9)

*March 13:* Budget Solutions 2014: Pension Reform Plan - Illinois Policy Institute

**Break Week**

No Class - Spring Break

**Week 10**

*March 23:* Can California Declare Bankruptcy? by Christopher Beam - Slate and How Detroit Was Reborn - Detroit Free Press

*March 25:* Inside Man: Municipal Bankruptcy - Morgan Spurlock

*March 27:* EXAM 2

**Week 11**

*March 30:* Education Policy (Chapter 10)

*April 1:* Education Policy (Chapter 10)

*April 3:* Everything You Need to Know About Common Core - Washington Post

**Week 12**

*April 6:* Environmental and Energy Policy (Chapter 11)

*April 8:* Environmental and Energy Policy (Chapter 11)

*April 10:* A Colossal Fracking Mess by Christopher Bateman - Vanity Fair

**Week 13**

*April 13:* Morality and Public Policy

*April 15:* Morality and Public Policy

*April 18:* No Class - MPSA Conference

**Week 14**

*April 20:* Foreign Policy (Chapter 12)

*April 22:* Foreign Policy (Chapter 12)

*April 24*: Class Presentations

**Week 15**

*April 27*: Class Presentations

*April 29*: Class Presentations

*May 1*: Class Presentations

*May 5*: EXAM 3 at 12:30 PM