

Professor McAvoy
Political Science 210
Fall 2007

Office: 223 Graham
Phone: 256-0517
Office Hours: MWF, 11-12
email: gemcavoy@uncg.edu

Introduction to Public Policy

Students of contemporary American public policy must confront a paradox. The government has never been more involved in addressing social and political problems through its regulatory and administrative programs. Yet, American citizens are routinely dissatisfied with the performance of government officials and their programs. To better understand the government's role in social problem solving and the satisfaction of citizens with its decisions, we will first focus on the policy process and look at three questions: 1) what is being decided? 2) how it is being decided? 3) what are the consequences of these decisions? Once these questions are addressed, we can begin to evaluate when and why government policies succeed or fail and the effectiveness of democratic policy-making in resolving social problems.

What You Will Learn in this Class

- How to provide evidence in support of a policy position
- How to research and report about public policies (both in writing and orally)
- How decisions that affect you are made
- The complex nature of the problems that government must solve

Required Texts

The following book is required for this course and available from the book store:

Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong. 2006. *Public Policy Analysis: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. CQ Press.

Additional assigned readings are available from the CQ Researcher database that is available electronically through the UNCG Library web page. You will need to print out these articles and bring them to class.

Occasionally, you will be asked to read a daily newspaper or news magazine in order to find examples of concepts or issues for class discussions.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. You should bring the assigned readings to class since we will often refer to these in our discussions. We will frequently have class and small group discussions in order to apply the course material to specific examples, and meaningful participation in these is required.

Course attendance is mandatory and roll will be taken.

Grades for the course will be determined on the basis of the following course requirements: quizzes and in-class assignments (15%), one midterm exam (20%), one position paper (20%), one issue forum presentation and report (25%), and a final exam (20%).

Letter grades are assigned as follows:

A (100-94)	B+ (89-86)	C+ (79-76)	D+ (69-66)
A- (93-90)	B (85-83)	C (75-73)	D (65-63)
	B- (82-80)	C- (72-70)	D- (62-60)

Part of the class requirements include participation in a series of issue forums. Each student will be present a policy position in one of these forums. You will be paired with one other student on your side of the issue. At the same time, two students will present an opposing position. Students not presenting will be asked to evaluate issue positions, serve as questioners, or other tasks associated with the issue forum.

Speaking Component

Because a speaking-intensive course focuses on learning of content through active engagement in oral communication, the class will be interactive. You will be encouraged to share ideas, argue viewpoints, and engage in meaningful discussion. Individual improvement is a key component in the course. You will learn to analyze and evaluate your skills and set goals for improvement. You will receive constructive feedback from your instructor and peers.

Resources to Help with Presentations

The University Speaking Center is designed to help you improve your oral communication skills. You have the opportunity to practice your individual or group presentations and work with a trained consultant. The Center is located in 3211 HHRA Building. To schedule an appointment, call 256-1346. It is open Monday through Wednesday from 10am - 8pm, on Thursday from 10am - 6pm, and on Friday from 9am -12noon. They also have a webpage with links to articles and other reference materials, speakingcenter.uncg.edu/

Expectations

I expect that everyone will maintain a classroom conducive to learning. I like an informal atmosphere, but it must be orderly. Thus, everyone is expected to behave with basic politeness, civility, and respect for others. In particular, talking in class is ok if it's part of a class discussion or with me. Private communications are not. Neither are reading extraneous materials, using electronic equipment, or sleeping.

Honor Code:

I expect all students in this course to abide by both the letter and spirit of the university's academic integrity policy. Violations of the university honor code will be prosecuted. The full text of the Academic Integrity Policy can be viewed at:
<http://www.uncg.edu/reg/Policy/HonorPolicy.html>.

Specifically pertinent to this course are the following rules:

1. "Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise."
2. "Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."

Do NOT engage in either cheating or plagiarism. The penalties for both offenses range from the need to re-do assignments to expulsion from the University, depending upon the severity of the cheating or plagiarism offense.

If you have any questions regarding what constitutes either cheating or plagiarism, please see me *immediately*.

Readings and Course Topics

Week 1. (Aug 20-24) Studying the Policy Process
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 1

Week 2. (Aug 27,29) The Context for Policymaking
Kraft and Furlong Chapter 2
"Energy Efficiency" (May 19, 2006) from CQ Researcher
****No class on Aug 30, American Political Science Association Conference.**

Week 3. (Sept. 5,7) Theories of Policymaking
Kraft and Furlong Chapter 3
"Factory Farms" (Jan. 12, 2007) from CQ Researcher

II. Policy Analysis

Week 4. (Sept. 10-14) Introduction to Policy Analysis
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 4

Week 5. (Sept. 11-15) Identifying Problems
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 5
"Speaking to Persuade," Chapter 15, from *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen Lucas.
Available from UNCG E-reserves. Instructions to access these readings are at:
<http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/resources/ereserve/>

Week 6. (Sept. 24-28) Identifying Solutions
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 6

III. Policy Issues

Week 7. (Oct. 1-5) Economic and Budgetary Issues
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 7
"Budget Deficit" (Dec. 9, 2005) from CQ Researcher

Week 8. (Oct.8-12) Economic and Budgetary Issues, cont'd
“Minimum Wage” (Dec. 16, 2005) from CQ Researcher **(Issue Forum)**

*Midterm Examination, October 10th

Week 9. (Oct. 17,19) Health Care Politics
“Universal Health Care” (Mar. 30, 2007) from CQ Researcher **(Issue Forum)**
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 8

Week 10. (Oct. 22-26) Welfare and Social Security
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 9
“Poverty in America” (Sept. 7, 2007) from CQ Researcher **(Issue Forum)**
“Social Security” (Sept. 24, 2004) from CQ Researcher **(Issue Forum)**

Week 11. (Oct. 29-Nov.2) Courtroom Politics and Policy
“Right to Die” (May 13, 2005) from CQ Researcher
“Death Penalty” (Sept. 23, 2005) from CQ Researcher **(Issue Forum)**

Week 12. (Nov. 5-9) Education Policy
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 10
“Education Value of Video Games” (November 10, 2006) from CQ Researcher **(Issue Forum)**

Week 13. (Nov. 12-16) Environment and Energy, cont'd
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 11
“Alternative Fuels” (Feb. 25, 2005) from CQ Researcher

Week 14.(Nov. 19) Environment and Energy, cont'd
“Domestic Energy Production” (Sept. 30, 2005) from CQ Researcher
“Climate Change” (Jan. 27, 2006) from CQ Researcher **(Issue Forum)**

Week 15. (Nov. 26-30) Foreign Policy and Homeland Security
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 12

Week 16. (Dec. 3-7) Foreign Policy and Homeland Security, cont'd
“New Strategy in Iraq” (Feb. 23, 2007) from CQ Researcher
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 13

Week 17. (Dec. 10)
Conclusion

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 12 (12 noon-3pm)