

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY--PSC 210-01--SI--UNCG--SPRING 2008

Mr. Jeff Colbert

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REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Public Policy in the United States, 4th Edition, Rushefsky

The Political Science Student Writer's Manual, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Scott and Garrison

Daily newspapers, news broadcasts, weekly/monthly periodicals/internet (Regular reading)

We will unearth a little about the "policy process" in our government. As informed folks know, government is a complex web of issues, ideas, interests and institutions. If you successfully complete the course, you will NOT be a policy expert. However, you will know much more about the process, the players and some of the problems. Further, you will realize the hopelessness and flat out stupidity of simplistic solutions in today's political scene and the importance of "groups" in policy-making. The Lone Ranger never made policy.

More specifically, by the end of the course, you should be able to:

- 1.) explain, in detail, Rushefsky's eight stage policy process and many elements within those stages;
- 2.) give examples of these stages and elements in different policy areas;
- 3.) identify players, forces and ideologies that both propel and inhibit the policy process in the US;
- 4.) identify some of the policy problems in the US, some of the proposed solutions, and some of the problems with those solutions;
- 5.) discuss items 1-4 in large group and small group format which will be instructor monitored and critiqued;
- 6.) lead at least one discussion in small group format which will be peer-evaluated;
- 7.) identify, with your group members, a specific policy problem;
- 8.) research, with your group members, library, web and human resources for information and potential ways to deal with your identified problem;
- 9.) develop, with your group members, a policy proposal;
- 10.) write, with your group members, an extensive paper detailing the problem, other attempts to deal with the problem, and a detailed account of your proposal to deal with the problem;
- 11.) Participate in an oral presentation of your research findings with your group members.

YOU are crucial to the progression of this course. You are expected to play a large role as an active, informed participant.

It is assumed that you will be in class, will have read all assigned material prior to class, and will regularly watch news broadcasts, read the daily paper and scan periodicals and use the internet. You must understand that this is not a guideline or a request--it is an expectation that will be reflected in your grade. If you don't like to attend class, read, and talk in class, you should drop this course. Should you not be properly prepared, you will discover my ability to create instantaneous and punitive pop quizzes. For the sake of all involved, let's avoid these "discoveries"!! Should you happen to miss class, YOU are responsible for learning what assignments were made and having them ready on time. Missing class IS NOT an acceptable excuse for a late assignment.

This course has been designated a speaking intensive course for this semester. This means that in the process of accomplishing the learning objectives already mentioned, we will attempt to enhance the speaking/presentation skills of the class members. Some of these exercises will involve small group discussion exercises where each of you will be required to serve as a discussion leader at least once. In addition, each of you will be expected to enhance your listening skills. For these activities, feedback will be provided by either your colleagues, myself, or both. I know that for many students, speaking in public is a daunting and intimidating task. I hope to ease some of your anxieties and help you improve your skills in public speaking.

**NOTE:** This course is taught with the presumption that you have completed PSC 100, Introduction to American Government. It is not a prerequisite for this course, but you may find it a bit more difficult without some background in American Government. However, some students have done well in this course without that background, and so can you.

### GRADING STRUCTURE

3 exams--10% each (02-04, 03-03, 04-21)	30%
1 cumulative final exam (05-09 8-11 A.M.)	20%
1 group project (including oral presentation)	35%
small group discussion evaluation/critiques	10%
Attendance/Pop Quizzes	<u>5%</u>
	100%

Exams are short and long discussion questions, based on lectures, readings and class discussions. Class time can be interesting, informative and sometimes, even fun, but that depends as much on you as it does me. I am normally pretty laid back in most areas, but that works under the assumptions that we are co-participants in this educational "thing" and that you do strictly abide by the rules I have.

### SCHEDULE

01-14	Introduction
01-16/18	Chapter 1 and in-class exercises
<b>01-21</b>	<b>NO CLASS!!!--MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY!!!</b>
01-23/25/28/30/02-01	Chapter 1 and in-class exercises
<b>02-04</b>	<b>Test # 1--**GROUPS FORMED!! (P. 3, Items 1 &amp; 2)**</b>
02-06	Discussion of group project rules/parameters/hints
02-08/11/13	Chapter 2
02-15/18/20	Chapter 3
02-22/25/27	Chapter 4
<b>02-29</b>	<b>????--Final Topic Due with one page explanation of project/Meet with each group</b>
<b>03-03</b>	<b>Test #2</b>
03-05	Chapter 5
<b>03-07/10/12/14</b>	<b>NO CLASS!!!--SPRING BREAK!!!</b>
03-17/19	Chapter 5
<b>03-21</b>	<b>NO CLASS!!!--SPRING HOLIDAY!!</b>
03-24/26/28	Chapter 6
03-31/04-02/04	Chapter 7
04-07/09/11	Chapter 8
04-14/16/18	Chapter 9
<b>04-21</b>	<b>Test #3</b>
04-23	Discuss presentations
<b>04-25</b>	<b>Project Paper due in my office NO LATER than 9:00 a.m. (P. 3, 4a)</b>
<b>04-28/30/05-02 (OR Saturday, 05-03)</b>	<b>Group Project Presentations!! (P. 3, 4b)</b>
	<u>ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED DURING THE GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</u>
05-05/06	TBA
05-07	Reading Day
<b>05-09</b>	<b>Final Exam (8-11 a.m.)</b>

## GROUP PROJECT

In teaching this course, I have become convinced of the value of students investigating a topic in depth in order to examine how the process has worked, is working, and should work. This assignment will allow you to do just that. It is not a "Gripe and Moan" paper, detailing the horrible ineptitude of our system and its' players. You do get to critique the past and present but you also must develop reasonable, workable, affordable NATIONAL policy options. Since in a few years it will be your job anyway, let's see how smart you are! While other details will work themselves out during the semester, the format is essentially this:

- 1.) Class members will self-select themselves into groups of 4-6 in order to work together on this group project;
- 2.) By 02-04, each group will inform me, in writing, of the following:
  - a.) their group members;
  - b.) the class/work schedules of each individual in the group;
  - c.) their probable policy topic (topics cannot be changed after 02-29);
  - d.) and their common meeting time (at least a two hour block).
- 3.) At the end of the semester, each group will have prepared;
  - a.) a 30 page (minimum) formal research paper detailing the problem as it exists today, past/present attempts to alleviate the problem and their recommendations for future policy solution(s) (due 04-25). This assignment will be strictly graded on appearance, grammar, spelling, punctuation and proper and adequate citations as well as substance (see next page for details).
  - b.) a 20 minute (minimum) to 25 minute (maximum) oral presentation, covering all elements of your paper but emphasizing the solutions (presentations will be on 04-28/30/05-02 OR 05-03). This is a formal presentation in which all members of the group must verbally participate with a professional appearance. If you're unsure as to the definition of "professional appearance", watch Congressmen/women on C-Span and C-Span2 for examples.
  - c.) A complete log of all group/subgroup meetings with accurate records as to time, place and members in attendance (turned in after your presentation and no later than reading day, 05-07).
- 4.) Each member must turn in, no later than reading day (05-07), a specific written evaluation of each member's participation, **including themselves**. Students who perform exemplary work may be rewarded. Students who attempt to ride the back of others to get a good grade will be severely punished. Regardless of your grades, students who do not turn in the evaluations will receive an "Incomplete" for the course.

While this is a large assignment, please note that it also comprises 35% of your grade (a lot of work = a lot of credit). Some groups misunderstand this project and think the key to this paper is the writing. That is incorrect. It must be written correctly, but the keys are research and teamwork! You must begin early and work hard. This will be further discussed in class.

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED DURING THE GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS.**

The research paper must adhere to the following rules/restrictions:

- \*As a guideline for form and structure, you will use The Political Science Student Writer's Manual (5<sup>th</sup> edition) except for any variations noted below;
- \* these are formal papers--no creative writing, questionable language or solely opinion-based comments;
- \* 30 (minimum) pages in content length--graphs, charts, etc. are expected, but are in addition to the 30 pages;
- \* pages are to be numbered in the top right corner;
- \* the pages will be bound together in some fashion that is attractive/professional in appearance;
- \* your group members' names will be on a separate sheet attached to the back of your paper--your names are not to appear anywhere else in or on your paper;
- \* include a title page;
- \* typewritten, double-spaced, Times New Roman-12 font;
- \* margins will be ½ inch on right/left and 1 inch on top/bottom;
- \* the paper will be graded on style/spelling/grammar/punctuation/substance;
- \* because these are research papers, they obviously will be completely filled with information gained from other sources. Accordingly, these papers are to be cited properly and extensively. If you have any questions about this, they are to be asked well before your paper is completed. Ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse once you have submitted your paper. Your citation method is to be the APSA Author-Date System as detailed in The Political Science Student Writer's Manual (5<sup>th</sup> edition);
- \* as a source, independent Internet sites may be used for no more than 25% of your sources and 25% of your content;

Violation of these rules will invoke an automatic one letter grade penalty per infraction. Generally, don't bother me with excuses; I've heard most of them. Real, serious and documented excuses may be considered.

### **FINAL NOTES AND WARNINGS:**

- 1.) I expect timely attendance. If you are later than 5 minutes late for class, you will not be counted present.
- 2.) Turn off or turn to vibrate ALL cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices other than your laptop computer. If there is an emergency possibility and you need your cell phone to be on, inform me. Otherwise, they ARE NOT to be heard or seen in class. If you use a laptop computer in class, you may use it for note-taking only unless otherwise directed or approved. Close, not reduce, all other screens.