

**PADP 8620**  
**Policy Process**  
**Fall 2020 (August 20–December 9)**  
**Course website: <https://uga.view.usg.edu/d2l/home/2061208>**

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**Instructor**

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**Office Hours**

Thursday, 1pm–3pm, or by appointment

**Class Day/Time**

This is an online, asynchronous and synchronous class, meaning there will be self-paced lecture modules to complete as well as live discussion/activities each week on Thursdays, 7pm–9:45pm.

**Catalog Description**

Key concepts in the study of public policy. Among the topics covered are description of policy process to include agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption.

**Course Overview**

This course is designed to familiarize you with the policy process and how to communicate complex policy information to different audiences. Two competencies students can expect to gain from this course are (1) understanding and communicating the policy cycle, and (2) an ability to analyze and think critically about policy problems. These skills will be valuable for careers in public administration, and provide a foundation for students interested in policy-related research.

**Teaching Approach**

This is a writing-intensive course. You will complete regular exercises and assignments to uniquely convey policy information intended for different audiences. I will work closely with you in developing your writing skills and understanding course content.

In addition to writing exercises and projects, we will have regular discussion sections and regular group exercises. This part of the class will allow for exchange of ideas and knowledge, critical thinking, and collective problem solving.

The current COVID-19 pandemic makes our class circumstances quite unique, and patience and adaptability will be necessary this semester. I will anonymously survey you all for input throughout the semester about what aspects are working, what could be improved, and suggestions you may have.

## **Learning Objectives and Competencies**

The objective of this course is to familiarize you with the policy process. Students will develop and improve their command of fundamental concepts, as well as ways to use theory think about and communicate policy information.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is not mandatory, but highly recommended. 20% of your grade will be based on participation in discussion, in-class exercises, and group work. Please let me know in advance (to the best of your ability) if you will not be able to make a class or an assignment deadline, and we will discuss alternative arrangements.

## **Coronavirus Information for Students**

This course will be taught online, so an in-person classroom protocol does not apply. However, information on resources for dealing with COVID-19 are outlined here.

### **•*DawgCheck:***

Please perform a quick symptom check each weekday on DawgCheck—on the UGA app or website—whether you feel sick or not. It will help health providers monitor the health situation on campus.

### **•*What do I do if I have symptoms?***

Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8am–5pm). Please DO NOT walk-in. Please go to the UGA emergencies and after-hours care website for more information.

### **•*What do I do if I am notified that I have been exposed?***

Students who learn they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 14 days consistent with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Please correspond with your instructor via email, with a cc to Student Care & Outreach at sco@uga.edu, to coordinate continuing your coursework while self-quarantined. If you develop symptoms, you should contact the University Health Center to make an appointment to be tested. You should continue to monitor your symptoms daily on DawgCheck.

### **•*How do I get a test?***

Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162. UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.

### **•*What do I do if I test positive?***

Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is required to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.

### Required Text

Birkland, Thomas A. *An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making*. Routledge, 2019.

You will need to purchase your book either from the UGA bookstore or from your favorite online vendor. Other materials will be made available through eLearningCommons (eLC) this term. You will need your UGA myID to gain access to eLC.

### Recommended Texts

Peters, B. Guy. *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*. Sage, 2019.

Sabatier, Paul A., ed. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Westview Press, 2007.

### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Description and Date	Points
Weekly discussions and responses	5 discussions, 5 responses	2 points each, 20 points total
Discussion/work-group participation	During live class time, TBD	2 points each, 20 points total
Op-ed	see Course Requirements below	20 points
Policy brief	see Course Requirements below	25 points
Virtual presentation	5-minute presentation of policy brief	15 points
	<i>Total</i>	100 points

### Grade Distribution

A+ 100–97	A 96.9–94	A- 93.9–90	B+ 89.9–87	B 86.9–84	B- 83.9–80
C+ 79.9–77	C 76.9–74	C- 73.9–70	D+ 69.9–67	D 66.9–64	D- 63.9–60

F less than 60 points

### Grades (continued)

- All grades will be posted in a timely manner in eLC. Students are encouraged to frequently check their progress during the semester. Students have two weeks after a grade is posted to meet with me regarding grading issues. After two weeks, the grade **WILL NOT** be changed.
- Should you wish to discuss your grade, you must meet with me via Zoom or by phone. I am not able to discuss grades by email.

## My Teaching Policy

*What I expect from you:*

- You will need to complete lecture modules and readings prior to class time. The modules and readings allow you to complete discussion comments, responses, and to meaningfully participate during the live-class component of this course. Finally, your dedication each week will be necessary for gaining the knowledge and tools necessary for writing a policy brief (your final assignment).
- All assignments are to be submitted by the designated time and date provided for each. Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be submitted through eLearningCommons (eLC). For writing assignments, please submit documents in .docx format. PDFs will not be accepted.
- Deadlines have been structured so that the instructor can provide regular and periodic feedback on your understanding and application of the course material. Late penalties will not be applied to course work this semester; however, late material will delay feedback and reduce the value you derive from the class. No late material will be accepted after December 5, 2020.

*What you can expect from me:*

- Throughout the semester, please feel free to email me if you have any questions about the assignments. If you have questions about any assignments, you can expect me to get back to you in a timely manner (at most 48 hours, not including weekends).
- Depending on where we are in the class, I may decide to alter a due date. Any changes will be announced on the eLC announcement page and by email.
- Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

## University Policy

- The University of Georgia Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment (NDAH) Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. These behaviors are unacceptable and will be reported. Please see [here](#) for more information on the NDAH policy.
- It is the University's goal to make learning experiences accessible to all students. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (Voice: 706-542-8719 or TTY: 706-542-8778) to establish reasonable accommodations.
- Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me. If at any time you see something that troubles you regarding academic integrity, you should contact me immediately. According to the University Council, "All academic work must meet standards contained in 'A Culture of Honesty'". Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found [here](#).
- Please go [here](#) to learn more information on the confidentiality of student records.
- Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies. For information on **incompletes**, please go to [here](#); for **withdrawals** go to [here](#).

# Course Requirements

## **Weekly Discussions, 10 points (2 points each)**

Students will participate in **5** online discussions. There are 10 weeks to choose from for flexibility. Discussions will entail answering prompts posted on eLearningCommons (eLC) relating to the weekly readings and modules and must be at least 1 paragraph long. Please write your response to the prompt on the discussion board. Written discussions will need to be posted to the eLC discussion board each **Tuesday before class by noon**. This will allow time for classmates to read and submit a response. Note: posts must relate to current week's topic.

## **Weekly Responses, 10 points (2 points each)**

Students will participate in **5** weekly responses to at least one classmate's weekly discussion. There are 10 weeks to choose from for flexibility. Answers should be at least 1 paragraph long and will be written on the discussion board in eLC each **Wednesday before class by 11:59pm**. It is recommended that you try to complete responses early in the semester to ensure you have something to respond to. Note: responses must relate to current week's topic. Instructions for weekly discussions and responses can be found on eLC under Tools → Discussions.

## **Live Class and Work-Group Participation, 20 points (2 points each)**

Classes will have two parts: 1) a series of recorded mini lectures (modules) with prompts for weekly discussion, and 2) a live online portion during our scheduled class time. During the live discussion and work-group participation, we will explore the week's topics in greater depth and have weekly exercises. Both live discussion and work-group participation are central components to active learning and internalizing key concepts. Instruction for participation and submission (when needed) will be discussed during class time.

## **Op-ed, 20 points**

An op-ed is a powerful tool for succinctly communicating an argument about a policy issue to a target audience. In this assignment, you will write a well-researched, 750 to 800-word piece on a policy issue of your choice. This will be designed for an audience you think would need to be convinced of your argument. This assignment will be due **October 1 by 11:59pm** on eLC.

## **Policy Brief, 25 points**

A policy brief is a key resource for framing policy issues, discussing what is known about the issue, how this relates to policy goals, and recommending solutions to decision makers or other target audiences. Like the op-ed, this assignment will focus on your policy issue of choice. Instructions will be posted to eLC. The policy brief is **due on December 5 by 11:59pm** on eLC.

## **Virtual Presentation, 15 points**

Quickly communicating key points discussed in longer documents (such as policy briefs) is a critical skill, especially for when your target audience has limited time to read. You will give a 5-minute Powerpoint presentation of key points from your policy brief. Class engagement through asking questions will be considered as part of class participation. Presentations will take place across two days—November 19 and December 3. If you prefer to switch days, you will need to find a classmate willing to swap with you. Once this has been arranged, please inform me ASAP. Instructions for developing and giving a presentation will be posted on eLC.

***PhD Students: please contact me to discuss alternative arrangements.***

# Course Outline

**Week 1** (August 20): Review of the syllabus and course overview.

- Assignments:
  - Review course information through modules on eLearningCommons (eLC).
  - There will be an online Q&A session during class time. Please bring your questions.
  - **Please complete the online survey for class on or before August 20.**

**Week 2** (August 27): What is the policy process? How do we think of this as part of a system?

- Readings (complete **before** August 27):
  - Birkland Ch. 1: Introducing the Policy Process, pp. 1–27
  - Birkland Ch. 2: Elements of the Policy-Making System, pp. 33–37
  - Paul Cairney: Politics and Public Policy
- Assignments:
  - **Post to discussion board by Tuesday (August 25) at NOON.**
  - **Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (August 26) at 11:59pm.**

**Week 3** (September 3): Policymaking and the structure of US government

- Readings (complete before September 3):
  - Birkland Ch. 2 (*continued*), pp. 37–69 & 75–105
  - Peters pp. 28–33 (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - **Post to discussion board by Tuesday (September 1) at NOON.**
  - **Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (September 2) at 11:59pm.**

**Week 4** (September 10): Communicating the policy process.

This week: modules and one-on-one meetings with Dr. Bell to discuss policy topic for op-ed. Expect an email about scheduling.

- Readings (complete before September 10):
  - Winkler and Sondag, Ch. 3-5 (posted on eLC)
  - How to Write an Op-ed or Column (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - **NO discussion or responses this week.**
  - **Submit paragraph on policy topic(s) of interest in preparation for discussion with Dr. Bell by Tuesday (September 8) at NOON. Instructions will be posted on eLC.**

### Week 5 (September 17): Official and unofficial actors in the policy process

- Readings (complete before September 17):
  - Birkland, Ch. 4 and Ch. 5
  - (skim) Weible, C.M. & Karin Ingold. 2018. “Why advocacy coalitions matter and practical insights about them.” *Policy and Politics*, 46(2), 325-43. (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (September 15) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (September 16) at 11:59pm.
  - Work on op-ed, due October 1 at 11:59pm.

### Week 6 (September 24): Problem definition, agenda setting, and politics of attention

- Readings (complete before September 24):
  - Birkland, Ch. 6
  - (skim) Shanahan, E. A., McBeth, M. K., Hathaway, P. L., & Arnell, R. J. 2008. “Conduit or contributor? The role of media in policy change theory.” *Policy Sciences*, 41(2), 115. (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (September 22) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (September 23) at 11:59pm.
  - Work on op-ed, due October 1 at 11:59pm.

### Week 7 (October 1 ): Case review on energy and the environment

- Readings (complete before October 1):
  - Peters, Ch. 14
  - (skim) Hussey, K., & Pittock, J. 2012. “The energy–water nexus: Managing the links between energy and water for a sustainable future.” *Ecology and Society*, 17(1). (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (September 29) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (November 4) at 11:59pm.
  - Op-ed (due October 1 at 11:59pm).

## Week 8 (October 8): Policy analysis and innovation

- Readings (complete before October 8):
  - Birkland, Ch. 8
  - “Frances Stokes Berry and William Berry. 2014. “Innovation and Diffusion Models in Policy Research.” In *Theories of the Policy Process*, 3rd edition, 307–338. Edited by Paul Sabatier. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (October 6) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (October 7) at 11:59pm.

## Week 9 (October 15): Policy design, tools, and types

- Readings (complete before October 15):
  - Birkland, Ch. 7
  - Birkland, Ch. 9
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (October 13) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (October 14) at 11:59pm.

## Week 10 (October 22): Policy implementation and failure

This week we will cover policy implementation and failure and then we'll pivot to talk about expectations for the upcoming policy brief and presentation.

- Readings (complete before October 22):
  - Birkland, Ch. 10, pp. 343 - 354
  - Whitford, Andrew B. 2014. “Information and Uncertainty in Policy Implementation: Evidence from the Implementation of EPA Waivers.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 24(2), 267-288. (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (October 20) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (October 21) at 11:59pm.
  - Read instructions for policy brief; bring to class any questions about the assignment.



## **Week 11** (October 29): Policy learning

- Readings (complete before October 29):
  - Birkland, Ch. 10, pp. 354-366
  - (skim) Bennett, C. J., & Howlett, M. (1992). The lessons of learning: Reconciling theories of policy learning and policy change. *Policy sciences*, 25(3), 275-294. (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (October 27) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (October 28) at 11:59pm.
  - Work on policy brief, due by December 5 at 11:59pm.
  - Read instructions for the presentation; bring to class any questions about the assignment.

## **Week 12** (November 5): Case review on ideologies and beliefs

- Readings (complete before November 5):
  - Peters, Ch. 16
  - Sabatier, P., Hunter, S., & McLaughlin, S. 1987. "The devil shift: Perceptions and misperceptions of opponents." *Western Political Quarterly*, 40(3), 449-476.
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (November 3) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (November 4) at 11:59pm.
  - Work on policy brief, due by December 5 at 11:59pm.

**Week 13** (November 12): What is policy theory? How do we use it?

- Readings (complete before November 12):
  - Birkland, Ch. 11
  - Cairney, Paul. “Standing on the shoulders of giants: how do we combine the insights of multiple theories in public policy studies?” *Policy Studies Journal* 41, no. 1 (2013): 1-21. (posted on eLC)
- Assignments:
  - Post to discussion board by Tuesday (November 10) at NOON.
  - Respond to discussion(s) on board by Wednesday (November 11) at 11:59pm.
  - Work on policy brief, due by December 5 at 11:59pm.
  - Work on presentation: Group 1 presents on November 19, Group 2 presents on December 3

**Week 14** (November 19): Policy brief presentations

- Assignments:
  - Work on policy brief, due by December 5 at 11:59pm.
  - Group 1: prepare 5-minute presentation of policy brief for class on November 19. (Instructions on eLC)

**Week 15** (November 26): Thanksgiving break, NO CLASS

**Week 16** (December 3): Policy brief presentations

- Assignments:
  - Work on policy brief, due by December 5 at 11:59pm.
  - Group 2: prepare 5-minute presentation of policy brief for class on December 3. (Instructions on eLC)