

*University of Georgia
School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Public Administration and Policy*

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Office: Baldwin Hall 415
Email: evbell@uga.edu
Class Schedule: Mondays, 7:10 PM to 9:55 PM
Class Location: Baldwin 102

Office Hours: available by appointment

Course 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.

This course is designed to familiarize you with the policy process and how to communicate complex policy information to different audiences. Two competencies that students can expect to gain from this course are (1) understanding and communicating the policy cycle, and (2) an ability to critically analyze policy concepts and how these relate to your role as a professional. These skills will be valuable for careers in public administration and provide a foundation for students interested in policy-related research. These competencies will be developed through individual writing exercises and in-class discussion.

How will we approach these discussions and exercises? This course will be conducted in person once per week.

Student Learning Objectives

- Students will become familiarized with the roots of policy process studies and how the field has evolved over time.
- Students will develop and improve their command of theoretical concepts in order to conceptually frame and communicate policy information.
- Students will link concepts covered in the course to their own role in the policy process.
- Students will complete regular exercises and assignments to convey policy process information for different audiences.

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.

Recommended Text

Sabatier, Paul A., ed. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Westview Press, 2014. (The 2018 edition has some of the most recent updates in theoretical advancement, but much of the same content).

eLearning Commons and Online Resources

In addition to the required textbooks, additional reading is posted in a folder in the eLearning Commons (eLC). Students can access online information about our class at <http://elc.uga.edu>. Graduate students should become familiar with searching for journal articles and books using the library's holdings and electronic databases. Many journals are free to you through your status as a student at the University of Georgia, and you should make use of these resources.

Assignments and Grade Distribution

Assignments will be evaluated using a point system, with 100 points possible for the class. Note, the grade "A" indicates "outstanding" achievement. The following scale will be used to assign letter grades in this class:

100 – 94 points A	86.9 – 83 points B	75.9 – 70 points C
93.9 – 90 points A-	82.9 – 80 points B-	69.9 – 60 points D
89.9 – 87 points B+	79.9 – 76 points C+	59.9 – 0 points F

Assignment	Due Date	Points
In-Class Discussion and Participation	Weeks 2-15	15
Exam	February 24	30
Case Study Review	March 21	15
Policy Brief Presentations and Peer Review	April 21 and 28	20
Policy Brief (MPA or PhD) or Proposal (PhD)	May 6	20

In-Class Discussion: A core feature of this class is to engage with the material to develop—and strengthen—a command of policy process concepts. This will entail discussion in class of the concepts throughout lecture, as well as during—and following—in-class exercises.

Case Review Memo: The case review memo is a writing assignment that challenges students to i) articulate how the policy case illustrates concepts of the policy process and ii) what strategies, as a practitioner, they would employ to address what they consider challenges. The case study will correspond to a 'stage' of the policy process. Details for the assignment is summarized in an assignment information sheet found in the eLC. The assignment information sheet contains the rubric that will be used to evaluate the review. Prior to the review, we will cover review-writing strategies and resources. The case study review is due **March 21 by 11:59pm EDT**.

Take-Home Exams: There is one essay examination, comprises 30% of your final grade. The exam is designed to assess your command of the material and concepts we cover therein. Foundational knowledge about the policy process and how this relates to theory and practice is a critical for current and future public administrators seeking to understand the system in which they operate.

The exam will require responses on three of four questions presented. The exam will cover material beginning from the beginning of the semester (Weeks 2-5). The written response should be three-four pages double-spaced for each question (11pt font, Times New Roman). With note taking and class participation throughout the semester, students should need no more than 2.5 hours (i.e., class time) to complete.

- The exam will be available on eLC at **7:10 EST on Monday, February 24**, and is due on eLC by **11:59pm EST on Tuesday, February 25**.

In-Class Presentation: Clearly and concisely communicating the elements of your policy brief is a critical skill to build, especially when conveying this information to decision makers with limited time. Your group will give a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation of key points from your policy brief (PhD students, you will do the same for your independently written brief). As a supportive exercise, other presenting groups will ask questions and offer recommendations to improve the content (pointers on feedback will be posted to eLC). Presentations will take place on **April 21 and 28 during class**. Instructions for developing/giving a presentation and instructions for peer review will be posted on eLC.

Policy Brief: 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. This assignment will focus on your group's policy issue of choice. Instructions will be posted to eLC. The policy brief is due on **May 6 by 11:59pm EST** on eLC.

Assignment Submission and Grades

Assignments—unless completed as part of an in-class exercise—will be submitted on eLC by the set deadline.

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 during office hours or by Zoom. I am not able to discuss grades by email.

Class Expectations and Guidelines

Class Preparation and Discussion: Complete the reading assigned before each class meeting and be prepared for discussion. Make sure everyone has an opportunity for input. We are interested in each person's contribution, so please understand if I ask for brevity or a conclusion to a chain of discussion. Your dedication each week will be necessary for gaining the knowledge and tools necessary for the writing assignments and presentation. Finally, you are expected to practice professional decorum and respect in the classroom.

Lecture Protocols: Recording or distribution of class sessions (video or audio) is prohibited. If a student wishes to record, they must first gain approval from the instructor and other students

that may be included in the recording. Students that require recording for purposes of special accommodation must have relevant written accommodations from the UGA Disability Resource Center. Please see the DRC [guidelines](#) for more information.

Freedom of expression is welcome, but decorum must be professional and respectful. In accordance with UGA [here](#), expressive activities must not disrupt the class.

Preferred Name and Pronouns: Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Academic Honesty: As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Plagiarism: Our capacity to learn and synthesize knowledge within the public administration profession depends upon our ability to build on the foundation of existing knowledge and research. Recognizing and documenting the work of others is critical for all students, but especially for graduate students. When writing, students must take great care in how they reference ideas and information sources. **Never use someone else's words or ideas in your writing without proper attribution.** Serious penalties exist for academic misconduct and plagiarism. Students should read and be familiar with the following resources:

o UGA Academic Honesty Policy: Plagiarism

https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/

o UGA Libraries Research Guide: Writing and Citing

<http://www.libs.uga.edu/researchguide/writing/index.html>

Mental Health and Wellness Resources: If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Electronic Devices: Silence all phones and other electronic noise-making devices while you are in the classroom. Save text messages and emails for the break or after class. Laptop computers

or tablets may be used for taking notes, but students must refrain from participating in any online activities during class. Before using electronic devices with online access in class, students should be aware of the learning distractions associated with these technologies in the classroom (e.g., <http://tinyurl.com/q7pdtgc>).

Attendance and Accommodations: Attendance is not required, but it is necessary to receive credit for in-class discussion. To receive full credit for in-class discussion, you will need to attend 12 of the 14 classes (this does not include the presentation day on December 2). You are responsible for staying up to date on class content. If you fall ill, please communicate with the instructor so that we can make appropriate accommodations. If health concerns develop and you require an accommodation, please reach out to the instructor and/or the Disability Resource Center (DRC) on campus, as appropriate. The DRC can be reached at drc@uga.edu or 706.542.8719.

Late Assignments: Deadlines have been structured so that the instructor can provide regular and periodic feedback on your understanding and application of the course material. For late submissions, 1 point will be deducted from the final grade of the assignment for each day it is late. **No late material will be accepted after May 6, 2025.**

Communication with the Instructor: Throughout the semester, you can reach me by email, and can expect me to return correspondence in a timely manner (at most 48 hours, not including weekends). I am also available to talk during office hours. If the available time slot does not align with your schedule, contact me by email so that we can identify a good meeting time.

Disabilities and Accommodations: If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>

Syllabus and Schedule Changes: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. The instructor will communicate changes in writing through your UGA email account.

Other Logistics:

- 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 [here](#).

Coronavirus Information for Students

Starting in 2022, UGA began to [manage COVID-19](#) the same way as other infectious diseases. UGA continues to follow Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) guidance on COVID-19. Self-isolation is the expectation for faculty, staff, and students who test positive for COVID-19, i.e.,

- Isolate for 7 days.
- If you have no symptoms and a negative test at the 7-day mark, you can leave isolation.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for 7 additional days.

If you have been in close contact with someone who is COVID-positive, but you are not sick, GPH and [CDC](#) urge you “...to monitor your health for symptoms of COVID-19 during the 10 days following the last time you were in close contact with a sick person with COVID-19.”

Mask-wearing is not mandatory on campus (and we cannot require students to wear masks nor ask about vaccination status).

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.

Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Schedule

Our class meets once per week on Wednesday from 7:10 pm to 9:55pm. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings *before* the class. We will then cover the lecture, and students will engage in discussion and exercises relating to weekly content. Any questions about the schedule can be directed to evbell@uga.edu.

Course Outline

Week 1 (January 6): Syllabus Review and Course Overview

We will meet to discuss the syllabus, introduce ourselves, and discuss the direction and expectations for the course.

Reading (complete **before** January 6):

- [Paul Cairney: Politics and Public Policy](#)

Assignments:

There will be a Q&A session during class time. Please bring your questions.

Week 2 (January 13): The Policy Process as Part of a System

Readings (complete before January 13):

NOTE: textbook readings are posted this week on eLC if some still need to buy the book.

- Birkland Ch. 1: Introducing the Policy Process, pp. 1-27.
- Birkland Ch. 2: Elements of the Policy-Making System, pp. 33-37.
- Tönurist et al. (2020). Introducing Systems Thinking into Public Sector Institutions: Learning by Doing? (posted on eLC)

Week 3 (January 20): MLK Holiday: NO CLASS

Week 4 (January 27): Policymaking and the Structure of US Government

Readings (complete before January 20):

- Birkland Ch. 2 (*continued*), pp. 37-69.
- Peters pp. 28-33 (posted on eLC).
- Excerpt from Elazar, D. J. (1987). *Exploring federalism*. (posted on eLC).

Week 5 (February 3): Official and Unofficial Actors in the Policy Process

Readings (complete before January 27):

- Birkland, Ch. 4 and Ch. 5
- 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)

Week 6 (February 17): Policy Theory and Its Applications

Readings (complete before February 3):

- 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)
- Cairney, P. (2015). How can policy theory have an impact on policymaking? The role of theory-led academic-practitioner discussions. *Teaching Public Administration*, 33(1), 22-39. (posted on eLC)

Week 7 (February 24): NO CLASS – EXAM

The take-home exam should require no longer than the time allotted for class. You may, however, submit this later by 11:59pm after class on February 25 if you need more time. Also, you may still use our classroom during regular class time should you choose.

Exam available on eLC in Instructions for Assignments folder

Available February 24 at 7:10pm EST on eLC in Assignment Submissions folder

Due February 25 at 11:59pm EST on eLC in Assignment Submissions folder

Week 8 (March 3): NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (March 10): Belief Systems

Readings (complete before February 19):

- Jenkins-Smith, Hank, Daniel Nohrstedt, Chris Weible, and Karin Ingold. 2018. "Chapter 4: The Advocacy Coalition Framework." In *Theories of the Policy Process*. pp. 140-141.
- 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.

Assignment: **Work on case study review, due March 21 at 11:59pm EST.**

Week 10 (March 17): The Role of Science in the Policy Process

Readings (complete before March 10):

- Karl, H. A., Susskind, L. E., & Wallace, K. H. (2007). A dialogue, not a diatribe: effective integration of science and policy through joint fact finding. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 49(1), 20-34.
- Cairney, P., & Oliver, K. (2017). Evidence-based policymaking is not like evidence-based medicine, so how far should you go to bridge the divide between evidence and policy?. *Health research policy and systems*, 15(1), 1-11.
- Henry, A.D.H., Dietz, T., and Sweeney, R.L. (2020). "Coevolution of Networks and Beliefs in U.S. Environmental Risk Policy. *Policy Studies Journal*, 0 (0), 1-28.

Assignment: **Work on case study review, due March 21 at 11:59pm EST.**

Week 11 (March 24): Problem Definition, Agenda Setting, and Politics of Attention

Readings (March 17):

- Birkland, Ch. 6
- Kingdon Ch. 8, pp. 168-179
- Downs, A. (1972). Up and down with ecology: The issue-attention cycle. *The public*, 462-473.
- Conduit or contributor? The role of media in policy change theory (Shanahan et al. 2008) (posted on eLC)
- Crow, D., & Jones, M. (2018). Narratives as tools for influencing policy change. *Policy & Politics*, 46(2), 217-234. (posted on eLC)
- Policy in 500 Words: Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (Cairney 2019)

Week 12 (March 31): Policy Design, Tools, and Types

Readings (complete before March 24):

- Birkland, Ch. 7
- Birkland, Ch. 9
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1990). Behavioral assumptions of policy tools. *The journal of politics*, 52(2), 510-529.
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy. *American political science review*, 87(2), 334-347.

Week 13 (April 7): Policy Analysis

Readings (complete before March 31):

- Birkland, Ch. 8
- “Policy Analysis in the Policy Process” by Dunn (2012), pp. 31-41 and 54-57 (posted on eLC)
- Blanchard, S. (2007). Policy analysts: Shaping society through research and problem-solving. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, 51(1), 20. (posted on eLC)

Week 14 (April 14): Policy Implementation and Failure

Readings (complete before April 14):

- Birkland, Ch. 10, pp. 343 – 354
- O'Toole Jr, L. J. (2000). Research on policy implementation: Assessment and prospects. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 10(2), 263-288.
- Moulton, S., & Sandfort, J. R. (2017). The strategic action field framework for policy implementation research. *Policy Studies Journal*, 45(1), 144-169.
- Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., & Balogh, S. (2012). An integrative framework for collaborative governance. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 22(1), 1-29.
- Nilsen, P., Ståhl, C., Roback, K., and Cairney, P. (2013). Never the twain shall meet? – a comparison of implementation science and policy implementation research. *Implementation Science* 8(63), 1-12.

Optional reading:

- Riccucci, N. M. (2005). Street-level bureaucrats and intrastate variation in the implementation of temporary assistance for needy families policies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 15(1), 89-111. (posted on eLC)

Assignments:

Work on policy brief, due by May 6 at 11:59pm EDT.

Read instructions for the presentation; bring to class any questions about the assignment. Prepare a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation of policy brief for class on April 14 or April 21, depending on your assigned date for presentation/review. (Instructions on eLC)

Week 15 (April 21): Policy Brief Presentations and Peer Review

Assignments:

Work on policy brief, due by May 6 at 11:59pm EDT.

10–15-minute PowerPoint presentation of policy brief for class; peer review of presentations (groups will be assigned). (Instructions on eLC)

Week 16 (April 28): Policy Brief Presentations and Peer Review

Assignment:

Work on policy brief, due by May 6 at 11:59pm EDT.

10–15-minute PowerPoint presentation of policy brief for class; peer review of presentations (groups will be assigned). (Instructions on eLC)