

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

Emily V. Bell, Ph.D.  
Office: Baldwin Hall 276  
Email: [evbell@uga.edu](mailto:evbell@uga.edu)  
Class Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:15-2:35pm  
Class Location: Journalism 511

Office Hours: please email to set up an appointment

### **Course Description**

An introduction to roles of governmental structures and policy-making procedures in the policy process. In addition, the course covers an array of policy areas and topics, including both cost-benefit analysis and ethical analysis. The core focus is on policymaking in the United States.

We will approach lecture, discussion, and exercises in person twice per week.

### **Topical Outline**

This course explores how different actors play a role in the policymaking process and how theories (i.e., ideas) help us understand this process. The first half of the course introduces key concepts in policymaking and the policy process. The latter half of the course focuses on different theories to understand “stages” of the policy process. We will also use theories to examine real-world policies. The course focuses primarily on policymaking in the United States (largely at federal and state levels), but policy process theories we will discuss are also applicable beyond the US context. By the end of the course, students will understand the policymaking process and be equipped with theoretical frameworks to analyze policy decisions and changes.

### **Course Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the policy process in the United States.
2. Perform analysis of identification of public problems, the process of agenda setting, the prospects for policy adoption, and policy implementation.
3. Analyze policy processes using policy process theories.

### **Course Text**

NOTE: both textbooks are available as eBooks through the UGA library

Birkland, Thomas A. *An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making*. Routledge, 2019. ISBN: 978-1351023924.

Weible, C. M. (Ed.). (2023). *Theories of the policy process*. Taylor & Francis.

### eLearning Commons and Online Resources

The readings are posted a folder in eLearning Commons (eLC). Students can access online information about our class at <http://elc.uga.edu>.

### 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	Points	Due
Attendance	5	--
Individual Memo and Participation	20	Weeks 2 - 13
Research Article Discussion Lead	20	Week 2 - 13
Policy Process Project		--
- <i>Deliverable 1: policy proposal</i>	5	February 5
- <i>Deliverable 2: process analysis</i>	15	March 5
- <i>Deliverable 3: presentation</i>	10	April 16 and 21
- <i>Deliverable 4: policy theory application</i>	15	April 23
Final Exam	10	May 5
<b>Total</b>	100	--

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected for all classes. I allow two unexcused absences; three or more unexcused absences will reduce your attendance grade. University approved reasons will not affect your grade

#### **Individual Memo and Participation—Group Assignment:**

- To prepare for the in-class discussion, you are expected to read the weekly readings and write up to 200 words (minimum of 150 words) of weekly reading memos on eLC. The memos should address key questions from the readings, main findings, your critiques, and one question to be raised during the discussion.
- The memos are due by Monday 11:59pm on eLC for the dates that memos are due.
- I will give a ‘complete’ if you submit each memo on time and participate in the discussion. However, I will give an ‘incomplete’ if the memo is unsatisfactory,

or if you did not participate in that class.

- You do not have to submit 2 memos out of the 10 assigned memos. First, you do not have to submit a memo for the week you are leading the discussion on Thursday. Second, you may choose one additional week when you do not want to submit a memo.

*Research Article Discussion Lead—Group Assignment:* Students will form groups of 3 or 4 members at the beginning of the semester, and each group will lead a 60-minute class discussion on one of the assigned papers on most Thursdays. The rest of the students in the class will engage in the discussion based on the research article of the week and their memos throughout the semester. Instructions for the group discussion are posted on eLC under Content → Assignment Instructions.

*Policy Process Project:* This is a group project of 3-5 students. We will self-organize in the first two classes. Student groups will select one policy and analyze its policy process, stakeholders, and implementation. For the policy under consideration, each group will apply one of the policy theories we discuss to understand the policy/policymaking process. The deliverables (1-4) for the project are listed below.

### **1. Deliverable 1: Proposal**

For Deliverable 1, each group will pick one state- or federal-level policy that was adopted between 1980 and 2020. As of today, the policy should be already adopted and implemented.

Groups will write 300-400 words (formatted in Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, 1-inch margins), describing the policy they have chosen, and will use at least 5 references (the reference list does not count toward the word count). I will review your submitted proposals on policy choice for approval.

### **2. Deliverable 2: Policy Analysis**

For Deliverable 2, each group will analyze the policy process, analyzes what policy stakeholders have played a key role in policy formulation and implementation. This writing assignment will be 5 pages, formatted in Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, 1-inch margins

What to include in the assignment:

- a) *Introduce the policy and the public problem it addresses.*  
Provide background information on the issue, explain why it required government attention, and describe how the policy emerged. Write a concise overview of the policy issue progression—how did the issue make it onto the agenda, when legislation was passed, and information about its implementation.
- b) *Analyze the context surrounding the policy's adoption.*  
For the policy and policy problem that you introduced in 1., I want you to tie this to the broader context (e.g., political, social, and institutional factors). Link this context to the stakeholders involved, and how this has impacted the decisions they make.
- c) *Identify and assess the roles of the organizations and individuals involved.*  
Discuss how different actors contributed to both the adoption and implementation of the policy. Pay particular attention to unofficial policy actors (such as interest groups, media, advocacy coalitions, or community leaders) and explain their influence on outcomes.

- d) *Evaluate the implementation process.*  
Analyze how the policy has been implemented in practice, identifying both its achievements and shortcomings. Discuss the administrative, financial, and political factors that have facilitated or hindered its effective execution.

### **3. Deliverable 3: presentation**

For milestone 3, each group is expected to present for 15 minutes based on Deliverables 1 and 2 so that the class can learn about different policies from each other.

### **4. Deliverable 4: policy theory application**

For milestone 4, each group should pick 1 policy process theory from the 7 theories we learned and apply the theory to analyze the policy of choice. This writing assignment should be 5 pages long, formatted in Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.

*Take-Home Exam:* The exam will be an open-book, take-home exam with several questions provided as options, from which you can pick one to answer. Students are expected to write an essay-type answer. Each answer should be one page long, Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. The exam will be available on eLC at **1:15 EDT on Thursday, April 23**, and is due on eLC by **11:59pm EDT on Friday, April 24**.

### **Class Expectations and Guidelines**

*Statement on AI and Classwork:* AI is becoming a key tool in schools and in the workplace. While AI is not prohibited to guide your work, there are some rules about how to ethically use AI that we will follow.

- 1) AI produces well-written content. Because of this, my ability to assess the quality of your writing will depend on:
  - The validity of your sources
  - The quality of your ideas
- 2) When using verbatim text generated from AI, you are expected to include AI in your works cited. You are also expected to include a statement as to why and how you used AI chatbots.
- 3) We will complement take-home assignments with in-class written assignments for data collection, brainstorming, exploratory writing, and synthesis. For ongoing assignments (e.g., policy briefs), should you decide to build on this content with support from AI, you may do so.
- 4) I want you to succeed in your profession. To stand out from other potential employees, we will work on exercises that promote higher-order thinking. Through this approach, you will use AI tools to not only generate sophisticated responses, but to:
  - articulate when and how you know that the AI chatbot is using reliable sources
  - verify or refute claims made by the AI chatbots

- reflect on AI chatbot feedback and further prompts to consider how well the material generated suits your needs

*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 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. 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:

- UGA Academic Honesty Policy: Plagiarism  
[https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited\\_Conduct/](https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/)

- 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>).

*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 5, 2026.**

*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). Please contact me by email so that we can identify a good meeting time.

*UGA Well-being Resources:* UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community. Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu). Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the **Embark@UGA** program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity. UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: [well-being.uga.edu](https://well-being.uga.edu)
- Student Care and Outreach: [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu)
- University Health Center: [healthcenter.uga.edu](https://healthcenter.uga.edu)

- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: [caps.uga.edu](https://caps.uga.edu) or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: [healthpromotion.uga.edu](https://healthpromotion.uga.edu)
- Accessibility & Testing: [accessibility.uga.edu](https://accessibility.uga.edu)

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting [well-being.uga.edu](https://well-being.uga.edu).

*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>

*Student Success Resources:* The Office for Student Success and Achievement (OSSA) empowers students to achieve success throughout their academic journey. Through free peer tutoring, academic coaching, UNIV student success courses, Bulldog Basics, and first-generation student support, we promote well-being, student learning, and community building. To connect with OSSA, email [ossa@uga.edu](mailto:ossa@uga.edu), call (706) 542-0163, or visit Milledge Hall (near Reed Hall and Sanford Stadium).

*Disclaimer for 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 to the following link to learn more information on the confidentiality of student records: <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/>
- Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies. For information on incompletes, please go here: <https://osfa.uga.edu/resources/policies/enrollment-financial-aid/grade-changes-incomplete-grades/>
- For withdrawals go here: <https://osfa.uga.edu/resources/policies/enrollment-financial-aid/dropping-courses-vs-withdrawing/>

## Schedule

Our class meets twice per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:15pm to 2:35pm. 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](mailto:evbell@uga.edu).

## Course Outline

### **Week 1 (January 13 & 15): Introduction to the Course | Public Policy and the Policy Process**

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

#### Required Readings:

- [Paul Cairney: Politics and Public Policy](#)
- Birkland Ch. 1: Introducing the Policy Process, pp. 1-27.

## **Week 2 (January 20 & 22): Policy Typologies and Real-World Application**

### Required Readings:

- Howlett, M. (2022). What Is a Policy Tool?: An Overview of the Tools Approach to Public Policy. *The Routledge Handbook of Policy Tools*, 3-18.
- Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1990). Behavioral assumptions of policy tools. *The journal of politics*, 52(2), 510-529.

**Due: Reading Memo #1**

## **Week 3 (January 27 & 29): Policy Environments, Systems, and Subsystems**

### Required Readings:

- Birkland Ch. 2: Elements of the Policy-Making System, pp. 33-37.
- Birkland Ch. 2 Elements of the Policy-Making System, pp. 37-69.

**Due: Reading Memo #2**

## **Week 4 (February 3 & 5): Official and Unofficial Actors in the Policy Process**

### Required Readings:

- Birkland, Ch. 4: Official Actors and their Role in Public Policy, pp. 136-183.
- Birkland, Ch. 5: Unofficial Actors and their Role in Public Policy, pp. 184-226.

**Due: Reading Memo #3**

## **Week 5 (February 10 & 12): Agenda Setting and Policy Formation**

### Required Readings:

- Birkland, Ch. 6, pp. 230-272.
- Pew Research Center – In a Politically Polarized Era, Sharp Divides in Both Partisan Coalitions

**Due: Reading Memo #4**

## **Week 6 (February 17 & 19): The Role of Belief Systems**

### Required Readings:

- Jenkins-Smith, H. C., Nohrstedt, D., Weible, C. M., & Ingold, K. (2018). The advocacy coalition framework: An overview of the research program. *Theories of the policy process*, pp. 140-147.
- Sunstein, Cass R. (2012), "Breaking Up the Echo." *New York Times*, pp. A25(L).

### Optional Reading:

- Weigel, Margaret. (2013). *Misinformation and its correction: Continued influence and successful debiasing*. The Journalist's Resource. <https://journalistsresource.org/politics-and-government/misinformation-correction-successful-debiasing/>.

**Due: Reading Memo #5**



**Week 7 (February 24 & 26): Science, Policy, and Theory**

Required Readings:

- Birkland, Ch. 11: Science and Theory in the Study of Public Policy, pp. 403-443.
- Pew Research Center - Public Trust in Scientists and Views on Their Role in Policymaking. *Pew Research Center*.

**Due: Reading Memo #6**

**Week 8 (March 5 & 7): Midterm**

**Week 9 (March 10 & 12): SPRING BREAK**

**There is no class this week!**

**Week 10 (March 17 & 19): Policy Change -- Multiple Streams and Punctuated Equilibrium Theory**

Required Readings:

- Birkland, Ch. 6, pp. 413-417
- Cairney Ch. 11: Ideas and 'Multiple Streams' Analysis

**Due: Reading Memo #7**

Optional Readings:

- Birkland, Ch, 6, pp. 422-425
- Policy in 500 Words: Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (Cairney 2019)

**Week 11 (March 24 & 26): The IAD and ACF**

Required Readings:

- Chapter 4: Nohrstedt, D., Ingold, K., Weible, C.M., Koebele, E.A., Olofsson, K.L., Satoh, K., and Jenkins-Smith, H. (2023). The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Progress and Emerging Areas. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Taylor & Francis.
- McGinnis, M. D. (2011). An introduction to IAD and the language of the Ostrom workshop: a simple guide to a complex framework. *Policy studies journal*, 39(1), 169-183.

**Due: Reading Memo #8**

**Week 12 (March 31 & April 2): Collaborative Governance**

Required Readings:

- Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative governance in theory and practice. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 18(4), 543-571.
- Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., & Balogh, S. (2012). An integrative framework for collaborative governance. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 22(1), 1-29.

Optional Readings:

- Choi, Y. J. (2020). The power of collaborative governance: The case of South Korea responding to COVID-19 pandemic. *World Medical & Health Policy*, 12(4), 430-442.

**Due: Reading Memo #9**

**Week 13 (April 7 & 9): Policy Innovation and Diffusion**

Required Reading:

- de Oliveira, O. P., Romano, G. C., Volden, C., & Karch, A. (2023). Policy diffusion and innovation. In *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 230-261). Routledge.
  - Tuesday: pp. 298-309
  - Thursday: pp. 311-326

**Due: Reading Memo #10**

**Week 14 (April 14 & 16): Policy Implementation | Project Presentations**

Required Reading (April 14):

- Birkland, Ch. 10, pp. 343 – 354

**Project Presentations (April 14):** student groups will provide 15-minute presentations for their assigned day, or they will serve as reviewers for their assigned presenter group.

**Week 15 (April 21): Policy Project Presentation**

**Project Presentations (April 21):** student groups will provide 15-minute presentations for their assigned day, or they will serve as reviewers for their assigned presenter group.

**Week 15 (April 23): Final Exam (Take Home)**

This is an open-book, take-home exam that will be made available on eLC at 1:15pm EDT on April 23 (instructions included), and will be due on eLC by April 24, 2:35pm EDT.