CARLETON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

PADM 5116: POLICY ANALYSIS & CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE

SYLLABUS
FALL TERM 2009

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of public policy, decision-making, and the key elements of the policy process. The focus is in large part on Canada, but not exclusively so. The emphasis is on understanding contemporary theoretical and practical debates about public policy and public management. Readings will illustrate cutting-edge discussions in the field, but at the same time contribute to your grasp of the underlying frameworks that can help us understand the policy process. As much as possible, there will be a concerted effort to link theoretical discussions to practical concerns around policy formulation and implementation. The broad theme of the course is that the policy-making world has changed dramatically in the last decade, forcing reconsideration of the traditional tools of policy analysis and public management.

The course is a literature-based graduate seminar, and students will be expected to complete all the readings and be ready to engage in spirited but civil discussion at each class. Assignments and readings have been designed to provide the appropriate platform for strong participation and engagement. The first part of the course emphasizes theory and the second part emphasizes applied policy analysis, but there is a balance of theory and application throughout the course since the two cannot be separated in the real world.

By the end of this part of the course, you will be able to:

- Identify key aspects and weaknesses of the analytical paradigm in policy studies
Understand and explain the fundamental features of the changing domestic and international context of policy-making

Apply new analytical skills to make sense of both the content of policy and the policy process itself

Outline the major challenges governments face in making policy in the new millennium

**READINGS**


Other Readings will be available either on the course website or electronically.

**REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briefing Note on Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>October 14, in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Consists of general participation and presentation, 10% each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>One week take home starting October 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>December 2, in class</td>
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*Participation*

Students are expected to do all the readings and come prepared to class. At the outset of each class, I will provide some remarks to set the readings and the issues in context, but the remainder of each seminar will consist of presentations and discussion. The grade is based on the quality of the contributions, not the quantity.

*In-Class Presentation*

The ability to analyse, critique, and present a complex document/article is a highly valuable professional skill required in all career paths.

Each course reading will be presented and critiqued by a member of the class. You should assume that everyone has read the materials, so the presentation must be thematic and analytical. Rather than a linear summary or description of the reading, the presentation should be organized around a set of questions about the theme for that week, and how the reading is connected to that theme. Sample questions could include:
What are the implications of the arguments in the reading for the issue for this week, and for previous weeks?

What are the practical consequences for policy analysis or policy-making from the reading?

Are there important weaknesses or contradictions in the reading? What assumptions are being made in the reading, and are they warranted?

What evidence does the author present? Does it support the general argument?

Where you persuaded by the argument? If so, why? If not, why not?

In addition to these questions, you can develop several more that are specifically keyed to the topic being discussed that week. At least 24 hours before the class, presenters should circulate via WebCT their list of questions – no more than four per presenter.

The presentation should be about 15 minutes in length. Presenters should think through how they can make their presentation appealing and comprehensible. Short handouts are advised. After the presentation, the student will lead a short discussion. Be prepared with additional questions and comments to stimulate the discussion. Real-world examples or illustrations of theoretical points in the readings are also welcome where appropriate. Remember that concise, informative and interesting oral presentations are also a key professional skill.

**Briefing Note on Research Paper**

Students will submit a proposal for their research paper in class on October 14 for review and approval. It should be no more than 1000 words in total (roughly two single-spaced pages). Assume that it is a briefing note on a proposed research project being submitted to your boss, a senior and very busy official.

It should contain the following:

- A succinct introductory paragraph that briefly outlines the problem/issue that you are examining, why it is important, and how you propose to proceed.
- A longer section that fleshes out the issue/problem, and provides a more developed analysis of why the problem is important.
- The research question that will guide the work.
- A brief list of some sources that you have consulted and what they contain, as well as a short list of other possible sources.
- A brief outline of the paper.

**Mid-term**

The mid-term will be a week long take home exam. The exam will be distributed at the end of class on October 28 and returned in class on November 4. It will consist of two essay style answers chosen from a list of several questions. The questions will provide you with an opportunity to integrate the readings and class discussions.
The midterm must be submitted in hardcopy. You must also submit an identical electronic version to the course WebCT site. I will grade the hardcopy, and retain the electronic version in the databank of papers submitted.

Applied Policy Analysis Research Paper
The research paper will be about 5000 words in length (about 20 double-spaced pages, not including notes or appendices). The paper will analyze a policy issue of your choice. It is expected that the paper will apply the conceptual tools developed in the first part of the course. The policy issue does not have to be restricted to Canada – it can be Canadian, something taking place in another country or collection of countries (e.g., the EU), a comparative analysis of how the issue is tackled here and in other countries.

The final paper must be properly cited (you may choose any of the standard citation guides), including internet sources. An enormously powerful and useful tool is RefWorks (see under the Services column at www.library.carleton.ca/). You can instantly transfer all the bibliographical information from a book or article into folders in your RefWorks account, and then use them through a simple program called “Write ‘n Cite” that inserts them in your paper and automatically generates bibliographies. A couple of hours of investment will save you many, many more later on, not just for this course, but all your courses and research papers.

While the internet is a useful resource, please avail yourself of the full range of electronic research tools that exist. Some examples:

Google Scholar
http://scholar.google.com
[A database of scholarly articles and citations – a quick method to find works by a given author]

Google Books
http://books.google.com/
[Similar to Amazon, but with some books searchable in their entirety]

IPSA Portal
http://ipsaportal.unina.it/final.html
[The International Political Science Association guide to 300 web resources dealing with politics]

Carleton University Library electronic resources for public policy and admin
http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/padmin/articles.html
[Includes immensely useful databases like the Economist Intelligence Unit, the Web of Science (for the Social Science Citation Index), OECD, and Lexis-Nexis]

Please be aware that this paper must be original to this course, and your own work. Please consult that University’s guidelines on instructional offences (http://www.carleton.ca/calendars/grad/current/regulations/index.html#14). Plagiarism is an extremely
serious offence, and can result in suspension or expulsion. It is in your best interest to submit your own, original work, and to ensure that it is properly and thoroughly cited and sourced.

Your paper must be submitted in hardcopy in class on December 2. You must also submit an electronic version of your paper to the course WebCT site. I will grade the hardcopy, and retain the electronic version in the databank of papers submitted. Extensions will be granted only in cases of documented illness or serious domestic affliction.

GRADING

The following explanation of grades is the agreed policy of the School of Public Policy and Administration.

In graduate school, expectations about analytical abilities and performance are higher than in undergraduate work, and what is an acceptable grade is also different. Whereas a C+ is a passing grade in undergraduate studies, it is not in graduate school. We have expanded upon the grading system outlined in the Graduate Calendar in order to give you a fuller description of standards. This explanation is intended to provide clarification of the Graduate Calendar, and in no way overrides it.

Carleton University uses a 12 point grading scale from A+ (12) to D- (1). Your overall Grade Point Average (GPA) will be calculated on the basis of this 12 point scale and the final evaluation you receive in courses will be submitted as letter grades corresponding to this scale. Here is how to interpret grades in terms of our expectations of performance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Carleton Numerical System</th>
<th>% Ranges</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>For written work, virtually publishable. Demonstrates exceptional evaluative judgement, outstanding critical thinking, and mastery of technical as well as literary aspects of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>Demonstrates superior grasp of material, very strong critical thinking, and capacity to understand and extend underlying patterns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>Demonstrates strong grasp of material, its component parts, and capacity to analyze their relationships to each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Demonstrates clear understanding of material and ability to apply concepts. Written work is competent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>Satisfactory, but below average. Demonstrates</td>
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comprehension of material, reasonable but not strong analytical capacity, with limitations in the ability to apply concepts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Barely Adequate</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Less Than Adequate</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C to D-</td>
<td>Less than Adequate</td>
<td>50-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Clearly below average. Demonstrates comprehension and understanding, with limited capacity for application. Communication skills problematic.

Did not demonstrate an adequate understanding of the material or the ability to apply the concepts. Writing and/or presentations show serious problems.

Grades in this range indicate work that is passable in some respects but does not meet the standards of graduate work.

Did not meet minimal requirements.

Grades of A- or B+ should be considered as good, solid performances that hover around the average for graduate work. In any given class, most of the grades are likely to be A- or B+. There are usually fewer grades of A, and an A means you have done very well; grades of A+ are quite rare (but we do give them). A grade of B- is a strong signal that things did not go well in the course, and you were considerably below average. Normally, graduate students do not get credit for courses with a grade less than B-.

In the case of this course, grades will be awarded as letter grades, but I will calculate your final grades as the weighted mean of the grade point equivalencies. Example: A- on an exam worth 30%; B+ on a paper worth 45%; and B for participation worth 25%:

\[
\begin{align*}
A- & \quad 10 \times 0.30 = 3.00 \\
B+ & \quad 9 \times 0.45 = 4.05 \\
B  & \quad 8 \times 0.25 = 2.00 \\
\text{Final} & \quad 9.05 \text{ or B+}
\end{align*}
\]

Please note in the example above that your letter grade will correspond to the interval in which your numerical grade falls (e.g., anything between 9.0 and 9.9 is a B+).
SEMINAR SCHEDULE
(Classes begin for us on Wednesday September 16 and end on Wednesday December 2)

Week 1 (September 16): Introduction and Overview


Week 2 (September 23): Policy Analysis: What are the Key Concepts and Practice?


Week 3 (September 30): Why is Policy Making Under Pressure, and How are Policy Problems Defined?


Week 4 (October 7): How are Policies Designed?


Week 5 (October 14): What are the Challenges of Implementation?


Week 6 (October 21): Who are the Players in the Policy Process?


The range of players is too broad to be embraced in a single reading. Accordingly, each student in the class should visit http://polisci.nelson.com/igroups.html and select a group’s web site, read through it, summarize its agenda, objectives, tactics, publications etc., and be prepared for a brief report in class as well as discussion. More instructions on this assignment will be given the week before.

Week 7 (October 28): How do We Evaluate Policy?

MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED THIS CLASS


Leslie A. Pal, A Value-Based Policy Development Model (Environment Canada, 2008)

Week 8 (November 4): Policy Analytics: Integrating the Conceptual Framework

No readings assigned this week. The class will be devoted to brief (5 minute) presentations of progress reports on the applied policy analysis research papers. What is the topic/problem/issue being examined, what has been uncovered to date, any problems encountered.
Weeks 9 – 12: The next three weeks will consider three of the most challenging policy issues the Canadian (and other) government faces: climate change, social policy, and the war in Afghanistan.

Week 9 (November 11): Climate Change


Backgrounder material (to be provided closer to the seminar date)

Week 10 (November 18): Social Policy


Week 11 (November 25): War in Afghanistan


Backgrounder material (to be provided closer to the seminar date)

Week 12 (December 2) Conclusion

Readings TBA
GENERAL SOURCES ON POLICY ANALYSIS


Brau, Dieter and Andreas Busch, eds., *Public Policy and Political Ideas* (Edward Elgar, 2000)


