

---

# POS 331

## Public Policy

Taylor University

**Instructor:** Jakob A. Miller

**Contact:** jakob\_miller@taylor.edu

**Office:** Reade 231/x85281

**Hours:** 3–4pm/MWF

**Time:** 11:00–11:50am/MWF

**Place:** Reade 211

---

“We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom. The world henceforth will be run by synthesizers, people able to put together the right information at the right time, think critically about it, and make important choices wisely.” — *Wilson*

### **Course Description:** Welcome to Public Policy!

Public policy is, in a sense, what we have chosen to do about the problems that we see in the world. Yet most people don't know how policy is made, or even what their role in the policy process is.

This course offers an overview of the policy process, from the underlying reasons why we have this thing called policy in the first place to in-depth studies of the reasons why particular designs succeed or fail. We'll study everything from killer roller coasters to the proper size of a soda, from the dollar value of a human life to snowmobile arguments, from eating local to selling all the oil in Chad, and we'll learn the underlying principles behind them all. By the end of this course, you'll understand how and why a policy succeeds or fails — and you'll also be able (like a strategic political operative) to do something about that.

*Meets civic engagement or general social science requirement. Assistance available through BlackBoard Support Services.*

### **Required Materials:**

All readings will be posted on BlackBoard, with a folder for each class day. Optional readings will be marked as such. There is no required textbook for this course. If you want a reference book for your own use, I recommend *Public Policy* by Kraft and Furlong.

This is a reading-intensive course: it is imperative that you come to each class meeting having carefully read all the assigned texts. Students will be expected to be familiar with the material assigned, and will be frequently called upon to summarize and discuss what they have read. Students should also be familiar with current events, as these will sometimes be brought up during the course. Skimming any major news outlet is sufficient.

This is not a binding document. All material within subject to change at any time.

### **Course Goals:**

When our time together is over, you should have: 1) Developed a practical understanding of the policy-making process. 2) Become familiar with academic arguments, able to argue and discourse as scholars. 3) Grown as Christian citizens, able to better recognize and address public needs through policy tools.

## Assignments:

Participation	10%
Quizzes	20%
Papers	25%
Presentation	10%
Exams	35%

**Participation:** Class participation is both expected and required. I'll give a breakdown of why I have participation as a part of your grade, as well as how participation will be scored in our first meeting.

**Quizzes:** Reading quizzes account for 20% of your final grade. These quizzes are short, pop, closed-book quizzes, given at the beginning of class. In order to account for circumstance, the four lowest quiz grades will be dropped for each student.

**Papers:** Throughout this course, you will be working with a small group of your classmates to research a particular issue of your choice. *Individually*, you will use that research to complete **five** short written assignments, ending the course with a professional policy memo. Each assignment is roughly 500-800 words in length. Together, these papers are worth 25% of your final grade. Writing prompts for these papers will be distributed in class, and each paper must be turned in by midnight on the date listed below. Late work will be penalized one full grade, and work overdue by a week or more will not be accepted for any reason.

- **Problem Definition:** Sep. 20th
- **Policy Alternatives:** Oct. 4th
- **Public Opinion and the Political Context:** Nov. 3rd
- **Allies and Opponents:** Nov. 17th
- **Policy Memo:** Nov. 29th

**Presentation:** You will also be working with your research group to present your findings to the class. Each student in the group must have a major role, and you will be graded as a group. This is 10% of your grade.

**Exams:** There are two exams for this course: a midterm on Oct. 11th during normal class hours, and a final on Dec. 11th at 10:00 am. The midterm is worth 15% of your final grade, and the final is worth 20%. The exams are cumulative and cover both readings and lecture, and will be mixed multiple choice and short answer.

**Plagiarism:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a person presents or turns in work that includes someone else's ideas, language, or other (not common-knowledge) material without giving appropriate credit to the source. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in failing this course, and may also result in further consequences as stipulated in the Taylor catalogue. **Academic Dishonesty** constitutes a serious violation of academic integrity and scholarship standards at Taylor that can result in substantial penalties, at the sole discretion of the University, including but not limited to, denial of credit in a course as well as dismissal from the University. . . . In short, a student violates academic integrity when he or she claims credit for any work not his or her own (words, ideas, answers, data, program codes, music, etc.) or when a student misrepresents any academic performance.

## Course Outline:

Reading assignments and lecture coverage might change — it depends on the progress of the class. However, you must keep up with the reading assignments.

MONDAY		WEDNESDAY		FRIDAY	
Aug 28th Classes Start		30th <b>Introduction and Class Overview</b>	1	Sep 1st <b>What is Policy?</b> Torjman	2
4th No Class Labor Day		6th <b>What isn't Policy?</b> Kahneman and Tversky	3	8th <b>Why is Policy?</b> Olson and Hardin	4
11th <b>Why is Policy Hard?</b> Federalist 10	5	13th <b>Case Studies in Policy Failure</b> Buron, <i>Annals</i>	6	15th <b>Problem Definition</b> Stone	7
18th <b>Policy Windows</b> Kingdon	8	20th <b>The Tools of Governance</b> Lindblom	9	22nd <b>The Tools of Analysis</b> TBD	10
25th <b>The Tools of Analysis</b> TBD	11	27th <b>Cost-Benefit Analysis</b> Gayer and Parker	12	29th <b>Program Evaluation</b> Excerpt, <i>Overview of Evaluation</i>	13
Oct 2nd <b>Collective Action and Policy Entrepreneurs</b> Crowley	14	4th <b>Class Cancellation</b>	15	6th <b>Agenda Setting and Social Choice</b> Riker	16
9th <b>Public Opinion</b> Lakoff	17	11th <b>Midterm</b>	18	13th No Class Fall Break	
16th No Class Fall Break		18th <b>Federalism</b> Kettl	19	20th No Class Inauguration Day	
23rd <b>Institutions</b> Feyrer and Sacerdote	20	25th <b>Congress</b> Mayhew	21	27th <b>Legislative Executive Relations</b> Brady and Volden	22
30th <b>Courts and Agencies</b> Garrett	23	Nov 1st <b>Direct Democracy</b> Gerber	24	3rd <b>Interest Groups</b> Rubenzer	25
6th <b>Policy Persistence</b> Patashnik	26	8th <b>Counter-Terrorism and Security</b> Jost	27	10th <b>Welfare Policy</b> <i>20th Anniversary Brookings Conference on Welfare Reform (Keynote Speeches Only)</i>	28
13th <b>Education Policy</b> Cowen, Maranto	29	15th <b>Environmental and Energy Policy</b> <i>Cap and Trade, Undoing Obama</i>	30	17th <b>Case Study - Airport Security</b> Stewart and Mueller	31
20th <b>Case Study - Arsenic</b> Sunstein	32	22nd No Class Thanksgiving!		24th No Class Thanksgiving!	

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
27th <b>33</b> <b>Case Study - Ethanol</b> Lawrence, Cappiello and Apuzzo	29th <b>34</b> <b>Case Study - Local Food</b> Desrochers and Shimizu	Dec 1st <b>35</b> <b>Presentations</b>
4th <b>36</b> <b>Presentations</b>	6th <b>37</b> <b>Presentations</b>	8th <b>38</b> <b>Review</b> Course Conclusion and Final Exam Review.