POSC 3357/MLPOS 5357 Public Policy Analysis
Summer II Term 2015

Dr. Jon R. Taylor
Meeting Time: 5:30pm – 9:50pm MW Malloy 113
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Office Hours: 7:00am – 10:00am and 12:30pm – 5:00pm M – TH
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Required Text:

All course materials will be provided to you via a peripheral drive.

Course Description:

The objective of this course is to introduce you to policy analysis as a systematic way of thinking about public policies. Throughout the course, you will think about, discuss, and come to understand the crucial components of public policy, as well as analytical approaches to public policy. This will help you to take the first step in becoming a solid policy analyst. This course is designed to help you develop the skills required to define and critically analyze policy problems, articulate relevant decision making criteria for policy analysis, and evaluate alternative policy options. You are expected to learn: (1) what frameworks are available for policy analysis, (2) how a particular framework is relevant in a given context, and (3) the strengths and weaknesses of each framework. These frameworks, skills, and techniques will be applied to a wide range of substantive public policy issues.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Through course discussions, readings, and writing exercises, students will develop knowledge and skills to:

- Apply the rational model of policy analysis beginning with identification of a pressing policy problem, as well as its causes and consequences;
- Analyze alternative policy proposals across key criteria (e.g., effectiveness, sustainability) in order to develop clear policy recommendations;
- Understand the implementation process and accurately assess the likelihood of successful policy implementation over time.

Exams and Research Requirements:

There will be one exam plus a research memorandum. The following is the grading breakdown for the course:

- Research Memorandum: 35%
• Attendance and participation: 20%
• Final exam: 45%

Students are expected to prepare thoroughly for each class session, to submit written materials on time, and to participate actively and constructively in class. Attendance is critical. All written work is expected to be of high quality. That is, it should be logically organized, complete, and lead the reader to a conclusion. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, proper referencing, and organization will be graded as well as content and presentation. All quotations and significant paraphrases should be properly cited.

Research Memorandum:

A research memorandum on an aspect of public or non-profit policy is required. **The completed research memorandum is due on August 5, 2015.**

**Research memorandum expectations:** All work submitted must be typewritten and single-spaced, using a 12-point font, with 1 inch margins on all four sides and properly footnoted. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade. The grading of the memorandum will be based on:

- Your ability to provide an analytical viewpoint on the topic to back up your opinions provided with research materials.
- Clarity and organization of the memorandum.
- Appropriate citations and reference throughout the memorandum (footnotes, bibliography, etc.).
- Correct grammar, spelling and form.
- **Unexcused late memoranda will be reduced by one-half a grade per day.**
- **Undergraduate students:** The research memorandum should be between 4 – 5 pages or more in length.
- **Graduate students:** The research memorandum should between 6 – 8 pages or more in length.

Class Rules:

- **Attendance and participation is required and worth 20% of your overall grade**
- Arriving late is strongly discouraged
- Reading course assignments is expected
- Showing respect to other students and the professor is expected
- Make up work will be limited to special circumstances (and with prior notification only)
- Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will result in a failing grade.
Attendance and Miscellaneous:

I rarely take roll in class. That does not mean I fail to notice the lack of your presence in the classroom. On the contrary. With such intimate classes as offered at the University of St. Thomas, your absence is quite noticeable. I like to have you in class. I value your input. But I make the presumption that since you are in college that you are a reasonably responsible adult. It bothers me very little if you have found someone or something better than attending my class. Of course, it bothers me very little to flunk you as result of your finding that someone/something better. If you don’t show up for class and/or blow-off or do extraordinarily poor on the homework assignments, exams, and the article review, you may be looking at crime or a job in the fast food industry as a succinct alternative to the stresses of higher education.

Academic Integrity:

"It would have been better if he had never been born"– Mark 14:21.

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy and reported to the University’s Academic Misconduct Committee.

As stated in the Academic Misconduct Code for the University of St. Thomas, academic misconduct includes: (a) cheating (using an authorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; (b) assisting others in any such act; or (c) attempting to engage in such acts.

Plagiarism is using the work or another person and claiming it as your own. The most common types of plagiarism include:

- Using a paper or portion of a paper prepared by someone else;
- Quoting someone else’s language or words without proper quotation or citation; and
- Paraphrasing someone else’s ideas, framework, or insights without giving credit to the original author in a citation.

Academic misconduct in any form is unacceptable and suspected violations will be pursued aggressively.
Students with Disabilities:

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953. If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953.

Course Schedule (Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis in class):

Introduction to Public Policy Analysis
What is public policy?
Rationale for policy: Markets, experts, and democratic decisions
The policy process: Cycles, charts, graphs, and fun with data
Problem Definition: Structuring problems
Agenda-setting: Institutional stakeholders and non-institutional actors
Selection of Criteria: Decision criteria and policy trade-offs
Comparison of Alternatives: Cost-benefit analysis
Formative Evaluation: Implementation/performance monitoring
Summative Evaluation: Program/policy evaluation; Impact/outcome evaluation
The practice of Policy Analysis: Collaborative policy-making

Research Memorandum Due on August 5, 2015
Final Exam on August 5, 2015 5:30 – 9:50pm