PAFF 523: Introduction to Public Policy Analysis

Binghamton University | State University of New York | Fall 2021

# Course Information

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| Meeting Place | Meeting Time | Zoom Link for the Class |
| UDC 222 | T: 5:50-8:50 pm | <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/6187732069>  **Please Note: This link is only if we migrate to online learning during the semester. This class is currently scheduled to be taught in person.** |

# Instructor Information

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Instructor | Email | Office Location & Hours |
| Matthew J. Uttermark, PhD | [mutterma@binghamton.edu](file:///C:\Users\muttermark%20laptop\Downloads\mutterma@binghamton.edu) | UDC 341  T 3:00 - 5:00 pm |

# General Information

## Description

Public Policy Analysis is a core requirement in any administration, policy, or political science graduate-level curriculum. It is designed to provide a broad approach to theories of policymaking and to various analytical tools used for its study. Public policy may be approached in several distinct ways with distinct approaches. In the broadest sense, it is the study of “who gets what, when, why, and how,” and so is focused on questions of distribution. More narrowly, it may focus on specific policy issues with which people are concerned at some times: health care, the environment, and so forth. It may also be focused on specific theories, frameworks and approaches.

This is a seminar—not a lecture. You are expected to critically read, analyze and discuss these readings each week. There can be no free-riders in this class. Your insights and analysis will be key to the success of the class. You will be expected to carefully read the required texts and come to class prepared to discuss the importance of the readings to public policy scholarship and your own interests. Since public policy research deals with timely and dynamic topics, it is appropriate to think of how the academic research on public policy relates to current events at the federal, state and international level.

The objectives of the course are as follows: to understand and be able to utilize key theories defining public policy theory and analysis; recognize strengths and weaknesses in this research; answer what is unique about public policy research and what other subfields can learn from this research; and develop a research design to answer a key question in public policy research.

**This course requires that students to have previously taken PAFF 510 (Research Design & Methods).** We will be applying and evaluating many of the research techniques covered in that course to material in this class.

## Grading\*

| A 93-100 | B 83-86.99 | C 73-76.99 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A- 90-92.99 | B- 80-82.99 | C- 70-72.99 |
| B+ 87-98.99 | C+ 77-79.99 | F < 70 |

\* A letter grade of ‘A’ is the highest grade that you can receive in this course.

**Advice to Accelerated Undergraduate Students** Please note that expectations and evaluation of performance in a graduate-level course are substantially different than evaluations in an undergraduate-level course. In a graduate-level course, you will work develop skills to think independently and problem solve on your own. These are valuable skills that employers are looking for in the public and private sector job markets. This means that assignments and course readings will, by design, have less handholding than assignments and readings that you interacted with in undergraduate level coursework. If you are having trouble engaging with material in this class, it is your responsibility to schedule an appointment and visit during office hours.

In addition, as stated in the department handbook, grades are another departure from undergraduate coursework. A work effort that earned you an ‘A’ in an undergraduate course, will only earn you a ‘B’ in a graduate-level course. Adjust your expectations accordingly. I recommend scheduling 8-10 hours per week for this class, 3 hours for lecture and the remainder for readings and assignments. It is better to schedule too much time to prep for this class than not enough. I also strongly recommend against taking course overloads while taking a graduate-level course.

**Grade Rounding** As a matter of policy, the instructor does not round grades in graduate-level coursework. Please do not email the instructor at the end of the semester asking that your final grade be rounded up.

## Evaluation

**Participation (15%):** Students are expected to attend all in a graduate program, barring an excused absence. Please come to class prepared (i.e. having read all of the assigned materials for that day). You are expected to actively participate in each class. Participation will be evaluated by students' actively engaging in lecture, providing thoughtful comments/questions in class discussion, and evidence of careful reading of assigned materials. I expect students, on average, to have at least five comments of quality each week in class to receive an ‘A’ grade on this benchmark. Students who do not participate will receive no higher than a ‘C-‘ (70%) on this benchmark.

**Discussion Leader / Guiding Questions (15%):** Students will be paired to serve as discussion leader for one class during the semester. I will pass around a sign-up sheet for you to indicate a day that you would like to lead discussion. Students should reflect on key questions that come up in the week's readings and possible applications of findings in public administration/policy. Prior to class, student leaders will submit a pair of guiding questions (8-12), which will guide class discussion. Student will send a preliminary draft no later than 9am Monday during the corresponding week. The instructor will make adjustments as they see fit and place the questions on a folder in Brightspace.

**Response Papers (10% each):** In addition to serving as discussion leader, students will also sign-up for two class periods to write response papers. Response papers should be 1,000-1,200 words (about two full pages), typed in Times New Roman size 12 font, single-spaced. A template is available on Brightspace.

Students should briefly highlight main themes or questions of the readings. The response papers can (and should) discuss theories and methodological techniques of the readings; discuss strength and weaknesses of theories, hypotheses, and research methods; discuss what implications exist for public administrators; and potential questions that you have after engaging with the research.

Students must email their response papers to the instructor no later than 12:00 pm on Tuesday. Additionally, a hardcopy of the response paper is due on my desk at the start of class. Response papers are graded on a check plus (100%), check (90%), check minus (80%) system. Response papers that are late are not eligible for grade higher than check minus. It is expected that students writing response papers will be the most engaged students during class discussion, during their respective weeks.

**Final Project (40%):** Students must select one of the two options below for a final project.

**Option A – Practice Policy Analysis:** Students will write a draft policy analysis for a final project in this class. Students can select a policy at any level of government and any substantive policy of the student’s interest. You will complete a conceptual framework paper that combines policy theory, research design and methods, and public service perspectives to analyze a real-world policy problem of your choice.

The conceptual framework will: 1) describe the policy problem to be studied; 2) outline the policy theory (e.g., one of the theories coved in the W&S text) that may be used to understand and analyze the problem; 3) discuss a theoretical model of relationships among outcome, policy, and control variables; 4) present a schematic or logic model of the theoretical relationship; 5) state testable hypotheses; 6) within reason, describe and conduct a quantitative/qualitative/mixed-methods analytic approach and data requirements that would be needed for evidence-based analysis of the policy problem, and; 7) discuss the findings of such an analysis to the appropriate lay audience (e.g., state legislative committee, non-profit advisory board, local community leaders, etc.).

With respect to research design/methods, students must make an effort to produce the most complete set of evaluation possible. If a student decided to conduct a case study, they need to take a stab at writing a competent case study. If a student wishes to collect observational data (e.g., a 50-state analysis of a particular policy), they should attempt to collect that data and visualize the data in the report. If a student decides on a design that cannot be feasibly run in the semester (e.g., a survey of administrators), they should present a draft of the proposed study (e.g., draft survey questions) and then must walk through expected implications given various findings.

Evaluations should be at least 5,500 words for quantitative papers and at least 6,000 words for qualitative papers – including references, 1.5 spacing, Times New Roman fount, size 12. Please use APA author—date citations. At least 50% of references must come from academic sources (e.g., university press books or peer-reviewed academic journals).

Please note: If you turn in final project that is 1,000 words below the required word count, you are ineligible to receive a final grade higher than the percentage missing – for example, a student who turns in a 3,000-word qualitative analysis will receive no higher than a 50% on the final project grade.

**Option B – Research Paper:** With instructor permission, students may instead choose to write a research paper that most effectively analyze a public policy question related to your research. The paper should provide: 1) a carefully developed research design and; 2) at least a base-line, first-cut, evaluation of your research question. Either via a qualitative or quantitative analysis.

Papers must be of article length (between 7,000 – 10,000 words including references), 1.5 spacing, Times New Roman fount, size 12. Please use APA author—date citations. Please note, that I will evaluate your paper at least in part based on your ability to carry out the project in the real world. You cannot simply write that you are going to randomize an intervention that would be impossible, for all intents and purposes, for you to carry out.

**Final Project Presentation (10%):** Students will prepare a 10 minuet (~5 slide) presentation of their evaluation project and findings and share them with the class on the last meeting of the semester. Please note, class may run a little long on this day due to presentations.

# Course Materials

## Required Text

**Theories of the Policy Process.** Fourth Edition. 2016. Christopher M. Weible and Paul A. Sabatier (eds.). Taylor.

## Supplemental Text (This is good for reviewing specific qualitative and quantitative research designs).

**Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation.** Third Edition. 2010. Wholey, Joseph, S. Harry P. Hatry, and Kathryn E. Newcomer (eds.). John Wiley & Sons.

**Other readings (book chapters, journal articles) will be made available on the course site.**

COVID-19 Related Class Policies

Binghamton University has adopted requirements to protect the health of students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. Safeguarding public health depends on each of us strictly following these requirements. As a condition of enrollment, each student has acknowledged a statement of Rights and Responsibilities for the semester; including an acknowledgment that all campus requirements for spacing and wearing face coverings must be followed at all times. Health and safety standards will be enforced for this course.

**Face-to-face Mask Policy**. Currently Binghamton University (and the SUNY system at large) are following CDC guidelines with respect to wearing masks in enclosed spaces. This class will follow any university directives on wearing masks in the classroom. Please review Binghamton University’s mask policy from the 2020-21 school year below on university expectations if masks are required by administration.

**2020-21 Directive.** Face masks that cover the nose and mouth tightly are required at all times in the classroom. We know that they are one of the most effective means at stopping the spread of the corona-virus. Please note that the university has indicated that face-shields are not an appropriate substitute for face masks in the classroom.

If a student comes to class without an adequate face mask, the instructor will dismiss the student from the class. Any work that the student misses will receive a zero. If a student is not wearing a mask properly, the student will readjust the mask or leave the classroom after the instructor's first warning.

If a student does not comply with the requirements and refuses to wear their face mask properly so that it covers the nose and mouth tightly, to leave the classroom when directed by the instructor, the instructor will immediately cancel the remainder of the class session and inform the dean's once – per university policy. The Dean's office will work with the Student Records office to issue a failing grade (F) for the course, regardless of when in the semester the incident occurs. The Dean's once will also inform the Office of Student Conduct.

I encourage all of you to be good global citizens and be courteous of the fact that peers in the class may have family or friends with compromised immune systems who need this accommodation.

**If we migrate back to Zoom** you will be able to join the class using the link below:

<https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/6187732069>

Normal Class Policies

**Makeup Work** Make-up work will be accepted in this course if a student has a university approved absence. University approved absences include:

* A documented illness (or serious illness of a dependent child).
* A death in the family.
* Call to active military duty.
* Jury duty.
* A religious or work-restricted holy days.
* Official university activities (i.e., a student athlete competing in a meet).

It is your responsibility to inform me and get documentation before the absence occurs. For example, if you are ill the day of an assignment, I require a signed note from a medical doctor dated the day of the exam. I will then work to determine how to make-up the assignment. With the exception of the midterm and final – which must be completed on time –late work submitted up to 48 hours after a deadline may receive up to half credit.

**Incomplete Grades** I do not expect to hand out a grade of “Incomplete” to any student in this course. However, a grade of “Incomplete” will only be given if there is an agreement between the instructor and the student prior to the end of the semester. The instructor reserves the right to determine a legitimate reason for assigning an incomplete grade.

**Email Policy** Please avoid emailing the instructor with questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus. The instructor will not reply to such emails. This document contains information on how your grade is calculated and what is covered each day in class. Additionally, if you wish to set up an appointment with the instructor outside of office hours, please provide a list of times to meet in the first email sent to the instructor.

**Maintaining a Respectful Classroom Environment** Binghamton University is committed to providing and maintaining a respectful environment that is conductive to safe working, learning, and living for all members of the institutional community. It is expected that all students will respect each other in their personal interactions, inside and outside of the classroom. Acts of violence, threats of violence, derogatory comments, and behavior meant to intimidate others is prohibited.

I reserve the right to have a student escorted from the classroom for persistent violations of this policy and the students final grade will reflect their lack of decorum.

**Plagiarism** Any form of cheating will NOT be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing any written work you will receive an automatic zero on the assignment and will be reported to the university in accordance with Binghamton policy. Plagiarism is defined as: handing in a paper you did not write, attempting to pass off someone else's work as your own, or using your own ideas, information, or phraseology of other writers without giving proper credit in your text. Self-plagiarism – handing the same written assignment for multiple courses – is also prohibited. See the university honor code details below for more information.

**Binghamton's Academic Honor Code** The academic honor system of Binghamton University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility: (1) To uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work. (2) To refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community, and (3) To foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community."

I expect students to bring possible violations of the honor code to my attention as soon as possible, so that the violation may be resolved. Violations included, but are not limited to, plagiarism of work, assisting a student in obtaining unauthorized information for an assignment, project or test. A complete list of violations can be found in Binghamton's University Bulletin.

Violation of the Academic honor code can lead, but is not limited to, a lower/failing grade on the assignment or a lower/failing grade in the course. The university may take additional measures including, formal reprimand, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university.

For more information on Binghamton's Academic Honesty policy, visit:

<https://www.binghamton.edu:8443/exist/rest/bulletin/2020-2021/index.html>

**Americans with Disabilities Act** If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please notify the instructor by the second week of class. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). The SSD office makes formal recommendations regarding necessary and appropriate accommodations based on specifically diagnosed disabilities. Information regarding disabilities is treated in a confidential manner. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to Binghamton students with disabilities, contact:

**Services for Students with Disabilities**

Room 119

University Union

Binghamton University

Phone: 607-777-2686 (Voice, TTY)

Fax: 607-777-6893

Email: [ssd@binghamton.edu](file:///C:\Users\muttermark%20laptop\Downloads\ssd@binghamton.edu)

<https://www.binghamton.edu/ssd/index.html>

# Course Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary over the course of the semester. Regularly check Brightspace and your e-mail for updates on any changes.

| Week | Date | Topic | Reading | Assignments |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week 1 | **Aug. 24th** | **I: Theories of the Policy Process**  Introduction: Public Policy Research | W&S Chapter 1 |  |
| Week 2 | **Aug. 31st** | Rational Policymaking? Incrementalism, the Stages Model | Zahariadis, Nikolaos. “Ambiguity and Multiple Streams,” Chapter 2, Sabatier and Weible.  Weible, Christopher and Edella Schlager. 2016. “The Multiple Streams Approach at the Theoretical and Empirical Crossroads: An Introduction to a Special Issue.” Policy Studies Journal 44: 5-12.  Cairney, Paul and Michael D. Jones. 2016. “Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Approach: What is the Empirical Impact of this Universal Theory?” Policy Studies Journal 44: 37-58.  DeLeo, Rob A. and Alex Duarte. Published Online. “Does Data Drive Policymaking? A Multiple Streams Perspective on the Relationship Between Indicators and Agenda Setting.” Policy Studies Journal. |  |
| Week 3 | **Sep. 7th** | **No Class** | **Labor Day / Rosh Hashanah** |  |
| Week 4 | **Sep. 14th** | The Advocacy Coalition Approach, IAD Framework, and Punctuated Equilibrium | Weible, Christopher and Paul Sabatier. “The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Foundations, Evolution and Ongoing Research.” in Sabatier and Weible text.  Ostrom, Elinor with Michael Cox and Edella Schlager. “An Assessment of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework and Introduction of the SocialEcological Systems Framework.” In Sabatier and Weible text.  Baumgartner, Frank R., Bryan Jones and Peter Mortensen. “Punctuated Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking.: In Sabatier and Weible text.  Cashore, Benjamin and Michael Howlett. 2007. “Punctuating Which Equilibrium? Understanding Thermostatic Policy Dynamics in Pacific Northwest Forestry.” American Journal of Political Science 51: 532-551. |  |
| Week 5 | **Sep. 21st** | New*-er* Policy Theories | McBeth, Mark K., Michael D. Jones and Elizabeth A. Shanahan. “The Narrative Policy Framework.” Sabatier and Weible text.  Schlager, Edella and Christopher Weible. 2013. “New Theories of the Policy Process.” Policy Studies Journal 41: 389-96.  Jordan, Andrew, Michael Bauer and Christoffer Green-Pedersen. 2013. “Policy Dismantling.” Journal of European Public Policy 20: 795-805.  Swedlow, Brendon. 2014. “Advancing Policy Theory with Cultural Theory: An Introduction to the Special issue.” Policy Studies Journal 42:465-83.  Song, Geoboo, Carol L. Silva, and Hank C. Jenkeins-Smith. 2014. “Cultural Worldview and Preference for Childhood Vaccination Policy.” Policy Studies Journal 42: 528-54. |  |
| Week 6 | **Sep. 28th** | Comparing Policy Theories | Cairney, Paul and Tanya Heikkila. “A Comparison of Theories of the Policy Process.” In Sabatier and Weible text.  Cairney, Paul. 2013. “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: How Do We Combine the Insights of Multiple Theories in Public Policy Studies?” Policy Studies Journal 41: 1-21.  Weible, Christopher. “Advancing Policy Process Research” In Sabatier an Weible text.  Scherlen, Renee. 2012. “The Never-Ending Drug War: Obstacles to Drug War Policy Termination.” PS: Political Science and Politics 45: 67-73. | **Idea /Outline Due** |
| Week 7 | **Oct. 5th** | **II Research on Policy Components**  Innovation and Diffusion Models | Berry, Frances and William Berry. “Innovation and Diffusion Models in Policy Research” In Sabatier and Weible text.  Berry, Frances Stokes and William D. Berry. 1990. “State Lottery Adoptions as Policy Innovations: An Event History Analysis.” The American Political Science Review. 84: 395-415.  Andrew Karch. 2007. “Emerging Issues and Future Directions in State Policy Diffusion Research,” State Politics and Policy Quarterly 7: 54-80.  Shipan, Charles and Craig Volden. 2008. “The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion,” American Journal of Political Science 52: 840-857.  Pacheco, Julianna. 2012. “The Social Contagion Model: Exploring the Role of Public Opinion on the Diffusion of Antismoking Legislation Across the American States.” Journal of Politics 75: 187-202. |  |
| Week 8 | **Oct. 12th** | **No Class** | **Thursday Class Catch-Up Day** |  |
| Week 9 | **Oct. 19th** | Policy Design and Defining Policy Targets | Schneider, Anne L, Helen Ingram, and Peter deLeon. “Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of Target Populations.” In Sabatier and Weible text.  Soss, Joe, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford F. Schram. 2008. “The Color of Devolution: Race, Federalism and the Politics of Social Control,” American Journal of Political Science 52: 536-553.  Skodvin, T. et al. “Target Group Influence and Political Feasibility.” Journal of European Politics 17: 854-873.  Howlett, Michael, 2014. “From the ‘Old’ to the ‘New’ Policy Design.” Policy Sciences. 47: 187-207.  Clarke, Amanda and Jonathan Craft. 2017. “The twin faces of public sector design.” Governance. 32: 5-21. |  |
| Week 10 | **Oct. 26th** | Path Dependence and Policy Feedback | Pierson, Paul. 2000. “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence and the Study of Politics.” American Politial Science Review 94: 251-267.  Mettler, Suzanne and Mallory SoRell. “Policy Feedback Theory.” In Sabatier and Weible text.  Mettler, Suzanne. 2002. “Bringing the State Back in to Civic Engagement: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill for World War II Veterans.” American Political Science Review 96: 351-365.  Soss, Joe and Sanford Schramm. 2007. “A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback.” American Political Science Review 101:111-27.  Jordan, Andrew and Elah Matt. 2014. “Designing Policies that Intentionally Stick: Policy Feedback in a Changing Climate.” Policy Science. 47: 227-247. |  |
| Week 11 | **Nov. 2nd** | Implementation | Saetren, Harald. 2005. Facts and Myths about Research on Public Policy Implementation: Out of Fashion, Allegedly Dead, But Will Very Much Alive and Relevant. Policy Studies Journal 33:599-582  O’Toole, Laurence. 2000. Research on Policy Implementation: Assessment and Prospects. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory. 10: 263-288.  Potter, Rachel A. 2017. “Slow-rolling, fast-tracking, and the pace of bureaucratic decision in rulemaking.” The Journal of Politics 79: 841-55.  Reenock, Christopher, David M. Konisky, and Matthew J. Uttermark. Published Online. “Chain of Command vs. Who’s in Command: Structure, Politics, and Regulatory Enforcement.” Policy Studies Journal. | **Front-end Due** |
| Week 12 | **Nov. 9th** | **Peer Review Day** | |  |
| Week 13 | **Nov. 16th** | Federalism | Nugent, John. 2009, “State Implementation of Federal Policy as a Safeguard of Federalism.” Chapter 5 In Safeguarding Federalism. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.  Rigby, Elizabeth and Jake Haselslwerdt. 2013. “Hybrid Federalism, Partisan Politics and Early Implementation of State Health Insurance Exchanges” Publius: The Journal of Federalism 43: 368-391.  Nicholson-Crotty, Sean. 2004. “Goal Conflict and Fund Diversion in Federal Grants to States. “American Journal of Political Science 48:110-122.  Karch, Andrew. 2012. “Virtical Diffusion and the Policy-Making Process: The Politics of Embryonic Stem Cell Research. Political Research Quarterly. 65: 48-61.  Kelly, Nathan and Christopher Witko. 2012. “Federalism and American Inequality.” Journal of Politics 74: 414-426. |  |
| Week 14 | **Nov. 23rd** | Policy Networks | Schneider Mark et al. “Building Consensual Institutions: Networks and the National Estuary Program.” American Journal of Political Science 47: 143-158.  Scholz, John and Cheng-Lung Wang. 2006. “Cooptation or Transformation? Local Policy Networks and Federal Regulatory Enforcement.” American Journal of Political Science 50: 81-97.  Lubell, Mark, Adam Douglas Henry and Mike McCoy. 2010. “Collaborative Institutions in an Ecology of Games.” American Journal of Political Science 54: 287-300.  Weber, Edard P. and Anne M. Khademian. 2008. “Wicked Problems: Knowledge Challenges, and Collaborative Capacity Builders in Network Settings.” Public Administration Review 68: 334-49. |  |
| Week 15 | **Nov. 30th** | Policy and Public Opinion | Soroka, Stuart N. and Christopher Wlezien. 2005. “Opinion-Policy Dynamics: Public Preferences and Public Expenditures in the United Kingdom.” British Journal of Political Science 35: 665-89.  Erikson, Robert, Gerald Wright and John McIver. 1987. “Public Opinion and Policy Liberalism in the United States.” American Journal of Political Science 31: 980-1001.  Stimson, James, Michael Mackuen, and Robert Erikson. 1995. “Dynamic Representation” American Political Science Review 89: 543-65.  Jennings, Will and Peter John. 2009. “The Dynamics of Political Attention: Public Opinion and the Queen’s Speech in the United Kingdom.” American Journal of Political Science 838-854.  Mettler, Suzanne and Joe Soss. 2004. “The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship: Bridging Policy Studies and Mass Politics.” Perspectives on Politics. 2:55-73 |  |
| Week 16 | **Dec. 7th** |  | Presentations | **Final Project Due (Start of Class)** |