

Instructor: Li-Yin Liu
 Email: lliu2@niu.edu
 Office: IA213
 Office Hour: Mon/Wed, 2:00-3:30 pm
 or by Appointment

Class Room: DuSable 246
 Class Time: Mon/Wed, 12:30-1:45 PM
 Fall 2017 Northern Illinois University

POLS 220: Introduction to Public Policy

Course Description and Objectives

What is public policy? Why should we learn public policy? Who are policy actors? How is policy made? What is a good policy? Why is public policy controversial? How can we influence public policy? These are the major questions to be answered in this class. To establish students' understanding of public policy and cultivate students' interests in policy issues, this class will be divided into three stages of learning. The first stage aims at familiarizing students with the fundamental framework and concepts of public policy through lectures and group exercises; the second stage utilizes several simulation activities to let student experience what it is like to be in the policy making network and prepare students to critically evaluate public policies; in the third stages, students are required to debate policy issues which cultivate their skills of synthesizing and applying knowledge they have learned in this class.

Course Competences, Learning Activities, and Assessments

Upon satisfactory completion of this class, students will be able to:

Course Competences	Learning Activities	Assessment
Describe Concepts and Frameworks of Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Group Exercises • Simulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Reflection paper
Identify the Process, Conflicts, and Dilemmas of Policy Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Class Discussion • Group Exercises • Simulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Final Paper
Discuss Public Policy from Political, Public Administration, and Non-State Actors' Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Discussion • Group Exercises • Debate projects • Simulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate Outcome • Final Paper
Apply course materials to evaluate current policy issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Discussion • Group Exercises • Debate Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper • Debate Outcome • Final project
Develop Logical Written and Oral Presentation Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Exercise • Class Discussion • Simulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate Outcome • Reaction Paper • Final Project

Required Reading

Kraft, M.E., and S.R. Furlong. 2017. Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives: SAGE Publications.

Supplemental Reading

Supplemental readings will be posted on Blackboard. Students are required to check Blackboard at least once before every class and complete the supplemental readings.

Class Requirement

Due Date and Time	Assignment	Grade Points
Weekly	Attendance and Preparation	10 points
Weekly	Class Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class Discussion• Group Exercise	10 points
No later than 11:30 am October 2 (paper #1) 11:30 am, November 1 (paper #2) on Blackboard and in Class	Two Reaction Papers	20 points (10 points for each)
Your Group's Assigned Week	Debate Project	15 points
October 16	Midterm Exam	20 points
December 11	Final Paper	25 points

Attendance Policy: Each student is allowed to have two absences with an eligible excuse without penalty. More than two absences will result in a deduction in your attendance grade (1 point for each missed class). Therefore, if you miss more than 2+10 classes, your attendance grade will be 0. Attendance will be taken based on the sign in sheets collected each class. If your name is not on the sign in sheets when it is initially distributed, you will not receive your attendance point. The time of the distribution will vary each week.

Participation: Each student is required to read not only the assigned chapter before attending every class, but is also required to participate in the discussion during each class by asking critical questions, bringing personal examples, and drawing evidence from the assigned readings. Students are also required to participate in group exercises during classes. Students who do not attend class will also miss their participation grade. Using a cell phone, chatting, listening to music, and falling asleep in class will result in a deduction of your participation grade.

Midterm: The midterm will be an in-class, open-book exam. Questions on the exam will cover all topics discussed before the midterm exam; The exam will cover assigned readings in the textbook, information given by the instructor, AND group exercises in class. THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP EXAM (other than for medical reasons with a doctor's note).

Reaction Paper: Students are required to complete two reaction papers throughout the semester. Each reaction paper is worth 10 points. In the first paper, students should select a state level policy that is primarily under the control of the Illinois State government, summarize the main policy issue, and discuss your reaction to it. In the second paper, student should select a national level policy that is primarily under the control of the federal government, summarize the main policy issues, and discuss your reaction to it. Students should apply at least 3 course related concepts in each of their reaction papers. Each paper should be between 450 and 550 words. A rubric will be provided to help guide students' writing. Students are required to submit their reaction papers on Blackboard no later than 11:30 am, October 2 for reaction paper #1 and 11:30 am, November 1 for reaction paper #2. Students are also required to bring a hard copy of their paper to turn in at the beginning of the classes on October 2 and November 1.

Debate Project: In the first week, students will be divided into five groups that will debate health care policy (Chapter 8), social welfare policy (Chapter 9), education policy (Chapter 10), environmental policy (Chapter 11), and national security policy (Chapter 12), respectively. Each group will be assigned a policy issue. Each group will be further divided into two sub-groups: "for" and "against" groups. The "for" group is responsible for defending the policy while the "against" group should provide counter arguments to oppose the policy they are assigned.

Before the debate, all students should familiarize themselves with the policy issues their groups are assigned by reading the relevant chapters in the textbook, searching for scholarly journal articles, and investigating scientific evidence. Students are also required to investigate the concerns of different policy actors (Chapter 2). The arguments students provide should include policy analyses based on the scientific, professional, AND political approaches (Chapter 4, 5, and 6). Even though the debate projects are based on group work, each student's grade is based on his/her performance during the debate and the mutual assessment of his/her group members. The debate will not only be evaluated based on the outcome of the debate, but also based on how comprehensive the arguments are. Unreliable resources, unconstructive, insensitive, and uncivil arguments will result in a deduction of your grade.

Final Paper: In the final paper, each student should choose a policy issue that is related to health care, social welfare, education policy, environmental policy, or national security policy, and the issue students choose should not be the same as their debate project. For example, if you are assigned to debate environmental policy, you should NOT choose environmental policy for your final paper.

In the paper, students are considered policy analysts who are responsible for analyzing a current policy and search for the possibility of improving the current policy. In order to do so, students have to apply knowledge they have learned in this class to define policy issues/problems, identify policy actors, describe the current policy, assess the current policy, and point out at least three advantages and three disadvantages. Then, students need to provide an ideal alternative that is feasible and justify that choice. If there is no ideal alternative, students should discuss why it is not feasible.

To support the arguments in the papers, students should go beyond the points of view presented in the textbook, and cite evidence from at least five other sources. The sources

should be from: policy institutes or think tanks, scholarly journal articles, government reports, other reliable websites, newspapers, magazines, etc. The references should be cited using APA style. The paper should be both submitted on Blackboard and a hard copy in class.

This paper should be between 2,500 and 3,000 words. Papers should be well written with the potential to be read by the elected officials in the particular jurisdiction.

Grading Scale:

A=94-100; A-=90-93; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C+=73-76; C-=70-72; D=60-69; F= 59 and below

Class Policies

- Please use the University Writing Center as an important assistance for your papers if you are struggling with writing. If you need them, please check the website: <http://www.niu.edu/uwc/aboutus/index.shtml>
- The assigned readings must be completed before each class.
- All communication needs to be conducted in a civil and constructive manner.
- The agenda of each class will be posted on Blackboard by 8 pm every Sunday. The agenda contains important information of each class. Print out or download the agenda before each class.
- Students are required to check our Blackboard course website for announcements and resources at least once before each class meeting and once during another time of the week. Blackboard is the primary vehicle for announcements, supplementary readings, and submission of assignments.
- Your NIU email will also be used for timely communication.
- Contact the instructor in advance if there is any LEGITIMATE reason that results in absence.
- The instructor will only check email during the weekday between 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.
- No cell phones are allowed during class. If you need to use your laptop, make sure it is course related.
- Students are responsible for familiarizing yourselves with the deadlines of each weekly assignment and manage your schedule

Academic Integrity

PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC GRADE OF “F” ON THE ASSIGNMENT. Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are responsible for plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas

from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.

Undergraduate Writing Awards

The Department of Political Science recognizes, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies, such as independent studies or honors theses. Winners are expected to attend the Department's spring graduation ceremony where they will receive a certificate and a check for \$100.00. No more than two papers may be submitted by a student. There is no requirement as to the length of papers submitted for the award. Often the Department awards prizes for both an outstanding short paper and an outstanding long paper. The number and types of award is dependent upon the papers submitted for consideration in any given year. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing. Only papers written in the previous calendar year are considered for the award. However, papers completed in the current spring semester are eligible for the following year's competition even if the student has graduated. Papers can be submitted by students or faculty and must be supplied in triplicate to the undergraduate secretary. All copies must have two cover pages – one with the student's name and one without the student's name. Papers are not to be stapled or bound. Instead, please use paper clips. Papers are generally due in March and notice of call for papers and submission deadlines will be published in the department e-announcements. You may also contact the department for information at 753-1015.

Department of Political Science Web Site

Undergraduates are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science website on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, researching career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to <http://polisci.niu.edu>.

Accommodations and Access for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are responsible for plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university to make curricular and campus

experiences accessible and helps determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for courses, programs and activities. The DRC will determine with the student, through an interactive process, the following: 1) the nature of the “documentation of disability” required; 2) appropriate accommodations; and 3) how the faculty or staff in charge of the curricular or cocurricular activity will be informed of the need for accommodation, usually through a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Students are strongly encouraged to meet and talk with their faculty to identify their requests for accommodations as early as possible in the semester, even if they won’t use all accommodations right away. Requests for accommodations must be made in a timely enough manner for them to be reviewed by the university, and requests for accommodations are not retroactive. The DRC staff will provide guidance to faculty, when needed, about how to implement accommodations. Students who make requests for accommodations are expected to follow DRC policies and procedures.

A wide range of services, based on the individual student situation, can be explored. This includes curricular and cocurricular activities, such as housing, accommodated testing, alternate format of instructional materials, and transportation. Students can visit the DRC on the fourth floor of the Health Services building during business hours or make an appointment by calling 815-753-1303

Class Schedule

Date	Topics	Assigned Readings
Aug 28	Introduction	Chapter 1
Aug 30	Public Policy and Politics	Chapter 1
Sep 4	<i>Labor Day/No class</i>	N/A
Sep 6	Public Policy and Politics	Chapter 1
Sep 11	Government Institution and Policy	Chapter 2
Sep 13	Policy Actors	Chapter 2
Sep 18	Theories of Policymaking	Chapter 3
Sep 20	Policy Process and Instruments	Chapter 3
Sep 25	Process and Type of Policy Analysis	Chapter 4
Sep 27	Importance of Policy Analysis	Chapter 4
Oct 2	Policy Problems <i>Reaction Paper #1 Due</i>	Chapter 5
Oct 4	Construct Alternatives	Chapter 5
Oct 9	Assessing Policy Alternatives	Chapter 6
Oct 11	Assessing Policy Alternatives	Chapter 6
Oct 16	<i>Midterm</i>	N/A
Oct 18	<i>Midterm week/no class</i>	N/A
Oct 23	Debate Project Discussion	N/A
Oct 25	Debate Project Discussion	N/A
Oct 30	Debate Health Care Policy	Chapter 8
Nov 1	Health Care Policy <i>Reaction Paper #2 Due</i>	Chapter 8
Nov 6	Debate Social Welfare Policy	Chapter 9
Nov 8	Social Welfare Policy	Chapter 9
Nov 13	Debate Education Policy	Chapter 10
Nov 15	Education Policy	Chapter 10
Nov 20	Debate Environmental Policy	Chapter 11
Nov 22	<i>Happy Thanksgiving/No Class</i>	N/A
Nov 27	Environmental Policy	Chapter 11
Nov 29	Debate National Security	Chapter 12
Dec 4	Foreign Policy and National Security	Chapter 12
Dec 6	<i>Study Day/No Class</i>	
Dec 11	<i>Final Paper Due</i>	