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American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

School of Arts and Humanities

POLS410

Public Policy

3 Credit Hours

8-Weeks

Prerequisite(s): None

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Course Description (Catalog)

In this course the student analyzes the formulation and execution of public policy in America. The course includes the study of decision-making theory, bureaucratic politics and other models that seek to explain how policy is made. Issues explored include social, environmental, economic, homeland security, defense, and foreign policy formation and reform.

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Course Scope

The POLS410 course provides an introduction to public policy in America. Students learn about various analytical models that will help them understand key debates in policy formulation, execution, and reform, as well as acquiring in-depth knowledge of the various major governmental programs, which shape modern US public policy. Areas of primary focus include criminal justice, health and welfare, education, economic policy, tax policy, international trade, immigration, environmental policy, civil rights, defense policy, and homeland security.

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Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- CO-1 Identify the essential actors in the formation of US public policy.
- CO-2 Describe the historical evolution of major US public policy programs.
- CO-3 Describe the relationship of federal and state/local governments in policy formation and execution.
- CO-4 Explain the impact of past policy execution experiences on current policy debates.
- CO-5 Explain contemporary government responses to demands for new public policies.
- CO-6 Explain select bureaucratic institutions' effectiveness in making, reforming, and executing policies.
- CO-7 Explain the contemporary debate about critical present-day public policy challenges.

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Course Delivery Method

This course will offer the student a highly interactive virtual classroom. Each week's lesson will have a course announcement, assigned readings, a discussion Forum question based on course readings, and Lessons provided by the instructor. The course will provide the student with the necessary knowledge of public policy and public administration to better appreciate and comprehend the behavior and motivations of the numerous public actors involved in policy-making. **Each week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday by 11:55 pm Eastern.** Students are encouraged to carefully check due dates and times on exams so as not to miss posting an assignment.

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Course Materials

1. [Public Policy in the United States](#), 5th Edition by Mark E. Rushefsky. eBook available through the APUS Online Library. Please visit <http://apus.libguides.com/er.php> and search by the course number (POLS410) to access your required resources.
2. Readings from eReserve - <http://apus.campusguides.com/content.php?pid=323416&sid=e>
3. Instructor Lesson Notes
4. Supplemental Web Sites

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Evaluation Procedures

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Grades for this course will be based upon three grading instruments: forum assignments, a midterm exam and a policy memo. There are eight weekly discussion questions that must be responded to in the Forums. Students must post their response before looking at what their classmates submit onto the Forum. The student will also reply to the posting of at least three other students to be eligible to receive full discussion participation credit for all Forum assignments. In addition, students must complete a midterm exam in Week 4 and a policy memo in Week 8.

The grade scale and relative weighting for each evaluation tool is provided below:

<u>Grade Instruments:</u>	<u>% of Final Grade</u>
Forum Discussion Assignments (8 @ 100 pts)	60%
Midterm Exam (2 essay questions @ 100 pts)	20%
Policy Memo	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Submission of Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due by Sunday at 11:55pm Eastern with initial Forum responses being due by Friday at 11:55pm Eastern. Any assignments submitted late will receive a deduction of 5 percent off the score each day it is late, unless the student contacts the instructor ahead of time about an extenuating situation and receives permission to submit work after the established deadline.

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Course Outline

Week	Topics	Readings	Assignments
1	<i>What is Public Policy?</i> <i> Policymaking Process</i>	<i>Rushefsky</i> , Chapters 1 & 9 <i>eReserve:</i> - Hamilton, Jay, & Madison, “The Federalist Papers” No. 46, No. 47, No. 51 and Conclusion - Nivola, “Why Federalism Matters” - Uscinski, “When Does the Public's Issue Agenda Affect the Media's Issue Agenda” - Pew Research Center, “What the Public Knows about the Political Parties” <i>Lesson Notes: Week 1</i>	Post a brief autobiography. Acknowledge the Plagiarism Policy. See Forum #1.
2	<i>Economic Policy</i>	<i>Rushefsky</i> , Chapter 2 <i>eReserve:</i> - Hall & Rabushka, “The Flat Tax” Chapter 4, Q&A - Katz, “Remaking Federalism to Remake the American Economy” - OECD, “Tax Policy Reform and Economic Growth” <i>Lesson Notes – Week 2</i>	See Forum #2.

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3	<i>Foreign Policy and Defense</i>	<p><i>Rushefsky</i>, Chapter 3</p> <p><i>eReserve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Johnson, "Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy" - Serafino, "Peacekeeping/Stabilization and Conflict Transitions" - Pingeot & Obenland, "In whose name?" - Goldstein & Western, "Humanitarian Intervention Comes of Age" - De Pinho Ferreira Pinto, "Mapping the Obama Administration's Response to the Arab Spring" <p><i>Lesson Notes – Week 3</i></p>	See Forum #3.
4	<i>Health Policy</i>	<p><i>Rushefsky</i>, Chapter 5</p> <p><i>eReserve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swendiman, "Health Care: Constitutional Rights and Legislative Powers" - Rosenbaum, "The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Implications for Public Health Policy and Practice" - Mongan et al, "Options for Slowing the Growth of Health Care Costs" <p><i>Lesson Notes – Week 4</i></p>	See Forum #4. Complete Midterm Exam.
5	<i>Social Policy</i>	<p><i>Rushefsky</i>, Chapters 4 & 8</p> <p><i>eReserve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kneebone & Garr, "The Suburbanization of Poverty" - Pew Research Center, "Who's Poor in America" <p><i>Lesson Notes – Week 5</i></p>	See Forum #5.
6	<i>Globalization</i>	<p><i>Rushefsky</i>, Chapter 6</p> <p><i>eReserve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ewing, "The Many Facets of Effective Immigration Reform" - Palley, "The Economics of Outsourcing" - Congressional Research Service, "Energy Policy: 113th Congress Issues" <p><i>Lesson Notes – Week 6</i></p>	See Forum #6.
7	<i>Criminal Justice Policy</i>	<p><i>Rushefsky</i>, Chapter 7</p> <p><i>eReserve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walker, "Too Many Sticks, Not Enough Carrots" - Otis & Stewart, "Should Mandatory Minimum Laws Be Repealed?" - Larkin, "Public Choice Theory & Overcriminalization" <p><i>Lesson Notes – Week 7</i></p>	See Forum #7.
8	<i>Policy Analysis & Evaluation</i>	<p><i>Rushefsky</i>, Review Chapter 1</p>	See Forum #8.

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		<i>eReserve:</i> - Carlson, "Trends & Innovations in Policy Analysis" <i>Lesson Notes – Week 8</i>	Complete Policy Memo.
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Policies

Please see the [student handbook](#) to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked questions about University policies are listed below.

[Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Extension Process and Policy](#)

Plagiarism Penalty

The instructor has the option of awarding a zero for any assignment found to be plagiarized. Subsequent violations may result in a *failing grade* for the course.

Course Extension Policy

There are very few acceptable excuses and all will require some form of documentation. If you do have an extraordinary circumstance arise that you feel qualifies you for an extension, contact me immediately to determine if it meets the criteria listed in the Student Handbook.

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

Citation and Reference Style

All paraphrased or quoted work must have a citation or they will be considered plagiarized. When in doubt, cite. Use the citation style that you are most comfortable with. Political science students typically use Turabian (http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html).

Netiquette

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate - both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and "flaming." Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

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- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple.
- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoticons” to help alert your readers: ;-), :), ☺

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Academic Services

ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES

The Online Library Resource Center is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Center provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to orc@apus.edu.

- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.
- **Turnitin.com:** Turnitin.com is a tool to improve student research skills that also detect plagiarism. Turnitin.com provides resources on developing topics and assignments that encourage and guide students in producing papers that are intellectually honest, original in thought, and clear in expression. This tool helps ensure a culture of adherence to the University's standards for intellectual honesty. Turnitin.com also reviews students' papers for matches with Internet materials and with thousands of student papers in its database, and returns an Originality Report to instructors and/or students.
- **Tutor.com:** Students have access to ten free hours of tutoring service per year through Tutor.com. Tutoring is available in the following subjects: math (basic math through advanced calculus), science (biology, chemistry, and physics), accounting, statistics, economics, Spanish, writing, grammar, and more. Additional information is located in the Online Library. From the Online Library home page, click on either the “Writing Center” or “Tutoring Center.” All login information is available.

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Selected Bibliography

If you plan to continue in this field and if you plan for a future in Public Policy, here are some works with which you should be familiar. **You are not required to buy these books.**

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de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. Penguin Classics, 2003.

Kingdon, John W. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Pearson, 2010.

Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard Economic Studies, 1971.

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster, 2001.

Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. Norton Paperback, 2003.

Stone, Deborah. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. Norton & Company, 2001.

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Forum Grading Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary	Competent	Beginning
Synthesis of Concepts	Response is at least 300 words, shows a clear understanding of main ideas, and mentions at least three concepts from the required weekly readings. There are no irrelevant comments and the information is on point. The response provides current examples that tie in with the course material being discussed. <i>Your Score Range (45-50 points)</i>	Response is at least 250 words, shows a clear understanding of main ideas, and mentions at least one concept from the required weekly readings. There are no irrelevant comments and the information is generally on point, though current examples may be missing. <i>Your Score Range (30-44 points)</i>	Response is less than 250 words, generally mentions a topic from the weekly readings, but does not clearly mention concepts from the required weekly readings. Argument lacks detail and examples. There are some irrelevant comments present. <i>Your Score Range (< 30 points)</i>
Discussion Participation	Replied to three or more classmates. Replies are at least 150 words each, demonstrate careful analysis of other's opinions, and incorporate several terms, concepts or theories from the required readings. <i>Your Score Range (15-20 points)</i>	Replied to two classmates. Replies were at least a 100 words each, formed a counter-argument or supported another student's answer, and incorporated one or two terms, concepts or theories from the required readings. <i>Your Score Range (10-14 points)</i>	Minimal interaction with classmates. Replies are less than 100 words, lack a topic sentence with logically supporting sentences and did not incorporate terms, concepts or theories from the required readings. <i>Your Score Range (< 10 points)</i>
Diverse Sources	Cited three or more sources outside of the textbook.	Cited a couple of sources outside of the textbook.	Cited one or no sources outside of the textbook.

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	<i>Your Score Range (10 points)</i>	<i>Your Score Range (5-9 points)</i>	<i>Your Score Range (< 5 points)</i>
Writing Standards	Response is free of grammatical errors and made proper reference to the course text or to other materials that were used in the discussion. Statements are well organized with a clear thesis statement and concluding thoughts.	Response is generally free of grammatical errors and includes proper citations. Statements are clear with a thesis defined, though a few points may be out of place or confusing.	Response has numerous grammatical errors and lacks proper citations. Statements are disorganized; perhaps with a general structure defined, but stream of logic is lost in the argument.
	<i>Your Score Range (16-20 points)</i>	<i>Your Score Range (10-15 points)</i>	<i>Your Score Range (< 10 points)</i>

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Midterm Exam Grading Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary	Competent	Beginning
Content & Subject Knowledge	<p>Essay is at least 500 words, demonstrates detailed knowledge of subject matter through extensive factual support, and incorporates key terms from course weekly readings.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (45-50 points)</i></p>	<p>Essay is at least 400 words, provides adequate details and supporting facts, and associates course content to the topic being explored.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (35-44 points)</i></p>	<p>Essay is less than 400 words, presents some supporting facts, but overlooks critical details; concepts are presented in isolation and do not directly reference key terms from course content.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (< 35 points)</i></p>
Critical Thinking	<p>Essay has a strong introductory thesis statement and presents a wide variety of relevant supporting information. Student can clearly organize research in a logical sequence. Several perspectives are explored before drawing thoughtful conclusions.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (25-30 points)</i></p>	<p>Essay has a clear introductory thesis statement, information is presented on-point, and essay comes to adequate conclusions. Student demonstrates proficiency in organizing research logically with only a few errors.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (15-24 points)</i></p>	<p>Essay does not follow a logical sequence and presents a limited perspective with little demonstration of critical thinking skills. Student does not incorporate research well into a coherent argument.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (< 15 points)</i></p>
Writing Standards & Research	<p>Essay is well organized with excellent command of grammar; little to no errors are present. Student exceeds minimum research source requirements.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (16-20 points)</i></p>	<p>Essay flows well and displays good writing and grammar; no more than five grammatical errors are present. Student meets minimum research source requirements.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (10-15 points)</i></p>	<p>Essay has a variety of formatting styles and has inconsistencies throughout; contains more than five grammatical errors. Research sources lack variety or do not meet the required number.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (< 10 points)</i></p>

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Policy Memo Grading Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary	Competent	Beginning
Content & Subject Knowledge	<p>Memo displays an impressive level of depth of student's ability to relate course content to examples and applications of a current policy issue. Incorporates comprehensive analysis of details, facts, and concepts in a logical sequence.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (25-30 points)</i></p>	<p>Memo displays student's above average ability in relating course content to current policy issues. Details and facts presented provide an adequate presentation of student's current level of subject matter knowledge.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (15-24 points)</i></p>	<p>Memo presents concepts, but only meets the minimum requirements in this area, overlooking critical details. Concepts are presented in isolation, and memo does not have a logical sequencing of ideas.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (< 15 points)</i></p>
Critical Thinking	<p>Memo follows a strategic approach in presenting examples of problem solving or critical thinking, while logical conclusions are drawn, which are not immediately obvious. Ideas are well-supported and both pro's and con's of policy options are thoroughly discussed.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (25-30 points)</i></p>	<p>Memo displays a command of critical thinking skills in the presentation of material and supporting statements. Concepts are related and memo contains adequate conclusions, with 2 or fewer errors.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (15-24 points)</i></p>	<p>Memo has a limited perspective on key concepts throughout assignment. Memo contains confusing statements and facts in assignment. Very limited demonstration of critical thinking skills.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (< 15 points)</i></p>
Organization of Ideas & Format	<p>Memo is highly organized – presenting the policy issue in a clear light, giving options to the reader and making a firm recommendation. Student can clearly plan and organize research in a logical sequence. Student exceeds minimum research requirement using at least seven sources.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (16-20 points)</i></p>	<p>Memo meets requirements of presenting a current policy issue, options and a recommendation for the reader. Student demonstrates a good skill level in formatting and organizing material in assignment, with a few errors. Assignment meets minimum research requirement.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (10-15 points)</i></p>	<p>Memo has a variety of formatting styles, with some inconsistencies throughout. Does not have a continuous pattern of logical sequencing. Sources used for research lack variety or do not meet the required number.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (< 10 points)</i></p>
Writing Standards	<p>Student demonstrates an excellent command of grammar. Research is presented in a concise writing style. Extensive understanding of word usage. Memo is free of grammatical errors.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (16-20 points)</i></p>	<p>Student displays good writing and grammar. Ideas are expressed with clarity and no more than 3-5 grammatical errors are present.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (10-15 points)</i></p>	<p>Memo contains more than 5 grammatical/proofreading errors. Student uses a basic vocabulary in assignment. Memo lacks clarity, consistency, and correctness.</p> <p><i>Your Score Range (< 10 points)</i></p>

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