

**Syllabus for PUBPL 496**  
**Independent Study: Policy Theory and the Opioid Crisis**  
**Fall 2018**

**Professor:** Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

Office: W-160A  
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30-2:30pm, Thursday 3-6pm  
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**Course Description:** This course is an independent study co-designed by the student and instructor. Using the opioid crisis as an illustrative policy domain, this course will introduce the student to public policy theory in greater depth than our introductory course (PUBPL 304). The student will read both social science research on the public policy making process (e.g., Multiple Stream Theory, Advocacy Coalition Framework, Agenda Setting and Framing) and research specific to the opioid crisis. Research on the opioid crisis will have two different lenses: criminal justice and public health. After a firm theoretical grounding, the student will complete a capstone project that engages with recent developments in the public policy and public health literatures. The instructor will mentor and will meet with the student on a weekly basis to discuss the material and development of the final project.

## **Learning Objectives:**

- Critical Thinking
  - The student will read and critically evaluate research on public policy theory
- Information Literacy and Research Skills
  - The student will complete several research projects that culminate in a paper that uses evidence and builds on existing scholarly literature
- Program Competence
  - The student will gain a better understanding of public policy theory and its usefulness in understanding contemporary public problems
  - The student will gain a better understanding of the public health and criminal justice aspects of the opioid epidemic

- Qualitative Data Analysis
  - The student will gather qualitative data on state opioid emergency declarations and consequent legislative actions, as well as the parameters in the states for declaring a public emergency
  - The student will compare state actions and draw inferences regarding their agenda-setting effects

**Methods for Learning and Teaching:** This independent study will require substantial self-paced work on the part of the student. We will meet every other week to discuss how the study is progressing and to tackle any questions about the material.

## Reaching Our Goals

**E-mail Policy:** I will work to respond to e-mails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

## Assigned Background Readings

The following readings are required and arranged by topic:

### Public Policy Theory Foundation

- Zahariadis, Mikolaos. (2018). “Ambiguity and Multiple Streams.” In *Theories of the Policy Process*, Paul Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, eds. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 25-58. **(Read by August 24)**
- Baumgartner, Frank R. and Bryan D. Jones. (2018). “Punctuated Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking.” In *Theories of the Policy Process*, Paul Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, eds. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 59-104. **(Read by August 31)**
- Schneider, Anne L., Helen Ingram, and Peter deLeon. (2018). “Democratic Policy Design: Social Construction of Target Populations.” In *Theories of the Policy Process*, Paul Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, eds. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 105-150. **(Read by September 7)**
- Mettler, Suzanne and Mallory SoRelle. (2018). “Policy Feedback Theory.” In *Theories of the Policy Process*, Paul Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, eds. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 151-182. **(Read by September 14)**
- Gasper, John T. and Andrew Reeves. (Working Paper). “Governors as Opportunists: Evidence from Disaster Declaration Requests.” Presented at the 2010 APSA Annual Meeting. **(Read by September 21)**

## **Opioids as a Public Health Problem (Read by September 28)**

- Dasgupta, Nabarun, Leo Beletsky, and Daniel Ciocarone. (2018). “Opioid Crisis: No Easy Fix to Its Social and Economic Determinants.” *American Journal of Public Health* 108(2): 182-186.
- Meldnum, Marcia L. “The Ongoing Opioid Prescription Epidemic: Historical Context.” *American Journal of Public Health* 106(8): 1365-1366.
- Kertesz, Stefan G. and Adam J. Gordon. (2018). “A Crisis of Opioids and the Limits of Prescription Control: United States.” *Addiction*. July 23.
- Burke, Donald S. and Jeanine M. Buchanich. (2018). “Measuring, Tracking, and Forecasting the Epidemic.” *Commonwealth* 20(1): 23-37.

## **Opioids as a Criminal Justice Problem (Read by October 5)**

- Shapiro, Josh. (2018). “Law Enforcement in the Twenty-First Century: Partnering to Combat the Opioid Overdose Epidemic.” *Commonwealth* 20(1): 6-22.
- Brinkley-Rubinstein, Lauren, Nicholas Zaller, Sarah Martino, David H. Cloud, Erin McCauley, Andrew Heise, and David Seal. (2018). “Criminal Justice Continuum for Opioid Users at Risk of Overdose.” *Addictive Behaviors* 86: 104-110.
- Cole, Donna M., Dawna Marie Thomas, Kelsi Field, Amelia Wool, Taryn Lipiner, Natalie Massenberg, and Barbara J. Guthrie. (2018). “The 21st Century Cures Act Implications for the Reduction of Racial Disparities in the US Criminal Justice System: a Public Health Approach.” *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* 5: 885-893.
- Howell, Tyriesa Howard. (2018). “Are Substance-Use Disorders in the USA a Crime or Crisis? Restorative Justice to Reclaim Voting Rights for Disenfranchised Nonviolent Offenders.” *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*.

## **Gubernatorial Disaster Declarations (Read by October 12)**

- Haffajee, Rebecca, Wendy E. Parmet, and Michelle M. Mello. (2014). “What is a Public Health ‘Emergency’?” *The New England Journal of Medicine* 371: 986-988.
- Rutkow, Lainie and Jon S. Vernick. (2017). “Emergency Legal Authority and the Opioid Crisis.” *New England Journal of Medicine* 377: 1512-2514. Rutkow, Lainie. (2014). “An Analysis of State Public Health Emergencies.” *American Journal of Public Health* 104(9): 1601-1605.

- Nordenberg, Mark A. and Janice L. Pringle. (2018). “Pennsylvania’s Statewide Disaster Emergency.” *Commonwealth* 20(1): 1-5.

Beyond these readings, the student will need to conduct a literature search and read additional research relevant to their selected research topic.

## Assessing Progress Towards Our Goals

The following assessments will be used to track your progress towards meeting our course goals: annotated bibliography, literature review, final paper. Each component represents the following percentage of your final grade:

Annotated Bibliography of Course Readings	25%
Literature Review	25%
Final Paper	50%

We will use the following grade scale:

Letter	Percent
A	94 to 100
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	84 to 86
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 79
C	70 to 76
D	60 to 69
F	Below 60

**Annotated Bibliography of Course Readings:** This first assignment is meant to help you gain the necessary background in policy theory and the opioid epidemic. As you read the assigned chapters and journal articles, produce an annotated bibliography using guidance from the readings listed above. We will meet weekly and discuss your annotations for the readings of the week.

**Literature Review:** As you identify and read additional articles and books relevant to your research question, keep a running annotated bibliography that helps you understand the literature. This assignment is meant to develop your review of literature relevant to your research question. Original sources include scholarly journal articles, think tank and policy center research reports, government reports, speeches, pamphlets, and interviews.

You should not rely on secondary sources like news articles. A literature review is not just summarizing all of the literature, but analyzing what is known, what is not known, and showing how your study fits into that. This should be no longer than 8 pages.

**Final Paper:** You will now combine your literature review (incorporating my feedback) with an introduction that includes your research question(s), your study design, and results. The paper should have the following format:

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. Section explaining your methodological approach to answering your questions
4. The results of your analysis
5. Conclusion

A good paper will be roughly 25-30 pages. This, of course, can vary depending on the number of research questions and how much evidence you need to discuss. I would like to see a rough draft of the paper by November 16.

Deadlines	
Assignment	Due Date
Annotated Bibliography	Weekly through Oct. 12
Literature Review	October 26
Rough Draft	November 16
Final Paper	December 14

## Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is not limited to simply cheating on an exam or assignment. The following is quoted directly from the *PSU Faculty Senate Policies for Students* regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty: “Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.”

All University and Penn State Harrisburg policies regarding academic integrity/academic dishonesty apply to this course and the students enrolled in this course. Refer to the

following URL for further details on the academic integrity policy of Penn State Harrisburg: <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/academics/academic-guidelines-and-policies>. Each student in this course is expected to work entirely on her/his own while taking any exam, to complete assignments on her/his own effort without the assistance of others unless directed otherwise by the instructor, and to abide by University and Penn State Harrisburg policies about academic integrity and academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty can result in an assignment of “F” or “XF” as the final grade for the student.

## Disability Access

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has a Student Disability Resources office. Student Disability Resources at Penn State Harrisburg is located in SEC 205. The Disability Services Coordinator, Alan Babcock, can be reached via email at [aub15@psu.edu](mailto:aub15@psu.edu) or phone 717-948-6025.

To receive consideration for accommodations, you must contact Student Disability Resources (SDR), participate in an intake interview, provide documentation of your disability, and complete a Self-Assessment. Additional information is available on the Disability Services website (<http://harrisburg.psu.edu/disability-services>). If the documentation supports requests for reasonable accommodations, SDR will provide you with an accommodations letter, which you will give to your professors. You will receive accommodations after you give your accommodations letters to your professors. You should share your accommodations letters with your professors as early in the semester as possible. Professors do not provide accommodations retroactively.

## Counseling Services

Students may face a variety of concerns over the course of their time at PSH- depressed mood, anxiety, stress, family concerns, body image, substance use, sexuality and many others- that may interfere with their ability to focus on their studies. Counseling Services provides FREE mental health and social support for all currently enrolled students. Staff follow strict legal and ethical guidelines concerning the confidentiality of counseling. Counseling services is located in SEC 205 and can be reached by phone at (717) 948-6025. You can find more information at the Counseling Services webpage, <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/counseling-services>.

## Educational Equity

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity at the

Report Bias site: <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/statement>. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to our Penn State Harrisburg Office of Student Affairs at the following link <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/webform/office-student-conduct-incident-report-form>.

## Writing Tutoring and Other Academic Support

The [Russell E. Horn Sr. Learning Center](#) provides tutoring for writing assignments as well as for other aspects of the academic experience. You can make an appointment in one of the four ways listed below. An appointment is recommended, though not required.

Website	Online Scheduler	Phone	In Person
<a href="http://harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center">harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center</a>	<a href="http://psuh.mywconline.com">psuh.mywconline.com</a>	717-948-6475	SEC 201

### Writing

The Learning Center provides tutoring support for writing assignments in this class. Do you need help developing your thesis and ideas? Do you need objective feedback when you're drafting or revising your papers? Do you have questions about MLA, APA, or Chicago styles? Do you want to improve your academic writing skills? The writing tutors at the Learning Center are experts at helping students improve their writing. Writing handouts are available at [psu.box.com/v/WritingResources](http://psu.box.com/v/WritingResources) and in print in SEC 201.

### Other Academic Support

Is English an additional language for you and your home language is “getting in the way?” Are you spending excessive amounts of time trying to finish your assigned readings? Are you nervous about participating in class and presenting speeches? American & Academic Literacy (AAL) appointments support international and other multilingual students with their transition to the U.S., and can help all students with their speeches. Our Academic Skills Consultants can also help with time management, organization, and study skills. Like us at [facebook.com/PSHLearningCenter](https://facebook.com/PSHLearningCenter) and follow us on Twitter [@PSUHLC](https://twitter.com/PSUHLC).