

Syllabus for POLS 2190, Section 001
Introduction to Public Policy
Spring 2016
TTh 2:30 pm – 4:20 pm, AS-102

Professor: Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

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Course Webpage	Link

Course Description

What is more important, clean water or jobs? Should a policy maximize effectiveness or efficiency? Is it possible to balance these things? This course examines the struggle over competing values and ideas during the policy making process. It explores how the selection and definition of policy goals (i.e., equity, efficiency, welfare, liberty, and security), problem definitions, and solutions shape our evaluation of public policy. Furthermore, the course will engage students in thinking about contemporary public policy debates, including mass incarceration, higher education, Common Core, gun control, and immigration. Students will learn how to critically evaluate competing policy proposals and will perform a deeper analysis of a policy problem of personal interest.

Prerequisites: There are no specific prerequisites for this course, however it will be very helpful to have a basic understanding of the structure and function of government in the United States.

Learning Goals and Objectives

- Goal 1: Students will gain factual knowledge about contemporary policy debates
 - Objective 1a: Students will learn the background of current policy problems facing federal, state, and local governments
 - Objective 1b: Students will learn about the competing proposals for solving these problems
- Goal 2: Students will analyze and critically evaluate competing policy ideas

- Objective 2a: Students will identify competing values and goals in proposed public policies
- Objective 2b: Students will evaluate the logic of a policy proposal; including the facts, assumptions, and inferences being presented (and ignored) by the proposer
- Goal 3: Students will develop their oral and written communication skills
 - Objective 3a: Students will contribute to class discussion and debates, as well as present their own solution to a policy problem of personal interest
 - Objective 3b: Students will write critical evaluations of contemporary policy problems and proposed solutions

Methods for Learning and Teaching: This course will contain a mix of lecture, class discussion, and in-class activities. It is vital for your own comprehension of the course material that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings and any relevant happenings in the news.

Reaching Our Goals

Attendance: Your attendance in class is always expected. Attending class will allow you to keep up with the course and provide for meaningful discussion as a class. I will be taking attendance in order to grade participation, but also as a way to get to know you. Please contact me via [e-mail](#) if you are unable to attend class. I will follow the University's attendance policy when it comes to excused absences. See http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/policypro/content/docs/2030_060414.pdf.

Preparation and Participation: I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read. Contributing to class discussion will make the course more interesting and will enhance your understanding of the material. Furthermore, it is helpful to keep up with current policy debates in the news, since they will be useful for reinforcing the concepts discussed in class.

Discussion Ground Rule #1 is Respect: We will be discussing challenging public policy problems in this course. There will inevitably be divergent opinions, some of them very strong, amongst the class. It is important that you be respectful of your peers and their opinions, lived experiences, and beliefs.

Do Not Suffer in Silence: Please do not suffer in silence throughout the course if you are struggling. Instead, let me know — as soon as possible — what things are not making sense and we can work it out. If you are having a problem of any kind in the course, please talk to me about it as soon as possible.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course, if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you right away when any changes are made.

Cell Phones and Laptops: Please be respectful of your fellow students and me by silencing your cell phone during class and limiting laptop use to only class-related activity.¹

Current Events: Politics happens in real time and the material we cover in class relates to these events. This is a great opportunity to become informed about national, state, and local policy developments. We will regularly discuss current events that are related to the class. Please be aware of what is going on, particularly as it relates to government bureaucracy. I will regularly tweet news stories relevant to our class using the hashtag #pols2190.

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

Readings

The following book is required for the course:

Stone, Deborah. 2012. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. Third Edition. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-91272-2.

Additional required readings that are not from the Stone book will be made available on Blackboard.

Lecture Slides

I will be using lecture slides throughout the course. These will be uploaded to the [course website](#) prior to each class period.

¹In fact, research demonstrates that students who take handwritten notes generally perform better than those that use laptops: Mueller, Pam A. and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking." *Psychological Science* 25(6): 1159-1168.

Assessing Your Progress Towards Our Goals

The following types of assessment will be used to track your progress towards meeting our course goals: regular essays, a position paper, policy briefing, attendance, and participation. Each component represents the following percentage of your final grade:

Essays	40%
Position Paper	35%
Policy Briefing	15%
Attendance and Participation	10%

We will use the following grade scale:

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

Essays: There are essay assignments for most parts of the class. The first three essays deal with Stone's *Policy Paradox* and are required of all students. There are then six analytical essays on our planned policy-specific weeks. You are required to complete essays for at least four of the policies (your choice). You may also complete an essay for a fifth and sixth topic as a form of extra credit. I will then keep the four highest essay grades. Each assignment can be found in Appendix [A](#) of this syllabus, so you can start working on them as soon as you would like. The assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard by the start of the class period they are due.

Position Paper: You are required to select a policy problem that is of personal interest. You will research this topic throughout the semester and write a position paper regarding the best policy for effectively solving the problem. Please see Appendix ?? at the end of the syllabus for more details.

Policy Panels: In the last two weeks of class, you will be given 10 minutes to brief the class on your position paper. This will be an opportunity to solicit feedback from your peers on your argument and to further discuss your policy of interest. Please see Appendix C for more details.

Participation: Attending class is incredibly important. It not only enriches the learning experience for yourself and your classmates, but also prepares you for succeeding in the working world. Thus, attendance and participation will represent 10 percent of your final score. See Appendix D for participation grading guidelines.

Students also have an obligation to notify me within the first three weeks of the semester if they will miss any class session due to a religious observance. I am pleased to do this, but will need notification in order to plan make-up work.

Make-Up Grades: You are allowed to make-up academic work only in the case of excused absences. These absences may include missing class for a [University-sanctioned activity \(with proper documentation\)](#), [illness](#), [religious observance](#), or [family responsibilities](#). If you know in advance that you are going to miss class, please contact me before the absence to make arrangements for completing the work. If you are absent for an unexpected reason, please check in with me as soon as possible. You will have one week from the day of your return to class to make up a missed assignment.

Extra Credit: I will extend 1 percentage point of extra credit for attending certain events throughout the semester (one point for each event). I will announce to the class when these events occur and when a related extra credit assignment is due. You must submit a 2-3 page discussion of the event and how it applies to what we are learning in class to a dropbox on Blackboard.

Academic Honesty

Stockton University takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously and so do I. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

This course includes both individual and group assignments. All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless I clearly state that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation should speak with me and review the following website ([Link](#)) about conducting research and properly citing sources. Furthermore, please choose a [single citation style](#) and stick with it.

In an examination setting, unless I give explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in class or take home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to me also constitutes a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is my policy to follow procedures established by the University. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=17>.

Disabilities

The Learning Access Program (LAP) ([Link](#)) provides services to students with disabilities. The services are meant to help students devise strategies for meeting college demands and to foster independence, responsibility, and self-advocacy. Registration for support services is strictly voluntary and on a confidential basis. Students MUST contact LAP immediately when they want to request reasonable accommodations for this course and can do so at any time during the semester, though earlier is better.

Course Schedule

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible, but we may take more time on some concepts and less time on others. For this reason, a digital version of this syllabus can be found on [my website](#). Slides used in class will also be posted on the online syllabus before class. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class or via e-mail and the online syllabus will be constantly up-to-date. Required course readings are listed and due dates for assignments are in bold. Links to some additional readings are included in the syllabus on my website, others will be uploaded to Blackboard. If you have trouble, please do not hesitate to [e-mail](#) me.

Week 1: Introduction

- January 19: Introduction to the class and each other
- January 21: Introduction to critical thinking
 - Review the [Elements and Standards of Critical Thinking](#)
 - Read [Defining Critical Thinking](#)

Week 2: Public Policy

- January 26: The Market and the Polis
 - Stone chapter 1
 - **Last Day of Add/Drop**
- January 28: Goals – Equity and Efficiency
 - Stone chapters 2 and 3

Week 3: Goals

- February 2: Goals – Welfare
 - Stone chapter 4
- February 4: Goals – Liberty and Security
 - Stone chapters 5 and 6

Week 4: Problems

- February 9: Problems – Symbols and Numbers
 - Stone chapters 7 and 8
- February 11: Problems – Causes and Interests
 - Stone chapters 9 and 10
 - **Goals Essay Due**

Week 5: Problems and Solutions

- February 16: Problems – Decisions
 - Stone chapter 11

- February 18: Solutions – Incentives and Rules
 - Stone chapters 12 and 13
 - **Topic for Final Research Project Due**

Week 6: Solutions

- February 23: Solutions – Facts and Rights
 - Stone chapters 14 and 15
- February 25: Solutions – Powers
 - Stone chapter 16
 - **Problems Essay Due**

Week 7: Pulling It Together

- March 1: Pulling it all together
 - Stone chapter 17
- March 3: Application
 - TBD
 - **Solutions Essay Due**

Week 8: Guns

- March 8: Gun Control
 - Masters, Jonathan. 2016. “[Gun Control Around the World: A Primer.](#)” *The Atlantic*. January 12.
 - Eichenwald, Kurt. 2013. “[Let’s Repeal the Second Amendment.](#)” *Vanity Fair*. January 3.
 - Parsons, Chelsea, Arkadi Gerney, and Tim Daly. 2015. “[Framework for Action.](#)” Center for American Progress. December 15.
 - Metzl, Jonathan M. and Kenneth T. MacLeish. 2015. “[Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, and the Politics of American Firearms.](#)” *American Journal of Public Health* 105: 240-249.

- March 10: Second Amendment Rights
 - Oyez. “[McDonald v. Chicago](#).” Case Summary.
 - The Heritage Foundation. “[Solutions 2014: Protecting Second Amendment](#).”
 - Kopel, David B. 2015. “[The Costs and Consequences of Gun Control](#).” The Cato Institute. Policy Analysis No. 784. December 1.

Week 9: Spring Break

- March 15: Spring Break
 - No Class
- March 17: Spring Break
 - No Class

Week 10: Immigration

- March 22: The Federal Government
 - Trump, Donald J. “[Immigration Reform That Will Make America Great Again](#).”
 - Clinton, Hillary R. “[Immigration Reform](#).”
 - Chip, William W. 2015. “[Mass Deportations vs. Mass Legalization: A False Choice](#).” Center for Immigration Studies. October.
 - American Immigration Council. 2015. “[A Guide to the Immigration Accountability Executive Action](#).” March 3.
 - **Gun Control Essay Due**
- March 24: State and Local Action
 - Amdur, Spencer. 2014. “[How Local Governments Are Hacking Immigration Reform](#).” *The Atlantic*. May 13.
 - Federation for American Immigration Reform. 2013. “[Sanctuary Policies Across the U.S.](#)” October 25.
 - Mathema, Silva. 2015. “[Providing Identification to Unauthorized Immigrants](#).” Center for American Progress. November. Introduction and Summary.

Week 11: Higher Education

- March 29: No Class, Preceptorial Advising
- March 31: Higher Education
 - PBS Frontline. 2010. “[College Inc.](#)” Video.
 - Harnisch, Thomas L. and Kati Lebioda. 2016. “[Top 10 Higher Education State Policy Issues for 2016.](#)” American Association of State Colleges and Universities. January.
 - Woodhouse, Kellie. 2015. “[Who’s to Blame for Rising Tuition?](#)” Inside Higher Ed. May 5.
 - **Immigration Essay Due**

Week 12: Mass Incarceration

- April 5:
 - Wagner, Peter and Bernadette Rabuy. 2015. “[Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2015.](#)” Prison Policy Initiative. December 8.
 - Pinto, Nick. 2015. “[Why Can’t We End Mass Incarceration?](#)” *Rolling Stone*. October 26.
 - Hager, Eli. 2015. “[Our Prisons in Black and White.](#)” The Marshall Project. November 18.
 - Brookings Institute. 2014. “[A New Approach to Reducing Incarceration While Maintaining Low Rates of Crime.](#)” The Hamilton Project. May.
 - Read about [The Coalition for Public Safety](#).
- April 7: The States
 - Gelb, Adam. 2015. “[Laboratories of Incarceration.](#)” The CATO Institute. September 23.
 - Silver, Drew. 2014. “[Feds may be rethinking the drug war, but states have been leading the way.](#)” Pew Research Center. April 2.
 - Dooley-Sammuli, Margaret. 2015. “[Changing Gears: California’s Shift to Smart Justice.](#)” American Civil Liberties Union.
 - **Higher Education Essay Due**

Week 13: Common Core and Choose Your Own Adventure

- April 12: Common Core
 - C-SPAN. 2014. “[Common Core Standards Initiative](#).” Video.
 - Jersey Can. “[Common Core in New Jersey](#).”
 - Burke, Lindsey. 2013. “[Common Core National Standards and Tests: Empty Promises and Increased Federal Overreach Into Education](#).” The Heritage Foundation. Special Report for Domestic Policy Studies No. 141. October 7.
- April 14: Choose Your Own Adventure
 - TBD
 - **Mass Incarceration Essay Due**

Week 14: Policy Panels

- April 19: Policy Panel
- April 21: Policy Panel
 - **Common Core Essay Due**

Week 15: Policy Panels

- April 26: Policy Panel
- April 28: Policy Panel
 - **Choose Your Own Adventure Essay Due**

Week 16: Finals Week

- May 5: Policy Position Papers Due via Dropbox by 4:30 pm

Appendices

A Essay Assignments

Please write no more than 2 single spaced pages on each essay assignment. Assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard by the start of the class they are due. All three Stone essays are required, but you only need to complete four of the six possible topical essays.

A.1 Stone Essay 1: Goals (Due February 11)

Briefly describe the five policy goals presented by Stone (equity, efficiency, welfare, liberty, and security).

Pick one of the following two sets of goals: (1) equity, efficiency, and welfare; or (2) liberty and security. Explain how the goals conflict and how they can be balanced (i.e., how progress can be made towards each goal simultaneously).

A.2 Stone Essay 2: Problems (Due February 25)

Explain how symbols, numbers, causes, interests, and decisions each contribute to our understanding of policy problems. How can each be manipulated to alter how we view a particular problem? Use a specific policy example (e.g., illegal immigration) to illustrate your points.

A.3 Stone Essay 3: Solutions (Due March 3)

Explain the differences between using incentives, rules, facts, rights, and powers as the solution to a policy problem. Use the problem you selected for class to illustrate what these solutions would look like if applied to your problem. Meaning, what would it look like to address your problem using either an incentive, rule, fact, right, or power? Make sure you address each.

A.4 Topic Essays (Complete Four of Six)

For each topical essay, I would like to do two things. First, reflect on our in-class discussions about the topic. What did you learn about the topic that you did not know before? What was one point that you would like to raise in discussing the issue that you did not?

Second, describe one concept from each of the three sections of Stone (i.e., goals, problems, and solutions) as it applies to the topic of the week. For example, you could apply the topics of welfare (a goal), numbers (a description of the problem), and a rule (a type of solution) to our section on mass incarceration. You are free to choose which concept from each section that you would like to apply. Some will be more clearly applicable than others.

Remember that you are only required to submit four essays. That being said, if you complete five or six, I will only keep the four highest grades you earned.

Due Dates:

- **Gun Control: March 22**
- **Immigration: March 31**
- **Higher Education: April 7**
- **Mass Incarceration: April 14**
- **Common Core: April 21**
- **Choose Your Own Adventure: April 28**

B Position Paper Guidelines

Writing a Position Paper²

The following material explains how to produce a position paper. A template is provided that outlines the major parts of a good position paper. This, of course, is not the only way to write one. It is just a guide.

A position paper presents one side of an argument, for the purpose of debate and to convince your audience that your position is valid and defensible. You need to be very careful in selecting a position, making sure that you are comfortable defending that position with evidence. It is important to address all sides of the debate and make the paper easy for your audience to understand. It is important to provide evidence to support your claims, as well as refute opposing claims.

Picking a Topic

Before taking a side, you need to carefully select a topic that is of interest to you and arguable. Ask the following questions when picking your topic:

- Is it a real issue, with genuine controversy and uncertainty?
- Can you identify at least two distinctive positions?
- Are you personally interested in advocating one of these positions?
- Is the scope of the issue narrow enough to be manageable?

Please see me if you are having trouble answering any of these questions.

Analyzing the Issue and Developing Your Argument

After picking a topic, you need to do some more research on the topic. Even if you already have an opinion on the topic, you need to make sure your position can be well supported by evidence. Listing the pro and con sides of the argument can help you sort out the evidence for your claim and any counterclaims.

The following types of information might be useful: encyclopedias, books, government reports, scholarly articles, newspapers, magazines, positions papers and analysis from think

²Adapted from the Simon Fraser University's School of Communication. <http://www.sfu.ca/cmns/130d1/WritingaPositionPaper.htm>

tanks and other institutes. The [Stockton University Library](#) is always a good place to start. From there, identify any government agencies (federal and state) that might report on your topic, as well as think tanks that may support your positions. The University of Pennsylvania's list of [Top 50 Think Tanks in the United States](#) is a good place to start in looking for think tanks that might write on your topic.

Once you have determine the evidence for each side of the argument, decide which viewpoint you are going to argue. When writing a position paper, it is important to consider your audience. for this exercise, I am your audience and you are free to argue whatever point you would like. In the future, you may find yourself writing position papers for legislators, judges, non-profits, think tanks, the public, and various other audiences. It is important to know who you are writing for when crafting your position paper. It will help you decide what terms to explain, what background you need to provide, etc. For this assignment, assume that I do not know a lot about your topic.

Organization of the Paper Sample Outline

I Introduction

- i Introduce the topic
- ii Provide background on the topic, explain why it is important
- iii Assert your thesis. (See [this resource](#) for more information on crafting a thesis statement.)

II Counterarguments

- i Summarize the counterclaims (at least two)
- ii Provide supporting information for counterclaims
- iii Refute the counterclaims
- iv Give evidence for argument

III Your Arguments

- i Assert point #1 of your claims
 - i. Give your educated and informed opinion
 - ii. Provide support/proof using more than one source
- ii Assert point #2 of your claims
 - i. Give your educated and informed opinion
 - ii. Provide support/proof using more than one source
- iii Assert point #3 of your claims

- i. Give your educated and informed opinion
- ii. Provide support/proof using more than one source

IV Conclusion

- i Restate your argument
- ii Provide a plan of action, but do not introduce new information

A few notes on counterarguments: Be generous when you are describing counterarguments. Do not be flippant and make them look foolish, be fair and objective. You do not need to address all potential counterarguments, address a few key one in depth. Also, you will need to decide whether you will concede your opponent's point and then explain why your argument remains the strongest, or you will have to reject the counterargument and provide evidence for why it is wrong.

Writing Style I expect these position papers to be polished. There are numerous resources online that can be helpful, including the Simon Fraser University School of Communication's [page on writing a position paper](#). The Stockton University [Writing Center](#) is also very helpful.

Grading

Your position paper should be 8-10 pages, double spaced, though these are not strict requirements.

You will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Background (15 points)
2. A clear thesis statement (5 points)
3. Discussion of at least two counterarguments, including evidence to refute or concede the points (20 points)
4. Presentation of your own argument, with supportive evidence (50 points)
5. Style and clarity of writing (10 points)

Due Date: May 5

C Policy Panel Guidelines

This is an opportunity to “field test” your argument before finishing the final writing product. It will also help you hone your presentation skills, as well as practice answering questions on the spot. Each student will be assigned to a panel and will present a summary of their position paper (background, counterarguments, argument, and conclusion). The presentation should not exceed 10 minutes. PowerPoint is optional. The panels will be held during the last two weeks of class. In addition to asking questions during the panel, students in the class will provide one or two comments regarding areas for improvement for the final position paper.

You will be graded using the following criteria:

1. Background and clear thesis statement (20 points)
2. Presentation of at least two counterarguments and your response to them (20 points)
3. Presentation of your argument, including supporting evidence (40 points)
4. Style and clarity of the presentation (10 points)
5. Time management (10 points)

D Participation Grading Guidelines

A = A student earning an A comes to nearly all classes prepared and can demonstrate superior comprehension of the material. They contribute to the class conversation, but don't dominate it. They make thoughtful contributions that advance conversation, showing interest in and respect for others views. They are demonstrably engaged in course material and content.

B = A student earning a B misses only a few classes, but attends having completed the readings and is able to demonstrate comprehension of the readings, perhaps lacking fully integrated views toward the material. They make thoughtful comments when called upon, show respect and interest in other students views, and occasionally contribute without prompting. This student is making a good-faith effort to participate in class, but may not have the integration of ideas of an A student or may not participate as often.

C = A student earning a C misses several classes, but arrives having completed the readings and able to discuss their most basic tenets. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and gives only minimal answers when called upon. They are putting forward some effort, but appear to be uninterested in the material and do not participate much without prompting.

D = A student earning a D misses close to half of the classes, and when present has difficulty positively contributing. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class, and when prompted, gives responses that may be off-topic and demonstrate a lack of knowledge or preparedness. They are putting forth less than average effort in the course and may be having a negative impact on others.

F = A student earning an F misses over half of the classes, and when present, cannot demonstrate they have read the material or thought about the concepts. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and does not give answers related to the question being asked when prompted. They do not appear to be interested in the content of the class and are putting forth a very minimal level of effort.³

³Adapted from [Dr. Zachary Baumann](#).