

Syllabus for PUBPL 304-001
Public Policy Analysis
Fall 2017
MWF 3:35 pm – 4:25 pm, Olmsted E-212

Professor: Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

Office:	Olmsted W-160A
Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays 1 pm – 3 pm
Email:	mallinson@psu.edu
Twitter:	@djmallinson
Class hashtag	#pubpl304
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 help students build skills in conducting their own analysis of pressing public problems. Finally, students will apply what they have learned to an analysis of a policy problem of personal interest. Sprinkled throughout the course, students will engage in discussing contemporary policy debates, including mass incarceration, the opioid crisis, immigration, fracking, and healthcare.

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
- Objective 2c: Students will develop analytical skills including identifying primary sources, creating and evaluating arguments, evaluating the graphical presentation of data, and more.
- 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 skills workshops. 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 <https://handbook.psu.edu/content/class-attendance>.

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 some tough 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 #pubpl304.

E-mail Policy: I will work to respond to e-mails by the next business day. This means that e-mails sent on the weekends will be responded to by Monday.

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 Canvas.

Lecture Slides

I will be using lecture slides throughout the course. These will be uploaded to the course website (<https://djmallinson.wordpress.com/current-courses/pubpl-304/>) and Canvas 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: skills workshop assignments, Stone analysis, policy brief, legislative hearing, and participation.

Each component represents the following percentage of your final grade:

Workshop Assignments	25%
Stone Analysis	25%
Policy Brief	25%
Legislative Hearing	10%
Participation	15%

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

Workshop Assignments: Most Fridays we will be having practical skills workshops. The topics range from evaluating an argument to not being fooled by data. We will also work on writing skills that will be useful for your analysis and brief assignments. Many of the workshops will include an assignment that you will start in class and will submit before the start of the next class. See the course schedule for the topics we will be covering.

Stone Analysis: During the first half of the class, you will be introduced to Deborah Stone's view of policymaking. You will, in turn, use the analytical framework we develop in class to evaluate a policy of personal interest to you. You will need to demonstrate how her concepts of goals, problems, and solutions apply to two specific policy proposals. The research necessary for this assignment will provide a launching point for producing your own policy brief at the end of the course. See Appendix [A](#) for a more detailed description of this assignment.

Policy Brief: The final policy brief is due the Wednesday of Finals Week (December 13) by 5pm. Write a two page, two column, brief on your topic using the provided template. The brief should include enough background on the topic so that a non-expert can understand it. Then, you should make two specific recommendations for action based on your evaluation of research on the topic. The sources for this brief should be from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and groups that produce policy research (e.g., Pew Charitable Trusts). See Appendix B for a more detailed description of this assignment.

Legislative Hearing: At the end of the course we will spend two weeks holding legislative hearings where you will be placed on a panel with 4-5 other students and provide a brief statement (5 minutes) on your policy topic and recommendation. The rest of the class will act like a legislative committee and ask you questions about your proposal (this will be adjusted based on course enrollment). I will share feedback with you for the purpose of helping you improve your final policy brief. See Appendix C for more information.

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 participation will represent 15 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 Canvas.

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 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
harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center	psuh.mywconline.com	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 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 and follow us on Twitter [@PSUHLC](https://twitter.com/PSUHLC).

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 and Canvas 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 Canvas. If you have trouble, please do not hesitate to [e-mail](#) me.

Week 1: Introduction

- August 21: Introduction to the class and each other
- August 23: The Policy Process
 - Kraft, Michael E. and Scott R. Furlong. 2015. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. Fifth Edition. Chapter 3, pgs. 84-100. (See Canvas)
 - Cairney, Paul. 2016. [“The Politics of Evidence-Based Policymaking.”](#) *The Guardian*. March 10.
- August 25: The Market and the Polis
 - Stone chapter 1 (See Canvas)
- August 26: **Regular Drop Deadline**

Week 2: Goals

- August 28: Equity
 - Stone chapter 2

- August 30: Efficiency
 - Stone chapter 3
- September 1: Skill Workshop: Critical Thinking
 - Read [Defining Critical Thinking](#)
 - Review the [Elements and Standards of Critical Thinking](#)

Week 3: Goals

- September 4: Labor Day
 - No Class
- September 6: Welfare
 - Stone chapter 4
- September 8: Liberty and Security
 - Stone chapters 5 and 6
 - **Log Policy Choice on Canvas**

Week 4: Problems

- September 11: Symbols
 - Stone chapter 7
- September 13: Numbers
 - Stone chapter 8
- September 15: Skill Workshop: Logic
 - Read “[Logical Fallacies.](#)”
 - THEN watch “[How to Evaluate An Argument.](#)”

Week 5: Problems

- September 18: Causes
 - Stone chapter 9
- September 20: Interests
 - Stone chapter 10
- September 22: Skill Workshop: Searching for Primary Sources
 - Bring a laptop or smart phone to class

Week 6: Problems and Solutions

- September 25: Decisions
 - Stone chapter 11
- September 27: Incentives
 - Stone chapter 12
- September 29: Skill Workshop: How to Evaluate Research
 - Litman, Todd. 2012. *Evaluating Research Quality*. Victoria Transport Policy Institute.

Week 7: Solutions

- October 2: Rules
 - Stone chapter 13
- October 4: Facts
 - Stone chapter 14
- October 6: Skill Workshop: Identifying Bias in Statistics and Figures
 - Huff, Darrell. 1954. *How to Lie with Statistics*. Chapters 1 and 5. (See Canvas)

Week 8: Solutions

- October 9: Rights
 - Stone chapter 15
- October 11: Powers
 - Stone chapter 16
- October 13: Skills Workshop: Avoiding Plagiarism
 - We will not meet in the classroom.
 - Complete the Penn State Plagiarism Tutorial (<http://tlt.psu.edu/plagiarism/student-tutorial/defining-plagiarism-and-academic-integrity/>)
 - Upload a screenshot of your completion documentation to Canvas

Week 9: Connections

- October 16: Pulling it all together
 - Stone chapter 17
- October 18: Application
- October 20: Skill Workshop: Analysis Process
 - Kraft and Furlong. Chapter 4. (See Canvas).

Week 10: Mass Incarceration

- October 23: General Background
 - Mallinson, Daniel J. 2017. “The Color of Mass Incarceration.” In *Race in America: How a Pseudo-Scientific Concept Shaped Human Interaction*, ed. Patricia Reid-Merritt. ABC-CLIO. (See Canvas).
 - Pinto, Nick. 2015. “[Why Can’t We End Mass Incarceration?](#)” *Rolling Stone*. October 26.
- October 25: Opioids and Reform
 - Leap, Amy. 2016. “[Pennsylvania Opioid Addiction Statistics Are Staggering.](#)” *Pocono Record*. September 23.

- Kourkounis, Jessica. 2017. “[Behind the Headlines: Pennsylvania’s Opioid Epidemic Up Close.](#)” *WPSU*. May 18.
- Silver, Drew. 2014. “[Feds may be rethinking the drug war, but states have been leading the way.](#)” Pew Research Center. April 2.
- Seelye, Katherine O. 2015. “[In Heroin Crisis, White Families Seek Gentler War on Drugs.](#)” *New York Times*. October 30.
- October 27: Skill Workshop: Annotated Bibliographies
 - “[How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography.](#)” Cornell University Library.
 - “[Annotated Bibliographies.](#)” OWL. Purdue Online Writing Lab.
 - **Stone Analysis Due**

Week 11: Environment

- October 30: Fracking: New York
 - Graves, Lucia. 2016. “[On the Faultline: New York Fracking Back Leaves State Divided as Primary Looms.](#)” *The Guardian*. April 16.
 - Clemente, Jude. 2015. “[Why New York’s Fracking Ban is Unsustainable.](#)” *Forbes*. June 7.
- November 1: Skill Workshop: Writing an Effective Brief
 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. “[Preparing Policy Briefs.](#)”
- November 3: Fracking: Pennsylvania
 - Guest Lecturer: Michael J. Passiment (BS ‘09, MPA ‘12). Budget Analyst. Committee on Appropriations. PA House of Representatives.

Week 12: Healthcare

- November 6: Federal Reform
 - Levey, Noam N. and Kyle Kim. 2017. “[A Side-by-Side Comparison of Obamacare and the GOP’s Replacement Plans.](#)” *Los Angeles Times*. March 8. (Updated July 13).

- November 8: State Actions
 - NCSL. 2017. “[State Laws and Actions Challenging Certain Health Reforms.](#)” March 25.
 - Hederman, Rea. 2017. “[Ohio is Blazing the Trail on Healthcare Reform.](#)” *The Hill*. June 28.
- November 10: Skill Workshop: Effective Presentations
 - Kleinkauf, Cecilia. 1981. “[A Guide to Giving Legislative Testimony.](#)” *Social Work* 26(4): 297-303.

Week 13: Immigration

- November 13: The Federal Government
 - Kulsh et al. 2017. “[Trump’s Immigration Policies Explained.](#)” *The New York Times*. February 21.
 - Felter, Claire and Danielle Renwick. 2017. “[The U.S. Immigration Debate.](#)” Council on Foreign Relations. Updated June 29.
- November 15: State and Local Governments
 - Amdur, Spencer. 2014. “[How Local Governments are Hacking Immigration Reform.](#)” *The Atlantic*. May 13.
 - Lee, Jasmine C., Rudy Omri, and Julia Preston. 2017. “[What are Sanctuary Cities?](#)” *The New York Times*. Updated February 6.
 - Verbruggen, Robert. 2017. “[Do We Hate Sanctuary Cities More Than We Like Federalism?](#)” *The National Review*. August 9.
- November 17: Skill Workshop: TBD

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break

- November 20, 22, 24: No Classes

Week 15: Legislative Hearings

- November 27: TBD

- November 29: TBD
- December 1: TBD

Week 16: Legislative Hearings

- December 4: TBD
- December 6: TBD
- December 8: TBD

Week 17: Finals Week

- Policy Brief due Wednesday December 13 by 5pm

Appendices

A Stone Analysis

This assignment has several purposes:

1. Apply material we covered in Stone's book
2. Develop analytical skills
3. Dig deeper into your policy topic

You are required to write an 8-10 page policy analysis using the framework of goals, problems, and solutions. First, I want you to identify a policy proposal put forward by an interest group, think tank, politician, political party, or some other entity that relates to your policy topic. In your paper, first explain IN DETAIL, the most prevalent goal, problem frame, and type of solution present in the proposal. Then, the second section of the paper will address how the proposed solution would change if the group focused on different goals and used different tools for characterizing the problem. You will need to tackle each of the four other concepts discussed within each category. Finally, identify a competing group's proposal and how and why their view of the goals/problem/solutions differs than the first group's.

Having done this, answer the following question:

1. How well supported are the two proposals you have reviewed? Are they supported by scientific studies? Use the skills we have learned in class.
2. How could you determine, objectively, whether one proposal is superior to the other?

To summarize, here is the expected outline of your paper:

I Introduction

- i Introduce the topic
- ii Provide background on the topic, explain why it is important

II First Proposal Breakdown

- i Explain the most prevalent goal (equity, efficiency, welfare, liberty, or security)
- ii Explain how the problem is characterized using symbols, numbers causes, interests, and/or decisions.
- iii Explain how the proposal uses the solutions we discussed (incentives, rules, facts, rights, and/or powers)

III Alternative Framing

- i Explain how different types of goals and problem characterizations point to different solutions than the one presented in the first proposal.

IV Second Proposal

- i Identify how this proposal differs from the first in terms of goals, problems, and solutions.

V Answer: How well supported are the two proposals you have reviewed? Are they supported by scientific studies? Use the skills we have learned in class.

VI Answer: How could you determine, objectively, whether one proposal is superior to the other?

DUE OCTOBER 27

B Policy Brief

A policy brief is a “short, neutral summary of what is known about a particular issue or problem. Policy briefs are a form of report designed to facilitate policy-making.”² Writing clear and accurate briefs is an essential skill of successful professionals in the political and business realms. A skillfully crafted brief has many advantages, including (1) improving the reader’s understanding of the topic, (2) saving time by making the information available to many people at once, (3) providing the basis for securing an agreement among contending people, and (4) providing a written record that may become important in reviewing the history of decisions made within the organization.

In this course, you will write a brief on a policy problem of interest to you. Each brief must be no longer than two pages, single-spaced with double columns. Exceeding this limit will result in a one letter grade deduction for the assignment. The brief should have one inch margins and 12 point font. See the following [link](#) for an example brief.

You will select the topic for your brief and need to inform me of your selection by **September 8**.

Your grades will be based on meeting the requirements of the brief and upon the evaluation of content, form, and grammar. Remember that polished, persuasive writing is expected. Please attach to each brief the list of references you use to support your ideas. Feel free to use quotations, examples and data as well; just be sure to stay within the two-page limit.³

DUE Wednesday December 13 by 5pm

²Eisele, F. Preparing a Policy Brief Issue [PDF Document]. Retrieved from https://www.courses.psu.edu/hpa/hpa301_fre1/IBInstructions_fa02.PDF

³Adapted from Dr. Christine Kelleher Palus

C Legislative Hearings

Policy analysts not only have to present their ideas in writing, they often have to also present them orally. This assignment will help you build skills in presenting a complicated policy problem and a proposed solution in a manner that is clear to the listener. It will also help you learn how to field questions from your audience.

Students will be assigned to panels that will present an oral version of their draft policy brief to the class. This presentation must not exceed 10 minutes. PowerPoint is optional. The hearings will be held from November 27 to December 8. Students in the class will ask questions and provide comments regarding areas of improvement for the briefing.

Students will be graded using the following criteria:

1. Presentation of the topic/problem (20 points)
2. Presentation of proposed solutions – not just your chosen solution (30 points)
3. Presentation of your recommendation(s) (40 points)
4. Style and clarity (5 points)
5. Time management (5 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.⁴

⁴Adapted from [Dr. Zachary Baumann](#).