

Department: PP

Course No.: 101

Credits: 3

Title: Introduction to Public Policy

Contact Person: Mark Robbins

Content Area: Grp 2 Social Sciences

Catalog Copy: PP 101 Introduction to Public Policy. Either semester. Three credits. Public policy history and institutions, government administration and systems, policy analysis, contemporary policy issues, polling and influences on policy making.

Course Information: A. The goal of the course is to provide a broad survey of policy and administration topics and alert students to the approaches to public policy inquiry and contemporary issues in public policy.

Specific Course Goals:

understand what we mean by "public policy";

understand how the study of public policy relates to the social

sciences, and how the tools and theories of the social sciences help us

understand policy and the policy-making process

be able to apply your knowledge of the policy process to any

issue or topic that may confront you in your professional or personal life

be able to intelligently analyze policies, and to find the strengths and weaknesses in partisan or news media depictions of policy issues; learn and enhance your critical and analytical thinking skills.

B. Course Requirements: Requirements include readings, class participation and evaluation. Student evaluation will combine quizzes and a final exam. Readings will be based on a core survey text such as Thomas R. Dye's *Understanding Public Policy* (Prentice-Hall, 2004). Readings will be designed to complement each lecture. Lectures are organized topically. Quizzes and Final Exam are based on lectures and readings.

C. Major Themes: This course provides an introduction and overview to the major concepts in American public policy today, including: the institutions and processes involved in policy-making; the historical development of public policy in the U.S. ; analysis of specific public policy areas (such as environmental policy, welfare policy, economic policy); the role of the national government, state governments and local governments in policy-making; the influence of non-governmental entities in making policy (i.e., the news media, private business and interest groups); the implementation of policy through administration, the effects of elections on government policy-making; and the steps in the policy-making process. The course will explore both American domestic policy and American approaches to foreign policy.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed.: The course meets the following goals of General Education:

1. Acquire intellectual breadth and diversity. This course introduces students to interdisciplinary intellectual approaches to understanding and analyzing public policy. It covers a broad set of policy issues and topics and introduces students to the perspectives of a varied set of policy makers and citizens. >
2. Acquire critical judgment. Students are introduced to critical and analytic frameworks that are employed in policy decision making. An emphasis on critical thinking is emphasized in readings, assignments and class discussion. It is the expectation of the course that as students understand these tools and approaches these skills can be applied to their broader lives.
3. Acquire awareness of their era in society. Current policy problems and social issues frame the society in which students reside. This course engages students in and exploration of these policies and issues through readings, discussion and examination.

CA2 Criteria: 1. Introduce students to theories and concepts of the social sciences. This course will deal with a number of cross-disciplinary concepts and theories in the social sciences revolving around the public policy-making process, including theories of representation, policy-making theories including (incrementalism, pluralism, hyperpluralism, elitism), democratic decision-making, social group theory, democratic decision-making models, governance structures (federalism, dualist theory, separation of powers/checks and balances, etc.), the policy-making process (problem definition, agenda-setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation), and economic concepts (business cycles, capitalism, socialism, interventionism, regulation and deregulation).

2. Introduce students to methods used in the social sciences, including consideration of the ethical problems social scientists face. The course will include an introduction to various social science methods used to understand and evaluate public policy-making in the U.S., including case studies, program evaluation techniques, survey research, cost-benefit analysis, rationale choice approaches. Ethical issues underlie both general approaches to policy-making and specific elements of making public policy, and will regularly be discussed in course material.

3. Introduce students to ways in which individuals, groups, institutions, or societies behave and influence one another and the natural environment. Public policy-making is the product of the interaction of individuals, groups, and institutions in society. The theories and methods reviewed in #1 and #2 above all seek to providing and understanding/explanation of how the interaction of individuals, groups and/or institutions produce particular public policies, and the effect of those policies on individuals and institutions. The core goals of this course, therefore, examines how individuals/groups/institutions influence public policy, and how policy in turn affects these elements of society.

4. Provide students with tools to analyze social, political, or economic groups/organizations (such as families, communities, or governments), and to examine social issues and problems at the individual, cultural, societal, national, or international level. Social issues may include issues of gender, race, social class, political power, economic power, and cross-cultural interaction.

Public policy represents the interaction of social, economic, governmental factors, which are driven by cultural and global influences of a state. These factors and broader influences have played a crucial role in (1) defining and allocating who has power and how that power affects public policy, (2) how social conditions have changed in America over the years (gender equity, race relations, the social safety net, etc.), (3) the role of social institutions in society (such as the family, religion, and the media). Identifying how social issues and problems have changed through the public policy process makes up an important part of this course.

Availability at Regional Campuses: - This course will be generally available at the Greater Hartford Campus, where the Department of Public Policy is located.