

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Connections Category

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1. What course does the department plan to offer in *Connections*? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Social and Cultural, Local to Global, Systems)

PS 311 Public Policy in the Systems subcategory

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory? Please address all of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

1. Analyze how systems evolve.

Within PS 311 we discuss how the American system of government has evolved and how those political changes directly relate to changes in public policy. It is important for students to understand how the institutions of government affect not only the ultimate policy choices that are made, but also which policy alternatives are considered or ignored. Identifying and examining the roles of various actors in the policy process is a major part of PS 311.

2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.

PS 311 is organized around explaining the five primary stages in the policy process – problem identification, policy formation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation. Breaking this cyclical process into five component parts enables students to see how actors and institutions interact in different ways at different stages of policy development. Students are likewise able to see that whereas policy change is path dependent to a certain degree (how the problem is defined shapes policy formation, etc.), each stage of the process offers opportunities for policy change.

3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

Viewing public policy as the result of a process in which multiple decisions are made by multiple actors helps students to realize why all public policies are complex. It is important to understand how institutional rules constrain policy action and how multiple perspectives expressed by various policy actors limit policy choices. In PS 311, in addition to studying the process of making public policy, we examine several substantive areas such as economic policy, social welfare policy, and environmental policy. This enables students to make the connections between the theoretical construct of the policymaking process and policy outcomes in specific areas.

- 3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.**

PS 311 Public Policy should be included in the *Connections* category of Colonnade because of its direct reflection of learning objective #3 in the Systems subcategory. This class is designed specifically to help students understand the system of public policymaking, and how the way the system is designed and operates directly affects public policy outcomes.

- 4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.**

PS 110 American National Government is a prerequisite for PS 311; PS 110 is a Colonnade course in the Explorations (Social & Behavioral Sciences) category.

- 5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.**

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

- Identify and describe the five primary stages of the policy process;
- Explain how public problems are defined and placed on the policy agenda;
- Discuss ways in which public policy is changed at each stage of the policy process;
- Identify the various actors in the policy process and describe how they interact within and outside of government institutions to bring about policy change; and
- Describe how the process of policymaking affects policy outcomes in specific issue areas such as economic policy, environmental policy, and social welfare policy

- 6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.**

The Department of Political Science will establish an assessment committee to evaluate the effectiveness of meeting the stated learning objectives for all Colonnade classes. Each academic year, the committee will collect a random selection of research papers and examinations with all identifying student information removed. The committee will assess these samples following the course outcomes:

- 4 = outstanding (far exceeds expectations)
- 3 = good (exceeds expectations)
- 2 = average (meets basic expectations)
- 1 = poor (does not meet basic expectations)

The committee's targets are:

- 70% of the work will score 2 or higher.
- 30% of the work will score 3 or higher.

7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

PS 311 is designed to demonstrate to students the links between identifying a public problem, devising solutions to address that problem, engaging in compromise with other policy actors to adopt a course of action, taking action, and then assessing the subsequent impact on the original problem identified. Because the collection and presentation of data and information are critical elements at each stage of the policy process, PS 311 illustrates the importance of evidence. Since the policy process as a whole requires persuasion, compromise, and political savvy, PS 311 illustrates the role of argument. PS 311 is a summative learning experience for students because it demonstrates the broad picture of how policy is made – how the process relates to outcomes across all issue areas.

8. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

One section of PS 311 Public Policy will be offered each year in the Spring semester.

9. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.

PS 311 Public Policy Course Information

Spring 2015

Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:35 to 10:55

Grise Hall 340

Instructor Information

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Phone: (270)745-2908

Office: Grise Hall 315

Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00 to 5:00 Central Time *and by appointment*

Course Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Identify and describe the five primary stages of the policy process;
- Explain how public problems are defined and placed on the policy agenda;
- Discuss ways in which public policy is changed at each stage of the policy process;
- Identify the various actors in the policy process and describe how they interact within and outside of government institutions to bring about policy change; and
- Describe how the process of policymaking affects policy outcomes in specific issue areas such as economic policy, environmental policy, and social welfare policy

Texts

The following text is required for the course; it is available through the WKU bookstore or can be purchased from the source of your choice:

1. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives, 5th Edition*, by Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong

In addition to the text, supplemental readings will also be assigned. These will be available on Blackboard or will be given to you in class.

Grade Scale

The Grade Scale for the course is:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Below 70

Graded Elements

Your grade in the course will be calculated as follows:

Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Final Exam	20%
Policy Projects	35%
Class Participation	15%

Exams

You will have three exams in this course, including the final exam. The first two exams will be given in class on the dates tentatively scheduled in the course outline below; if these dates need to be changed, you will be notified in class. The final exam will be comprehensive and is scheduled for May 12th; time for the exam is to be determined.

Policy Projects

You are expected to complete an individual project on a policy issue of your choice. You are also expected to participate in the completion of a group policy project on a policy issue that will be assigned to you. Your grade on the individual project is 20% of your final grade in the course; the grade on the group project is 15% of your final grade. I will make the group assignments and provide instructions for the group policy project in class on February 10th.

I will need to approve your topic for the individual policy project, so please submit a brief summary (no more than one page, typed) of the policy issue you would like to explore **by February 19th**. Please include in your summary at least 3 sources that will be used in the completion of the project. Be sure to assess the credibility and/or point of view of the sources you intend to use, especially when using websites, blogs, and popular press articles. Your project should be 8 to 10 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font with 1-inch margins, and **appropriate and consistent citing of sources** should be used. At least 2 of your sources for the project should be peer-reviewed journals and/or books; sources such as popular press or websites should be in excess of the 2. (Journal articles that are downloaded from the web are still considered journal articles; popular press items are those such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, etc.). Since you will be incorporating each of the following six elements into an 8 to 10 page paper, I recommend that you choose a policy issue of a relatively small scale. Issues such as health care, social security, and the economy are too broad to be addressed within the parameters of this assignment. I suggest you consider issues that are more narrowly defined; the following are a few examples that should not be construed as specific suggestions or limitations on your choice of policy issue: elementary school lunches, nutrition needs of homebound seniors, a free clinic, a local recycling program, building a subway system.

Policy Projects (cont.)

The project (**due before class April 30th**) consists of the following elements:

- Identification and definition of the public problem to be addressed; include discussion of alternative definitions of the problem.
- Formulation of two policy alternatives to address the public problem identified; include discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative.
- Argument for each policy alternative that includes who will likely support and oppose each alternative and why.
- How each alternative would be implemented; include barriers to implementation.
- Discussion of how the success of each alternative would be evaluated; include discussion of the measures needed to evaluate the policy and the potential obstacles to collecting the data needed to determine how successful each alternative would be at alleviating the public problem.
- Your conclusions regarding which is the more viable of the two policy alternatives that include: Why is it more viable? Is it your preferred option? Why/why not?

Class Participation

I have tried to keep the reading load per class meeting reasonable. Therefore, I expect that everyone will **READ and be ready to discuss** the assigned material.

You are **required** to come to class. You cannot participate if you are not here, and 15% of your grade will depend on your participation in class. You are allowed two (2) absences, no questions asked. Absences in excess of two *for any reason* will result in a deduction of 5 points per absence from your class participation grade. However, **participation is not merely being present**; your class participation grade will also be based on my determination of your engagement in the class, such as asking and answering questions as well as making comments that demonstrate that you have read the assigned materials. Also, I will regularly introduce information/concepts not specifically addressed in your readings. You will be responsible for this information should it appear on the exams, so it is important that you come to class and also that you obtain notes from a classmate in the event you miss class.

I reserve the right to administer quizzes or make assignments during the course of the semester. Assignment and quiz grades will be included in the class participation portion of your overall grade. You will need to meet with me to discuss *possible* make-up of missed quizzes.

Keep in mind that students who leave class at any point during the class period will be penalized on your class participation grade, regardless of whether you later return to the classroom; exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please do not disrupt class discussion by leaving the room, except in the obvious case of illness. **At no time will you be allowed to exit and re-enter the classroom during an exam or quiz. If you leave the classroom during an exam or quiz, your paper will be immediately collected and graded accordingly.**

Electronic Devices

Out of respect for me and your fellow classmates, please turn off your cell phone during class. If work or family obligations necessitate leaving your phone on, please put it on vibrate and if you feel you must use your phone for any reason during class, please leave the room. Please do not use your laptop or iPad or other tablet devices to take notes during class. I refer you to this article from [The Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/28/why-students-using-laptops-learn-less-in-class-even-when-they-really-are-taking-notes/): (accessible online at: www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/28/why-students-using-laptops-learn-less-in-class-even-when-they-really-are-taking-notes/). At no time during class should you check email or access social media.

Academic Integrity

Deliberate plagiarism is completely unacceptable and will result in a grade of F for the course. The following statement is taken directly from the WKU Academic Requirements and Regulations:

“Plagiarism—To represent written work taken from another source as one’s own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism.”

I encourage you to read the entire list of [Academic Requirements and Regulations](http://www.wku.edu/undergraduatecatalog/documents/ugrad_13_14_files/academic_information.pdf), (accessible online at: www.wku.edu/undergraduatecatalog/documents/ugrad_13_14_files/academic_information.pdf).

WKU Writing Center

WKU students on all campuses have access to the resources of the [WKU Writing Center](http://www.wku.edu/writingcenter) (accessible online at: www.wku.edu/writingcenter) and you are strongly encouraged to utilize them. Students can visit the Writing Center in 123 Cherry Hall and the Commons at Cravens Library on the Bowling Green campus or in Room 163 on the Glasgow campus. All students can utilize the services of the [Online Writing Center](http://www.wku.edu/online/src/writing-center.php) (accessible at <http://www.wku.edu/online/src/writing-center.php>.) Please note that the tutors at the Writing Center have been trained to help students at all phases of a writing project, including assisting with brainstorming ideas, structuring the assignment, and editing for clarity and correctness, but they will NOT revise or edit the paper for you.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Accessibility Resource Center, DSU 1074. The telephone number is (270)745-5004 v/tty.

Per University policy, please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Tentative Course Outline and Reading Schedule

1/27	Course Introduction
1/29	Chapter 1: Public Policy and Politics
2/3	Chapter 1: Public Policy and Politics
2/5	Chapter 2: Government Institutions and Policy Actors
2/10	Chapter 2: Government Institutions and Policy Actors
2/12	Chapter 3: Understanding Public Policymaking
2/17	Chapter 3: Understanding Public Policymaking
2/19	Chapter 4: Policy Analysis *** Individual Policy Project topic due ***
2/24	Chapter 4: Policy Analysis *** Review for Exam 1 ***
2/26	Exam 1
3/3	Chapter 5: Public Problems and Policy Alternatives
3/5	Chapter 5: Public Problems and Policy Alternatives
3/10	Spring Break; class does not meet
3/12	Spring Break; class does not meet
3/17	Chapter 6: Assessing Policy Alternatives
3/19	Chapter 6: Assessing Policy Alternatives
3/24	Chapter 7: Economic and Budgetary Policy
3/26	Chapter 8: Health Care Policy
3/31	Chapter 8: Health Care Policy
4/2	Exam 2
4/7	Chapter 9: Welfare and Social Security Policy

Tentative Course Outline and Reading Schedule (cont.)

- 4/9** Chapter 9: Welfare and Social Security Policy
- 4/14** Chapter 10: Education Policy
- 4/16** Chapter 10: Education Policy
- 4/21** Chapter 11: Environmental and Energy Policy
- 4/23** Chapter 11: Environmental and Energy Policy
- 4/28** **Group Project Presentations**
- 4/30** Chapter 12: Foreign Policy and Homeland Security
***** Individual Policy Projects due before class *****
- 5/5** Chapter 12: Foreign Policy and Homeland Security
- 5/7** Chapter 13: Politics Analysis, and Policy Choice
- 5/12** **Final Exam, Time to be Determined**