Course Goals
The policy process is the manner in which (i) issues are conceptualized and brought to the government as problems needing action; (ii) policies are designed and selected; and (iii) policies are implemented, monitored, evaluated, and revised. The policy process is also the study of political behavior, especially how people interact and exercise power to allocate public resources, benefits, and burdens.

Trying to understand and explain the policy process requires an understanding of the relationships among an uncountable number of factors in a dynamic system with nested levels of interactions and uncertain inputs and outputs. Hundreds of formal (official) and informal (unofficial) actors with different beliefs and interests interact in the policy process, and their interactions are embedded in a community with its own history, geological conditions, and institutions/rules. How can we possibly make sense of it all? How can we participate and be effective in achieving our goals in such a complex system? How can we best prepare ourselves to write a capstone? I believe the best way to approach complex phenomena is to employ multiple theoretical lenses, which help to simplify complexity, identify the critical causal factors, and, hopefully, increase our personal efficacy.

In this course you will learn to apply several theoretical lenses for viewing the policy process including the stages heuristic, Hofferbert’s tunnel of causality, diffusions and innovations, punctuated equilibrium theory, multiple streams framework, social construction, institutional analysis and development, the advocacy coalition framework, and an implementation framework.

The objectives of this course and the reasons for learning these theories/frameworks of the policy process are to help students:
1. Simplify overly complex political systems into familiar stimuli that can be identified, stored in memory, and adapted to with effective strategies.
2. Offer strategies for adapting to obstacles encountered in a policy process.
3. Anticipate future events in a policy process beyond a current obstacle.
4. Avoid deep detours/failures in achieving objectives.
5. Enhance the sophistication of useable strategies through previous/existing empirical applications of the theories/frameworks.
6. Provide a foundation for thinking and learning about public affairs as a MPA student and as a citizen.

Students will achieve the course objectives by critically reading the course readings, by actively participating during in-class discussion/activities, and by completing two course papers. The course format includes a mix of lecture, class discussions, small-group discussions, presentations, class activities, and out-of class activities. Active participation and positive attitudes are expected. The readings from the peer-reviewed journals will cover a range of public policy topics including environmental policy, education policy, science policy, social policy, and international policy.

Course Texts
Course Requirements and Grading
I will use three methods to evaluate student learning and progress. These methods include:

1) Newspaper Content Analysis  35%
2) Comparative Theory Paper  35%
3) Final Exam    20%
4) Class Participation   10%

1) Content Analysis (35% of total grade)
This paper is a comparative analysis of the coverage of the same topic by two newspapers in a quasi-experimental design. This project is designed to help sensitize you to the potential biases in the coverage of policy issues in the mass media, your own perceptual filters, the use of a conceptual framework, and the techniques of social science research. The paper can deal with any public policy topic of interest to you. The content analysis paper is due at the beginning of class on November 10 with several parts due prior. Additional instructions on the content analysis paper will be given later in the semester.

2) Comparative Theory Policy Analysis (35% of total grade)
This paper is designed to test your ability to apply two of the theoretical lenses discussed in class to a topic of interest to you. The paper should involve a background of the topic, a brief summary of the major tenets of the two frameworks, the application of the frameworks to the topic, and a critique of the theoretical lens. Additional instructions on the comparative theory paper will be given later in the semester. The comparative theory paper is due December 11.

3) Exams (20% of total grade)
The exam will be given on December 1. The exam will be comprehensive and cover the materials presented and discussed in class and in the readings through the day of the exam. Details will be given before the exam.

4) Class Participation (10% of total grade)
The class participation grade will be based on the quality of your in-class participation, including class presentations, small-group activities, and discussions. I do call on students randomly so be prepared to speak up (you also have the right to “pass”). To help me assign the class participation grade, you are required to turn in a class participation report that summarizes your involvement in PAD 5005. Your class participation report will include a description of your course activities such as the questions you asked in class, the topics you took a lead in presenting to the class, your own attendance, and a peer-review of your classmates influence on your learning. The participation report is due December 11. I reserve the decision regarding the exact nature of weighting the different components of your class participation packet and your participation grade.

Reading and Critiquing Journal Articles and Theories
This class has a good deal of reading at a critical level. I recommend you apply the “Guidelines and Steps for Critiquing Journal Articles”, which is a handout that will be given to you. We will also critique the theoretical frameworks in the class using the “Guidelines for Critiquing Theories/Frameworks”, which is another handout. Important secondary objectives of this course are to learn and apply these guidelines as a familiar template for reading and critiquing journal articles/theories. Previous students have said that these guidelines have greatly enhanced their ability to succeed in graduate school.
Class Web Page
A class web site will provide this syllabus, electronic readings, and handouts at Blackboard on CU Online.

Reading Schedule
All dates are tentative. Except for the supplemental readings, all readings listed are required. Read the materials before the class for which they are assigned. I reserve the right to add, or remove, readings as the semester progresses.

Week 1. October 16. Introduction to the Course, Public Policy, & the Newspaper Content Analysis Paper
- Smith and Larimer Chapter 1
- Content Analysis Sample Paper Mark Farmer, former SPP MS student (Electronic Handout)

Supplemental Readings

Week 2. October 20. Need for Better Theories & Stages Heuristic
- Smith and Larimer Chapter 2.
- DUE CONTENT ANALYSIS TOPIC, HYPOTHESES, PRELIMINARY ARTICLE ASSESSMENT

Supplemental Readings

Week 3. October 23. CONTENT ANALYSIS RESEARCH DAY
- No class. Content analysis research.

Week 3. October 27. Hofferbert’s Tunnel of Causality
- Due Code Form. Peer Coding.

Supplemental Readings
**Week 3, October 30. Diffusions & Innovations**


**Supplemental Readings**


**Week 4 November 3 Agenda Setting and Multiple Streams**

- **Due Data. Classroom Data Analysis (bring laptops if you have them)**

**Supplemental Readings**


Zahariadis, Nikolaos. 1999 “Ambiguity, time, and multiple streams.” In Sabatier (ed), *Theories of the Policy Process*. Chapter 4, pg 73-96.


**Week 4 November 6 Punctuated Equilibrium**


**Supplemental Readings**


**Week 5, November 10. Social Construction and Policy Design**

- Smith and Larimer Chapter 8.
- **TBD**
- **Due Newspaper Content Analysis**

**Supplemental Readings**

- Smith and Larimer chapter 7.

Supplemental Readings


Supplemental Readings
Week 6: November 20 Institutional Analysis and Development

- Smith and Larimer Chapter 3.

Supplemental Readings

Week 7: November 24. Comparing Frameworks & Future of Public Policy

- Smith and Larimer Chapters 9 and 10.

Supplemental Readings

Week 8: December 1. Exam

- Exam

Week 8: December 4. Class Seminar

- Peer Reviews. Student Presentation & Feedback.

Week 9: December 8 Class Seminar

- Peer Reviews. Student Presentation & Feedback.

Week 9. December 11. Influencing the Policy Process / Course Conclusion & Closure

- Influencing the Policy Process Lecture
- Course Conclusions & Closure
- Due Comparative Theory Policy Paper

Academic Honor Code – From the University of Colorado Denver Course Catalog, 2007-2008*
A university’s reputation is built on a standing tradition of excellence and scholastic integrity. As members of the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center academic community, faculty and students accept the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty and ethical conduct in completing all forms of academic work at the university.
Forms of Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the university. . . . Academic dishonesty is defined as a student’s use of unauthorized assistance with intent to deceive an instructor or other such person who may be assigned to evaluate the student’s work in meeting course and degree requirements. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Plagiarism** – Plagiarism is the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words without acknowledgement.
- **Cheating** – Cheating involves the possession, communication, or use of information, materials, notes, study aids, or other devices not authorized by the instructor in any academic exercise, or communication with another person during such an exercise.
- **Fabrication and Falsification** – Fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information, i.e., creating results not obtained in a study or laboratory experiment. Falsification, on the other hand, involves the deliberate alteration or changing of results to suit one’s needs in an experiment or other academic exercise.
- **Multiple Submission** – This is the submission of academic work for which academic credit has already been earned, when such submission is made without instructor authorization.
- **Misuse of Academic Materials** – The misuse of academic materials includes but is not limited to the following:
  - stealing or destroying library or reference materials or computer programs
  - stealing or destroying another student’s notes or materials or having such materials in one’s possession without the owner’s permission
  - receiving assistance in locating or using sources of information in an assignment when such assistance has been forbidden by the instructor
  - illegitimate possession, disposition or use of examinations or answer keys to examinations
  - unauthorized alteration, forgery or falsification of academic records
  - unauthorized sale or purchase of examinations, papers or assignment
- **Complicity in Academic Dishonesty** – Complicity involves knowingly contributing to another’s acts of academic dishonesty.

*From the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center Undergraduate and Graduate 2007-2008 Catalog, p. 47.*