Course Goals
The policy processes refers to the development of public policy over time and the actors, events, and contexts surrounding this development. 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 government and non-government actors with different beliefs and interests participate 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? 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, diffusions and innovation framework, punctuated equilibrium theory, multiple streams framework, social construction, institutional analysis and development framework, 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 one course paper and four memos. 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
- Electronic Readings/Handouts
Course Requirements and Grading

I will use three methods to evaluate student learning and progress. These methods include:

1) Newspaper Content Analysis  30%
2) Four Policy Analyses   60%
3) Class Participation   10%

1) Content Analysis (30% 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 15 with several parts due prior. Additional instructions on the content analysis paper will be given later in the semester.

2) Four Policy Analysis Papers (60% of total grade)
You are required to complete four policy analyses that are designed to test your ability to apply the theoretical lenses discussed in class. The policy analyses will be short approximately 2 to 5 pages. Additional instructions on the each paper will be given later in the semester. The due dates are November 22, December 1, December 9, and December 16.

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 16. I reserve the decision regarding the exact nature of weighting the different components of your class participation packet and your participation grade.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100 percent of total possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Under 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Analyzing 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 Analyzing 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.
Reading Schedule
All dates are tentative. All readings on this Reading Schedule 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.
Readings marked with a dollar sign ($) introduce you to a new theory/framework and should be interpreted with the aid of the “Guidelines for Analyzing Theories/Frameworks” handout to prepare you for class. Readings marked with a number sign (#) are applications of the theory/framework and should be interpreted with the aid of the “Guidelines and Steps for Analyzing Journal Articles” handout to prepare you for class. Supplemental readings are available upon request.

Week 1
Friday October 21. Introduction to the Course & the Newspaper Content Analysis Paper
Birkland Chapter 1
Content Analysis Sample Papers (electronic)

Week 2
Tuesday October 25.
Birkland Chapters 2 through 5
**DUE an Email by 9pm Monday October 24 with Three Discussion Questions on Birkland Chapters 2 through 5**

Friday October 28. Need for Better Theories
Birkland Chapter 10
**DUE an Email Prior to Class Identifying the Content Analysis Topic, Hypotheses, Newspaper Choices, and Preliminary Article Assessment**

Week 3
Tuesday November 2. Agenda Setting and Multiple Streams Theory & Applications

Friday November 4. Policy Process Panel
Policy Process Panel Featuring PhD students David Carter and Jon Pierce
**DUE a Peer Coding Form to Conduct In-Class Peer-Coding Activity**

Week 4
Tuesday November 8. Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

**In Class Activity: Application of the Multiple Streams Framework**

Friday November 11 Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

**DUE Content Analysis Data for In-Class Data Analysis Activity (bring laptops if you have them)**

Week 5
Tuesday November 15. Innovation and Diffusion Framework

**DUE Final Content Analysis Assignment**

Friday November 18. Social Construction Framework

Week 6
Tuesday November 22. Implementation Framework
Birkland Chapter 9

**DUE 1st Policy Analysis**

Friday November 25.
**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, CLASS CANCELLED**

Week 7
Tuesday November 29 Advocacy Coalition Framework
Overview
Friday December 1 Advocacy Coalition Framework

Applications
**DUE 2nd Policy Analysis**

Week 8

**In Class Activity: Application of the ACF**

**DUE 3rd Policy Analysis**

Week 9
Tuesday December 13. Comparing Frameworks and Theories of the Policy Process
**In Class Activity: Application of IAD Framework**

Friday December 16 Influencing the Policy Process / Course Conclusion and Closure
**DUE 4th Policy Analysis**
**Student Conduct Code**
Students are responsible for being aware of and in compliance with campus policies about academic honesty, as stated in the University's Student Conduct Code. In particular, please be aware that plagiarism, or the use of another person’s words or ideas without crediting that person, is not allowed. Plagiarism may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, and/or dismissal from the program. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me.

**Missed Classes and/or Assignments**
Please contact me in advance for any classes that you must miss so that we can make arrangements for you to turn in any assignments that are due. If you miss the deadline for an assignment due to unexpected circumstances, contact me to discuss it. If you need an extension, contact me to discuss it. In general, you will be well-served by contacting me to discuss any absences or missing assignments. If I feel students are abusing this policy, I reserve the right to impose stricter policies. Requests for an Incomplete grade will be handled pursuant to Section 7.1.1 of the MPA Handbook. In general, an Incomplete grade is considered only when the student is unable to complete course requirements due to circumstances beyond the student's control. If I need to cancel or move our class, I will e-mail you.

**Student Assistance**
If you feel you may need additional assistance with the quality of your writing or any other aspects of your academic work, please contact the Center for Learning Assistance in NC 2006. If you have a disability that needs to be accommodated, please let me know and we will work out arrangements. For academic accommodations, first register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 177 Arts Building, 303-556-3450, TTY 303-556-4766, and then provide me with a copy of your DRS letter.

**Course Grades**
For overall course grades, I follow section 7.1 of SPA's MPA Handbook:

Grades offered in GSPA courses (except internship and thesis) are based on an A to F scale, with each letter grade representing the following standard narrative description:

- **A.** Work beyond the level of a typical graduate student; exemplary work. (An A equals 4 grade points, an A- equals 3.6 points.)
- **B.** Work typical of a graduate student; indicates student has attained the knowledge and skills intended for the course. (B+ equals 3.3, B equals 3.0., and B- equals 2.7 points.)
- **C.** Performance is below graduate-level expectations. (C+ earns 2.3 grade points, C yields 2.0).
- **D.** Substandard performance in all aspects of the work of the course; inadequate comprehension of assigned reading material. (D equals 1.0 grade points).
- **F.** Level of performance demonstrably below that expected of a graduate student; little or no indication that the student can succeed in a graduate program.

Please note that this grading policy requires exceptional performance for a grade of “A,” and that a “B” reflects typical performance expected of a graduate-level student. I do not grade on a curve, so it is possible for everyone in the course to earn an A or everyone to earn a C, based on how their performance compares to the work expected of a typical graduate student.