From programs providing income support for senior citizens to federal student loans to tax incentives for homeowners, public policies are the mechanisms by which lawmakers address a broad array of challenges. In political contexts shaped by increasing polarization, declining political participation, and considerable socioeconomic inequality—attaching solutions to a nation’s problems is a complicated task. While students of public policy could limit their analyses to questions of policy structure and direct, quantifiable outcomes, the most powerful policy analyses recognize that public policy is inherently political. As such, a comprehensive understanding of public policy requires that we appreciate the politics shaping the process through which government programs came into existence, the role that politics plays in structuring their content, and the deeply political nature of their outcomes.

This course aims to provide you with the skills necessary to engage in powerful policy analysis that takes seriously the political nature of government outcomes. We will begin by examining the concept of public policy and its objectives, paying particular attention to how politics influences policy development and outcomes. The second and third units of the course survey the institutional foundations, actors, and interest groups that shape—and are shaped by—public policy. Unit four explores the process through which public policies are developed, from agenda setting to policy evaluation. The fifth, and final, unit of the course considers the significance of public policy for important outcomes like citizenship, democracy, and equality. Throughout the semester, we will draw upon case-studies from a range of policy areas, including education policy, environmental policy, and welfare policy. The examples considered in this course are intended to provide a point of departure for students whose interests lie in domestic, international, and/or comparative contexts.
Course Objectives
1. Become familiar with core theories, concepts, and analytical tools that are necessary to analyze public policy from a perspective that takes politics seriously. Students should gain knowledge and develop skills that contribute to a solid foundation for subsequent courses in public policy and other social sciences.

2. Explore the connection between core political phenomena (such as institutional power, competing interests, and strategic coalitions) and policymakers’ ability to attach solutions to problems.

3. Enhance analytical and communication skills via discussions, activities, debates, and intensive writing exercises that focus on core issues related to politics and public policy.

Assignments/Grading
Classroom Participation 10%
Lecture/Section Engagement and Presentations (5%)
Quizzes (5%)
Midterm Examination 20%
Writing Assignments (4 short papers at 10% each) 40%
Final Examination 30%

Like all core public policy courses, I adhere to a policy that restricts the top grades only to truly exceptional work.

A 94-100 Exceptional B- 80-83 Adequate D+ 67-69
A- 90-93 High Quality C+ 77-79 Needs Improvement D 64-66
B+ 87-89 Very Good C 74-76 D- 60-63
B 84-86 Good C- 70-73 F <60

Classroom Participation
Engaged Lecture and Section Attendance: Students are expected to attend all lecture and section meetings, to arrive punctually, and to engage in active participation during each session. Please observe courteous behavior during all lecture and section meetings—i.e., please silence all cellular telephones; no laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices, unless otherwise directed; refrain from eating. Only documented absences that coincide with university-approved purposes (i.e., serious illness or other extraordinary personal circumstance, religious observance, or varsity athletic participation) are excused, given that you make arrangements with the instructor. Note: Missing more than five (5) class sessions for any reason will result in a grade of F or the option to take an Incomplete and retake the course. Except in extraordinary cases where excuses are properly documented, late work will not be accepted.

In-Class Presentation: For one class session you will provide a brief (3-5 minutes), informal presentation of your reflections on the day’s assigned reading. Your presentation will include three components: (1) thoughtful reflections on the material, (2) connections to current or recent political and/or policy events, and (3) two issues or questions that you would like us to consider as a group. While you may need to draw upon the readings to contextualize your comments, your presentation should NOT be a mere summary of the assigned material.

Quizzes: Throughout the semester, there will be five (5) brief, unannounced quizzes on the day’s assigned reading. These quizzes are intended to provide an additional incentive for attending class and for keeping up with the reading. If you miss a quiz during an excused absence, you have until the end of that week’s discussion section meeting to make up the quiz with your TA. Failure to complete a make-up quiz by that time will result in a forfeiture of points. There are no makeup quizzes for undocumented absences.
Examinations
There will be two exams this semester—an in-class midterm on **February 16**<sup>th</sup> and a final that will be proctored during the exam period on **Tuesday, May 2**<sup>nd</sup> **from 7:00 PM-10:00 PM**. Each exam will include short-answer and essay sections that permit you to demonstrate your knowledge of course concepts and your ability to apply them to relevant situations.

Writing Assignments
This is a writing-in-the-disciplines course (W). Using a pre-approved policy issue, students will complete four written assignments that include three policy memos and an op-ed piece. Section meetings will provide students with a designated forum for developing and “work shopping” their written work. TAs will offer feedback on questions as students write, edit, and revise their papers.

When submitting memos on their due dates, please bring a stapled hardcopy to class. Memos should be written in a 12-point Times New Roman font. You will receive additional spacing and formatting information for each assignment.

Students will receive detailed guidelines for completing each assignment; but as a general overview, the memo assignments are as follows:

**Assignment 1: Political History Memo**  
First Draft: 2/3  
Final Draft: 2/9  
- 3-page legislative history describing the political development of a piece of legislation (enacted, failed, or pending) that you think is important

**Assignment 2: Stakeholder Analysis Memo**  
First Draft: 3/3  
Final Draft: 3/10  
- 3-page memo outlining the key stakeholders involved in your legislation; includes a 1-page profile of a key legislator

**Assignment 3: Strategy Memo**  
First Draft: 3/31  
Final Draft: 4/6  
- 3-page memo outlining your strategy for putting your issue at the top of the legislative agenda; should include recommendations for achieving outside mobilization and defeating the status quo

**Assignment 4: Op-Ed**  
First Draft: 4/14  
Final Draft: 4/25  
- In 725-750 words, vigorously oppose the issue/policy that you advocated in Assignment 3

Academic Integrity
Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Citizens of this community commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and nonacademic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity.

To uphold the Duke Community Standard:

- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;
- I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and
- I will act if the Standard is compromised.

Each student is expected to abide by the Duke Community Standard, which can be found at http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/about-us/duke-community-standard. Any work that you submit must be your own, and you are responsible for ensuring that your submitted work does not contain plagiarism. Please do not hesitate to meet with me if you have any questions about proper citations.
**Public Policy Internship**
A note regarding the PubPol internship requirement: For an internship to count for the PubPol graduation requirement, the position must allow the student to apply concepts, skills, and knowledge from the PubPol core courses to a public policy problem. When you declare a PubPol major, you will receive information on how to get comprehensive assistance with the internship process.

**Research Service-Learning (RSL) Gateway Course**
This course is a Research Service-Learning (RSL) Gateway course, which includes an optional service-learning component. This centers on participation in a ten-week service project based on a course-related theme, which introduces students to basic research skills and challenges them to integrate the ethical, intellectual, and civic lessons from their field experiences into their Public Policy course work. RSL participants work with a Durham-area organization and produce a “deliverable”—such as a research proposal, a policy memo, or a report on their service experience—at the end of the term. The program is by application only, and space is limited. Participants who successfully complete the module will be exempt from Assignment no. 4 (the Op-Ed paper).

For more information about the RSL Gateway opportunity, visit https://hart.sanford.duke.edu/programs/rsl/.

**Required Books**


All additional readings will be available on Sakai or on reserve at Perkins Library.
Unit I. The Politics of Public Policy

January 12 Introduction + Research Service Learning (RSL) Overview
  • "Introduction to Terry Sanford." Available at:
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri9i8ZBiBwI&list=PLN1851F16gb_WdzUPfn1sQ-zZwJ2aP&index=1

January 13 Section—Overview and Introductions
  • Smith, Writing Public Policy, Preface and Chapter 1

January 17 Public Policy from a Political Perspective

January 19 Governance and the Pursuit of Goals
  • “Reforming Juvenile Justice.” Issues for Debate, Chapter 10 [pp. 223-246].
  [Note: RSL Gateway Program Applications are Due by 11:59pm!]

January 20 Section—Writing in Public Policy
  • Smith, Writing Public Policy, Chapter 2.

January 24 Types of Policy Solutions I

January 26 Types of Policy Solutions II

January 27 Section—Resources for Political Analysis of Public Policy
  • Bring Laptop to Section

Unit II. Surveying the Policy Scene: The Stage and Key Players

January 31 Institutional Foundations I: Federalism and Government Growth

February 2 Institutional Foundations II: Separation of Powers and Informal Actors

February 3 Section—Writing Workshop
  • Smith, Writing Public Policy, Chapters 5 and 8.
  • ***DUE: First Draft of Memo no. 1***
February 7  Political Elites I

February 9  Political Elites II
• Richard F. Fenno, Congressional Travels, Chapter 7.

***DUE: Final Draft of Memo no. 1***

February 10  Section—Debate: Regulating Marijuana
• “Marijuana Industry.” Issues for Debate, Chapter 3 [pp. 53-75].

February 14  Parties, Politics, and Policy

February 16  Midterm Examination

February 17  No Section Meetings

Unit III: Policy and the Politics of Influence

February 21  Interest Groups and Lobbyists I
• Deborah Stone, Policy Paradox, Chapter 10.

February 23  Interest Groups and Lobbyists II
• “Unions at a Crossroads.” Issues for Debate, Chapter 4 [pp. 77-99].

February 24  Section—Debate: Law Enforcement
• “Police Tactics.” Issues for Debate, Chapter 16 [pp. 379-406].

February 28  Subject to Policy: Target Populations

March 2  Mass Political Participation, Mobilization, and Public Policy
March 3  Section—Writing Workshop
- Smith, Writing Public Policy, Chapter 4.
- ***DUE: First Draft of Memo no. 2***

March 7  Political Knowledge and Preference Formation

March 9  Policy, Public Opinion, and the Media

March 10  Debate: Climate Change
- “Air Pollution and Climate Change.” Issues for Debate, Chapter 1 [pp. 1-23].
- ***DUE: Final Draft of Memo no. 2***

March 14, 16, & 17  Spring Break

Unit IV. The Legislative Process: Attaching Solutions to Problems

March 21  Agenda Setting I

March 23  Agenda Setting II

March 24  Section—Group Project: Agenda Setting and the Media
- Smith, Writing Public Policy, Chapter 3.
- Bring Laptop to Section

March 28  Policy Design and Decision Making I

March 30  Policy Design and Decision Making II

March 31  Section—Writing Workshop
- Smith, Writing Public Policy, Chapter 7.
- ***DUE: First Draft of Memo no. 3***

April 4  Policy Legitimation I
April 6  Policy Legitimation II
***DUE: Final Draft of Memo no. 3***

April 7  Section—Debate: Campus Sexual Assault
• “Campus Sexual Assault.” Issues for Debate, Chapter 9 [pp. 199-220].

April 11  Policy Implementation and Administration

April 13  Policy Sustainability and Evaluation

April 14  Section—Writing Workshop
• Smith, Writing Public Policy, Chapter 6.
***DUE: First Draft of Op-Ed [Assignment no. 4]***

Unit V. Public Policy, Citizenship, and American Democracy

April 18  Policy Feedback

April 20  Public Policy and Democratic Responsiveness + RSL Presentations

April 21  Section—Final Exam Review

April 25  Politics and the Art of Problem Solving with Public Policy
• ***DUE: Final Draft of Op-Ed [Assignment no. 4]***
• Bring laptop to class for course evaluations.

Final Examination—Tuesday, May 2th from 7:00 PM-10:00 PM (Sanford 03)
Jan 13  Section Overview and Introductions
• Smith, *Writing Public Policy*, Preface and Chapter 1.

Jan 20  Writing and Public Policy

Jan 27  Resources for Political Analysis of Public Policy
• Bring Laptop to Section

Feb 3  Writing Workshop
• Smith, *Writing Public Policy*, Chapters 5 and 8.

Feb 10  Debate: Regulating Marijuana
• “Marijuana Industry.” *Issues for Debate*, Chapter 3 [pp. 53-75].

Feb 17  No Section Meetings

Feb 24  Debate: Law Enforcement

Mar 3  Writing Workshop
• Smith, *Writing Public Policy*, Chapter 4.

Mar 10  Debate: Climate Change
• “Air Pollution and Climate Change.” *Issues for Debate*, Chapter 1 [pp. 1-23].

Mar 17  Spring Break

Mar 24  Group Project: Agenda Setting and the Media
• Smith, *Writing Public Policy*, Chapter 3.
• Bring Laptop to Section

Mar 31  Writing Workshop
• Smith, *Writing Public Policy*, Chapter 7.

Apr 7  Debate: Campus Sexual Assault
• “Campus Sexual Assault.” *Issues for Debate*, Chapter 9 [pp. 199-220].

Apr 14  Writing Workshop

Apr 21  Final Exam Review