

# Introduction to Public Policy & Management

## PP5340

Professor Douglas Spencer  
University of Connecticut

Fall 2019

### **Class**

HTB 220

Wednesday 4:00 - 6:30 p.m.

### **Contact**

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## Course Description

This course is part of the core curriculum for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Public Policy (MPP) degrees at UConn. The purpose of the course is to introduce you to the fundamentals of public policymaking in the United States and to provide instruction and practice in oral and written communication skills. We will make extensive use of case studies and examples. The case studies provide examples of how professionals have addressed specific policy issues—sometimes well, sometimes poorly. By reading the experiences of others who have grappled with difficult policy problems, you will be better prepared to grapple with them yourselves.

### *Fundamentals of public policymaking*

We will discuss the structure, nature and resolution of public policy and management problems in the United States through the reading, review and discussion of a series of case studies. We will look at the policymaking process, the role of ethics and accountability, and citizen participation. We will also learn about specific public policy domains such as education and public budgeting, and discuss important public management issues including privatization and the relevance of race in both policy inputs and outputs.

### *Written and oral communication skills*

Clear communication is a critical professional skill and professional writing requires clearly reasoned and directly stated arguments. The Department of Public Policy has developed a Writing Guide to help you learn the keys to professional writing. The second week of class will be devoted entirely to professional communication, with a focus on writing and important skills necessary for making clear and persuasive presentations. You will be required to write three Policy and Management Memos (PMM) on your own and prepare a PowerPoint deck with a partner.

## Required Readings

Readings for the course will be posted on the course HuskyCT site. We will be reading case studies, academic articles, and news stories relevant to our weekly discussions.

One of the main purposes of this course is to teach you to be a good writer. To that end, I recommend that you purchase the following book. The book is not required for the course, but is highly recommended and will be a great resource to you throughout your career.

- Catherine F. Smith. 2015. *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Making Process*, Oxford University Press, 4th edition.

## Students with Disabilities

According University of Connecticut policy, the university “is committed to achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for persons with disabilities.” Assurance of equal educational opportunity rests upon legal foundations established by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. By federal law, a person with a disability is any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning.” All students with disabilities are entitled to a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Any student who requires special accommodations due to a disability should contact the Regional Campus Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities at (860) 570-9204 or [jacqueline.santiago@uconn.edu](mailto:jacqueline.santiago@uconn.edu). For more information regarding the accommodations process at the University of Connecticut, you may also visit the Center for Students with Disabilities website at <http://www.csd.uconn.edu>.

## Additional University Policies

Official university policies on class attendance, discrimination and harassment, absences from final exams, scholarly integrity, and the student code of conduct can be found at <http://provost.uconn.edu/syllabi-references>.

## Grading

Course grades will be based on the following breakdown:

In-class participation	10%
Policy and Management Memos	
Memo #1	20%
Memo #2	25%
Memo #3	25%
Presentation Deck	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### *Participation (10%)*

This course makes extensive use of the case method and class attendance and participation is expected. It is important that class members be well prepared to discuss the assigned case studies because effective learning from case discussion depends on (a) familiarity with the details of the case and (b) readiness of individuals to contribute to a collective articulation of the problem at hand. You will be graded on your week-to-week contributions to classroom discussions.

### *Policy and Management Memoranda (70%)*

You will prepare three policy and management memos. Each memo will analyze issues presented in a case study that will be posted on HuskyCT. These memos should not exceed 2 single-spaced pages, meaning that you must write concisely in order to fully respond to the assignment questions. Your memos will be formatted according to the guidelines in the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY WRITING GUIDE. Your memos will be reviewed by me and by your peers. You should expect to receive substantial feedback on each of your memoranda because of the novel writing style and demand for precision and clarity. You will have the chance to revise the memos after these reviews. For two of the assignments, you may choose to revise and resubmit your graded memo and I will average the two grades.

### *Presentation Deck (20%)*

Good communication skills in the public sector are not limited to writing. Working alone or with a partner you will prepare a PowerPoint deck to present to the class. You will be graded for the quality of your slides and the professionalism of your presentation.

## Assignment Schedule

	<u>Due date(s)</u>
First PMM	9/11 – First draft due
Case: <i>Crosswalk at Babcock Place</i>	9/24 – Draft returned with professor’s comments
	9/25 – Submit memo for grade
	10/2 – Graded memos returned
Second PMM	10/9 – Draft due for in-class review
Case: <i>Equity in School Funding</i>	10/16 – Submit memo for grade
	10/23 – Graded memos returned
	10/30 – Resubmit memo for grade (optional)
Third PMM	11/13 – Submit memo for grade
Case: <i>TBD</i>	11/20 – Graded memos returned
Group presentations	12/4

## Course Overview

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Case &amp; Assignment</b>
8/28	Introduction & Course Overview	<i>Crosswalk at Babcock Place</i>
9/4	Professional Writing & Presentations	<i>Writing Exercises</i>
9/11	Privatization	<i>Privatizing Air Traffic Control</i> <b>PMM 1 first draft due</b>
9/18	Introduction to Policy Analysis	<i>Equality in School Funding Model</i>
9/25	Nonprofit Management	<i>Guest Speaker: Jason Jakubowski</i> <b>PMM 1 due for grade</b>
10/2	Education Policy	<i>Guest Speaker: Estela Lopez</i>
10/9	Writer's Workshop (YOM KIPPUR)	<b>In-class review of PMM 2</b>
10/16	Race, Policing, and Criminal Justice	Guest speaker: Chief Spagnolo <b>PMM 2 due for grade</b>
10/23	Public Budgeting & Policy	Guest speaker: Paul Potamianos <i>Fixing CT's Fiscal Problems</i>
10/30	Zoning, Planning & Development Policy	Guest speaker: Sara Bronin
11/6	Role of Citizens in Decisionmaking	<i>Citizen Participation in Monroe</i>
11/13	Law & Public Policy	<i>U.S. v. Virginia</i> <b>PMM 3 due for grade</b>
11/20	Presentation Workshop	<i>Customer Analytics and Big Data</i>
11/27	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	
12/4	Group presentations	<b>Decks due for grade</b>

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

I am committed to following the schedule below. However, it may be the case that our discussions move faster or slower than I anticipate. If it is necessary to revise the current schedule, I will let you know and will circulate an updated syllabus at that time.

### August 28: Introduction & Course Overview

- Expectations for the course
- Overview of writing assignments
- What is public policy?

#### Required Reading

“Learning With Cases” (handout)

**Case study:** *Crosswalk at Babcock Place*

### September 4: Professional Writing and Presentations

- Sample PMMs
- Writing for a professional audience
- Effective presentation skills
  - Message-driven slide layout
  - Horizontal and vertical consistency

#### Required Reading

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY WRITING GUIDE

Bratkovic, B. 2007. “Running an Effective Meeting,” *Government and Finance Review*, (April), pp. 58-60.

Theisen, P. 2010. “Focus on Your Story Rather Than Content.”

Schneier, B. 2010. “Worst-case thinking makes us nuts, not safe.” *CNN.com*, May 12.

#### References for Writing Style

Swain, J. and K.D. Swain. 2014. “The Mechanics of Writing,” in *Effective Writing in the Public Sector*, Armok, NY: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 17-36 (chapter 2).

Purdue OWL, “Conciseness”

Purdue OWL, “On writing paragraphs”

## September 11: Privatization

- Public goods
- Types of service delivery options
- The free-rider problem
- Make vs. buy decision

### Required Reading

Elliott Sclar. 2001. "Public vs. Private Production: Is One Better and How Would You Know?" in *You Don't Always Get What You Pay For*, Cornell University Press, pp. 47-68 (Chapter 3).

Government Finance Officers Association. 2006. *Managed Competition as a Service Delivery Option*.

**Case study:** *Privatizing Air Traffic Control*

**Assignment:** PMM #1 first draft due

## September 18: Introduction to Policy Analysis

- Policy Process
- Rational decision-making
- Incrementalism
- The Market vs. The Polis

### Required Readings

Teasley III, C.E., 2008. "Rationality in Public Administration," *International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration* (IEPPA). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 1904-1910.

Deborah Stone. 2010. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. Introduction & Conclusion.

Christopher Grandy. 2009. "The *Efficient* Public Administrator: Pareto and a Well-Rounded Approach to Public Administration," *Public Administration Review*, 69(6): pp. 1115-1123.

**Case study:** *Defining Equity: Student Funding Model in Chicago Public Schools*

## September 25: Nonprofit Management

- Guest speaker: Jason Jakubowski ('01), *President and CEO, Foodshare*

### Required Reading

- Marci Alboher, "Solving A Social Problem Without Going the Nonprofit Route," *New York Times*, March 4, 2009.
- "How Nonprofits Solve Social Enterprise's Three Big Problems: Money, Trust, and Information," *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45:2 (April 2016)

**Assignment: PMM #1 due for grade**

## October 2: Education Policy

- Guest speaker Estela Lopez, *Member, Connecticut State Board of Education*

### Required Readings

- Angrist, Joshua D. and Jorn-Steffen Pischke. "The Experimental Ideal" in *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*, Princeton University Press, pp. 11-23 (Chapter 2).
- Susan Dynarski & Judith Scott-Clayton, "Financial Aid Policy: Lessons from Research," *NBER Working Paper 18710* (January 2013), pp.20-32.

### Optional Readings

- David Kirp. 2004. "The Futures Market" in *The Sandbox Investment: The Preschool Movement and Kids-First Politics*, Harvard University Press, pp. 76-92 (Chapter 3).
- James Heckman, "The Economics of Inequality: The Value of Early Childhood Education," *American Educator* (Spring 2011)
- Kirabo Jackson, Rucker Johnson & Claudia Persico, "The Effect of School Finance Reforms on the Distribution of Spending, Academic Achievement, and Adult Outcomes," *NBER Working Paper No. 20118* (May 2014)

## October 9: Writers' Workshop

### Required Reading

None.

**Assignment: PMM #2 due for in-class review**



## October 16: Race, Policing, and Criminal Justice

- Guest speaker Fernando Spagnolo, *Waterbury Chief of Police*

### Required Readings

Congressional Research Service, “Public Trust and Law Enforcement – A Discussion for Policymakers,” pp. 15-27.

James Willis & Heather Toronjo, “Translating Police Research Into Policy,” *Police Practice & Research*, (Aug. 23, 2019)

**Assignment: PMM #2 due for grade**

## October 23: Public Budgeting and Policy

- Guest speaker Paul Potamianos, *Executive Budget Officer, Connecticut Office of Policy and Management*

### Required Readings

Dautrich, K., Robbins, M. & B. Simonsen. 2010. “Budget Deficits in the States: Connecticut,” *Journal of Public Budgeting & Finance*, vol. 30, no. 1., pp. 130-151.

**Case study: *Fixing Connecticut’s Fiscal Problems***

## October 30: Zoning, Planning & Development Policy

- Guest speaker Sara Bronin, *Thomas F. Gallivan Chair in Real Property Law and Faculty Director, Center for Energy and Environmental Law*

### Required Reading

Sacoby Wilson, Malo Hutson & Mahasin Mujahid. 2008. “How Planning and Zoning Contribute to Inequitable Development, Neighborhood Health, and Environmental Injustice,” *Environmental Justice*, 1(4): 211-216.

### Optional Reading

Ryan Enos. 2016. “What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us about the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior,” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1): 123-142.

## November 6: Role of Citizens in Decisionmaking

- Logic of collective action
- Rational ignorance
- Democratic vs. republican form of government

### Required Readings

Robbins, Mark D., Bill Simonsen, and Barry Feldman. 2008. "Citizens and Resource Allocation: Improving Decision Making with Interactive Web Based Citizens Participation", *Public Administration Review*, (May/June), 68(3): pp. 564-575.

Robbins, Mark D. and Bill Simonsen. 2010. *Citizen Participation: Goals and Methods*. Arizona State University/Alliance for Innovation Report commissioned by the International City/County Management Association.

**Case study:** *Citizen Participation in Monroe*

## November 13: Law and Public Policy

- Separation of powers
- Delegation doctrine
- Statutory interpretation
- Equal protection analysis

### Required Readings

Kerr, Orin S. 2007. "How to Read a Legal Opinion: A Guide for New Law Students", *The Green Bag*, 11(2):51-63.

Weber, Bruce. 2009. "Umpires v. Judges," *New York Times*, July 11.

Adam Liptak. 2014. "Utah's 3 Arguments, and Counting, Against Gay Marriage," *N.Y. Times*, January 13

**Case study:** *United States v. Virginia*

**Assignment:** PMM #3 due for grade

## November 20: Presentation Workshop

### Required Readings

None.

**Case study:** *Customer Journey Analytics and Big Data*

November 27: No class (Happy Thanksgiving)

December 10: In-class Presentations

Assignment: Decks due for grade