**Course Syllabus**

**Political Power and American Public Policy (GOVT-210)**

**Professor Lee Lukoff, MPP**

**Class Time:** Tuesday 8:20-10:50pm

**Class Location**:

**Office Hours**: By appointment

**Phone**: (508) 942-1083

**Email:** llukoff@american.edu

**Course Description**

This course will provide students with a theoretical framework for the study of public policy and an introduction to the policy process in practice. Students will learn how key actors within political subsystems identify problems, develop options, advance through the process, implement solutions, and evaluate policy outcomes.

Policymakers operate under institutional, legal and political constraints. America’s founders established a system of government intended to filter out weak policy ideas and permit enactment of only those initiatives with the strongest political support. Political power, skillfully applied, generates policy outcomes – and is in turn amplified by such outcomes. Through a better understanding of the application of political power to public policy debates, students will come to understand how policy is made, and how they can participate effectively in the process.

This course fulfills a GenEd requirement in Foundational Area 4: Social Institutions and Behavior. Students may complete their GenEd requirements for Area 4 by taking one additional course listed in Area 4.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

***By the end of this course, students will be able to***

1. *Demonstrate* an understanding of the American policy process including its rules, institutions and mechanisms.
2. *Demonstrate* an understanding of the interests, values, perspectives, and power dynamics involved in American politics, and how they influence policy agendas and outcomes.
3. *Apply* an understanding of the complexity of the policy process to a particular public policy.
4. *Locate* and *employ* appropriate empirical evidence to evaluate claims and draw conclusions about the policy process in American politics.
5. *Learn* how to procure scholarly sources and datasets on contemporary public policy issues.
6. *Write* public policy memoranda as practitioners in the American system do regularly
7. *Debate* contemporary issues in American public policy in a respectable and dignified manner
8. *Appreciate* the existence of diverse perspectives on contemporary public policy issues inside the classroom.
9. *Convey* coherent arguments about the development of public policy in American institutions both in writing and speech.

**Assignments and Grades**

**Quizzes (20%)**

Five quizzes will be given over the course of the semester as outlined on the syllabus. Quiz questions will be drawn from the previous week’s readings. Each quiz will be composed of 5 multiple choice/short answer questions. Students will be allowed to drop the lowest grade they receive on a single quiz. Make-up quizzes will be allowed *if and only if* the student contacts me with an excused absence before the quiz is administered to the class.

**Mid-Term (20%)**

The midterm exam will be held in class on **October 9th** and will include identification of key terms, short answers, and essays. It will cover topics discussed in the first six substantive lectures of the course.

**Final Exam (25%)**

The final exam will be held in class on **December 11th** and will include the identification of key terms, short answers, and essays. It will cover all topics covered after the mid-term exam. The final exam **is not** cumulative!

**Policy Paper & Policy Memo (30%)**

Students will complete an original policy paper (10 pages plus bibliography) and an accompanying policy memorandum (1-2 pages). The paper must focus on and demonstrate an expertise on some aspect of a substantive policy topic discussed in the course. Students may choose to write either a policy analysis or case study of a policy decision.

The policy memorandum must showcase your ability to synthesize the material discussed in your paper in a shorter format more suitable for consumption by a policymaker, subject matter expert, or stakeholder in the policy area discussed in your paper. Detailed guidelines for the research paper and policy memorandum will be posted on Blackboard. You will present and submit your paper/memo in class on **December 4th.**

**Attendance & Participation (5%)**

Regular attendance is a requirement for this course. Students will be docked **½ a point** on their final grade for each unexcused absence. Class participation will be graded on the frequency and quality of your participation in class discussions as well as your ability to discuss substantive policy topics in an intellectually honest and respectful fashion in class.

**Course Readings**

Books may be purchased (recommended) or read on library reserve.

1) B. Guy Peters - American Public Policy: Promise and Performance 11th Edition. Sage Publishers. 2018

2) Stan Luger and Brian Waddell - What American Government Does. Johns Hopkins University Press. 2017

3) Journal and Newspaper articles posted on Blackboard

**Course Schedule**

**August 28th**

**Class 1: Introductions & Course Requirements**

**September 4th**

**Class 2: Public Policymaking in the United States**

* Peters Chapters 1 & 2
* Luger & Waddell Chapter 1

**September 11th**

**Class 3: Public Policy Decision-making in the United States**

* Peters Chapters 3 and 4

**September 18th**

**Class 4: Policy Analysis, Evaluation, and Change in the United States**

* Peters Chapters 6, 8, and 17
  + - * + ***Quiz***

**September 25th**

**Class 5: Budgetary and Fiscal Policy I**

* Peters - Chapter 7 & 9
* Luger & Waddell - Chapter 10

**October 2nd**

**Class 6: Budget & Fiscal Policy II**

* Luger & Waddell - Chapters 2 & 3
* Congressional Research Service Report: The Federal Budget: Overview and Issues for 2019 and Beyond
  + - * + ***Quiz***

**October 9th**

**Class 7: Healthcare Policy**

* Peters - Chapter 11
* Congressional Research Service Report. Health Care for Veterans and Traumatic Brain Injury

**October 16th**

**Class 8: Social Security & Welfare Programs**

* Luger & Waddell Chapter 4
* Peters Chapter 12
  + - * + ***Quiz***

**October 23rd**

**Class 9: Social Values & Public Policy**

* Luger & Waddell Chapter 9
* Peters Chapter 16
* Congressional Research Service Report: The Marijuana Policy Gap and the Path Forward.

**October 30th**

**Class 10: Energy & Environmental Policy**

* Peters – Chapter 14
* CRS Report: The EPA’s Proposal to Repeal the Clean Power Plan. Benefits and Costs

**November 6th**

**Class 11 Homeland Security & Immigration Policy**

* Luger & Waddell Chapter 6
* Congressional Research Service Report: William A. Kandel. A Primer on US Immigration Policy

**November 13th**

**Class 12: National Security & Defense Policy**

* Luger & Waddell Chapter 5
* Congressional Research Service Report. A Shift in the International Security Environment: Potential Implications for Defense – Issues for Congress
  + - * + ***Quiz***

**November 27th**

**Class 13: American Foreign Policy**

* Luger & Waddell Chapter 11 & 12
* Congressional Research Service Report: Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs: FY 2019 Budget and Appropriations

**December 4th**

**Class 14: Paper Presentations**

**December 11th**

**Class 15: Final Exam (Policy Paper/Memo is Due)**

**\*I reserve the right to change the syllabus if necessary.**

**\*I will inform the class each time a change in the syllabus occurs.**

**Class Rules and University Policies**

**Discrimination and Harassment Policies**

*American University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The university is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.  
If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the AU Department of Public Safety* [*(202-885-2527*](tel:%28202-885-2527)*) or the Office of the Dean of Students (*[*dos@american.edu*](mailto:dos@american.edu) *or* [*202-885-3300*](tel:202-885-3300)*). Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff – with the exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, staff in the Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center – who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident. For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact OASIS: The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence (*[*www.american.edu/sexualassault*](http://www.american.edu/sexualassault)*,* [*oasis@american.edu*](mailto:oasis@american.edu) *or* [*202-885-7070*](tel:202-885-7070)*), or the Office of the Dean of Student (*[*www.american.edu/ocl/dos*](http://www.american.edu/ocl/dos)*).*

**Academic Integrity**: All students are required to follow the University’s Academic Integrity Code. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the standards and requirements of the University’s Academic Code of Conduct. Violations of the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and will be reported appropriately**.** You can find more information about the University’s Academic Integrity Code here: <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>

**Emergency Preparedness:**

In an emergency, AU will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (<http://www.american.edu/emergency/>) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.

**The Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC**) supports the academic development and educational goals of all American University students and is committed to providing access for individuals with disabilities within the university's diverse community.

Academic Support & Access Center Location: Mary Graydon Center (MGC), Room 243  
x3360 Fax: x1042 [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu) M–F: 9am–5pm Website: <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/>

**411 Information for Faculty regarding The Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC**)

**General Consultation and Outreach**

The Academic Support and Access Center is a resource to all students, faculty, and staff at the university. Faculty can be particularly helpful to students by making appropriate announcements and individual referrals to study skills workshops, Supplemental Instruction sessions, peer tutor opportunities, Writing Lab appointments, and individual meetings with our professional staff.

ASAC counselors are also available to faculty and staff to confidentially discuss student concerns. In addition, workshops and presentations tailored to various campus groups can be designed based on the needs of a particular course or group.

**Disability Accommodations at American University**

In addition to the services outlined above, students who request accommodations for a disability are served by the Academic Support and Access Center. Faculty and staff who are requesting accommodations can contact Human Resources to provide documentation of their disability.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The Academic Support and Access Center is responsible for reviewing documentation of disabilities presented by students who may request accommodations at the university. Once a disability has been documented in the ASAC, each semester a student may request letters for faculty to verify approved accommodations. Students are encouraged to meet with their professors during office hours to discuss their needs in relation to a particular course and to determine with each professor the best arrangement for accommodations.

Faculty may consult with an ASAC counselor at any time if they have questions about arrangements for a student's accommodations. To consult on testing or note taking arrangements, faculty may contact the testing and note taking coordinators at x3489 or [exams@american.edu](mailto:exams@american.edu) or [notes@american.edu](mailto:notes@american.edu).

**Taking Exams in the Academic Support Center**

Arranging student tests with disability-related accommodations in the Academic Support and Access Center, when faculty cannot make the necessary arrangements, is an important component of our work and we are here to support students and faculty. In order to manage this administrative function, we must ***strictly enforce the following guidelines.***

**To take a test in the ASAC:**

* students must submit an online test accommodations request form no later than one week before an exam
* for final exams, however, requests must be submitted by the published deadline (usually three weeks before the end of classes)
* If a student misses the online deadline to request a test in the ASAC:
* We recognize that life isn't perfect and occasionally a late form is needed. Using a late form will give a student *two extra working days* beyond the deadline.
* There is no guarantee that we will be able to secure a proctor after the online deadline has passed.
* Keep in mind that students are allowed only *one late form per semester.* Once we notify a student that they have met their limit, no further late forms may be used.

**Late forms must be:**

* picked up in person 9am–5pm from the Testing Coordinator in MGC 243
* filled out completely
* signed by the professor (the student may need to fax or scan/e-mail the form to the professor)
* returned to the testing coordinator by 5pm two working days (M–F) before the exam.

**Since exams requested with a late form are not guaranteed, students must:**

* check back with the testing coordinators to see if a proctor has been found
* let their professor know that they missed the deadline in the ASAC and prepare a back-up plan in case a proctor cannot be hired

**ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR TAKING EXAMS IN THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT and ACCESS CENTER**

* **To CANCEL a test appointment**A student should cancel the test using the online test request system as soon as they know they will not be taking the test in the ASAC.
* **To CHANGE a test appointment**A student must contact the testing coordinator as soon as possible so that new arrangements can be made.
* **LATE ARRIVAL to take an exam**
  + If a student is more than 15 minutes late for a test appointment, the professor is notified. Depending on the circumstances, the professor's permission may be necessary to start an exam late.
  + If a student arrives late to a test appointment, missed time cannot be made up.
* **EXAM MATERIALS**
  + The ASAC furnishes scratch paper, pens and pencils, dictionaries (if approved), Scantron sheets, and blue books, in addition to word processing, assistive technology, and earplugs or headphones.
  + Students are expected to furnish their own approved supplementary materials for an exam, including calculators, rulers, colored pencils, and highlighters.
  + Professors must furnish periodic tables.
  + If students are using Dragon Naturally Speaking software for an exam, they must bring their voice file with them on a flash drive or memory stick. Please come early in order to install the voice file before starting the exam.
* **INTERNET ACCESS**
  + ASAC computers do not have Internet access.
  + If students need access to the Internet (for Blackboard, data files, computer software like StatCrunch, Real Player, etc.), they must note what is needed on the test request form for the professor to approve, and discuss their needs with the test coordinator in advance of the test date.

**Testing Office hours:** M–F: 9am–5pm