Intro to American Public Policy
POLS 2330
Fall 2020

Professor's Information:

Robert Cropf, Ph.D.
E-mail: robert.cropf@slu.edu
Phone: As we will be online this semester better to call or text me at 314-605-2499 if you need to contact me right away. **I prefer using email for regular class communication.**
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30 – 3:30 by appointment. **These will be virtual office hours.** Please contact me at least 24 hours before if you need to schedule a Zoom or phone appointment.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor depending on the circumstances of the class.

Check your Blackboard Announcements and SLU email regularly for any updates.

Course Administration:

As I revise this in August 2020, there is still a great deal of uncertainty about COVID-19's effects on the fall semester. Professors have been given the option to teach their courses either online or in the classroom. I have decided, due to personal circumstances, to put the course entirely online. I will be using Zoom for the classroom portion of the course. I have put all the assignments on Blackboard, including the exams. In all likelihood, you will email me your policy brief assignments using my SLU email address unless I decide to use one of Blackboard's functions to collect these assignments. If you have any technology issues with Zoom or Blackboard, please inform me as soon as possible so we can resolve them.

Course Goals:

At the end of the course, students will be expected to provide evidence that they:

- Understand what is meant by "public policy", how it is created, implemented and evaluated;

- Understand how the study of public policy relates to political science and other social sciences including economics, psychology and sociology;

- Can apply this knowledge of the policy process to any policy-related issue or topic;
- Can evaluate public policy problems of current importance and possess a few perspectives on what to do about them;
- Can clearly communicate ideas through writing and online and class discussion;
- Can intelligently analyze policies, and to find the strengths and weaknesses in partisan or news media depictions of policy issues;
- Have enhanced their critical learning and analytical thinking skills.

The focus of the course is on American public policy and we will examine national policy. However, much of the course will center on St. Louis city and region as a case study in public policy failure. In particular, the most egregious failure of all (unfortunately, not confined solely to St. Louis): the unequal treatment and oppression of African Americans. On the one hand, we can view this as a failure (in terms of civil rights and equality) but, on the other hand, as the historian Walter Johnson writes in *Broken Heart of America*, this legacy could also be viewed as a success in terms of segregating African Americans and keeping them poorer than white Americans if the intention at that time was to promote white supremacy. Municipal public policy is a microcosm of American national policy and, as Colin Gordon writes, it has a greater day-to-day impact on average Americans and therefore needs to be examined in great depth.

Books and other readings

These books are required and are available at the University Book Store or online. The schedule of reading assignments listed in the table below was designed to provide general guidance. The depth of class discussion will determine the pace of the course as will extraneous events like the Covid-19 pandemic.

Textbooks:

Thomas A Birkland. *An Introduction to the Policy Process.* 4th ed. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Colin Gordon. *Citizen Brown*. Univ. of Chicago Press, 2019.

Richard Rothstein. *The Color of Law*. Liveright, 2018.

In addition, throughout the semester I will post articles online as reading assignments. These will be announced via email in advance of their due date if they are not in the syllabus. I do not know all of the article assignments in advance because in the quickly evolving world of public policy, some haven't been published yet.

Assignments*:

Date	Reading Assignment	Other Assignments
Unit 1: August 18, 20	Ohrfield article (online); Birkland: Preface.	Discussion Board (Introductions)
Unit 2: August 25, 27	Birkland: Chapter 1; Gordon: pp. 1-20; Rothstein: Preface.	Discussion Board (Why do you think what happened to Michael Brown, Cookie Thornton, and the other individuals discussed by Gordon had such an impact on public policy in the region and nationally?
Unit 3: September 1,3	Birkland: Chapter 2; Gordon: pp.21-36 (stop at Elmwood Park section; "Déjà vu All Over Again: Charter Reform Fails in St. Louis" (online)	Discussion Board (Why is it difficult to pass charter reform?)
Unit 4: September 8, 10	Birkland: Chapter 3; Gordon, pp.36-49; Rothstein: Chapter 1	Possible Guest Speaker: Former Mayor of St. Louis, Vincent Schoemehl Discussion Board: (How does local land-use zoning hamper African American economic growth) Policy topic due
Unit 5: September 15, 17	Birkland: Chapter 4; Gordon:48-65; Rothstein: Chapter 2	Guest Speaker: Rebecca Hyde, Pius Library 1st Policy Paper due Sunday by 11:59 pm.
Unit 6: September 22, 24	Birkland: Chapter 5; Gordon: pp.65-79; Rothstein: Chapter 3	Discussion Board: Topic TBD
Unit 7: September 29, Oct. 1	Birkland: Chapter 6; Gordon pp. 82-98; Rothstein: Chapter 4	Discussion Board: Topic TBD
Unit 8: October 6, 8	Birkland: Chapter 7; Gordon: pp. 99-119; Rothstein: Chapter 5	Discussion Board: Topic TBD

Unit 9: October 13, 15	Birkland: Chapter 8; Gordon: pp. 120-131; Rothstein: Chapter 6	2nd Policy Brief: See below. Due Sunday by 11:59 pm.
Unit 10: October 20, 22	Birkland: Chapter 9; Gordon: p.131-149	Discussion Board: TBD
Unit 10 (continued): October 27	Rothstein: Chapter 7	Midterm (covers material through Unit 10. Either online or in-class.)
October 29	Fall Break (No class)	
Unit 11: November 3 (Election Day Vote!). 5	Birkland, Chapter 10, Rothstein: Chapter 8	Discussion Board: Topic TBD
Unit 12: November 10, 12	Birkland: Chapter 11, Rothstein: Chapter 10	3rd Policy Brief: See below Due Sunday by 11:59 pm.
Unit 13: November 17, 19	Rothstein: Chapter 11; Ferguson Commission Report	Discussion Board: Topic TBD
Unit 14: November 24	Rothstein: Chapter 12; Ferguson Commission Report	
December 6		Annotated Bibliography due (email to me)
		Final Exam (Online)

*   Units in table correspond with units in Blackboard.

Online Written Assignments*:

Policy Essays: You will write several policy discussion essays during this course, each corresponding to one of the topics in the schedule below to be posted on Blackboard. The purpose of each essay is to discuss that topic's substantive issue in terms of the Public Policy concepts we have covered thus far in the class. The topic of the briefs can be found below and on Blackboard. You must complete the assignment on the date due unless there is (1) a death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, child), (2) an unforeseeable personal medical emergency affecting yourself or your child, (3) participation in an official SLU-sponsored academic or sporting event; in this event, you may apply to write on a different topic. Conflicts with a work schedule are not an excuse to fail to turn the discussion essay in on time. Due dates will be assigned several days in advance (depending on how quickly we cover class material;) the paper is due at 12:00 noon on that day.

Short policy essays between 400-500 words, which translates to roughly 2-3 double-spaced pages. They are to be submitted via Blackboard's Journal tool. This tool allows them to be graded online so that the grade is recorded in Blackboard and counts toward the total points for the entire semester. You can submit the policy brief by either inputting it directly into Blackboard or upload a Word file.

1st Policy essay due on Sept. 20 by 11:59 pm. When we think of public goods the things that come to mind are schools and police. But are **all** schools and police public goods? What about parks? Are goods public or private based entirely on who provides the good, or are there other features that characterize public and private goods? Is the distinction meaningful to policy makers?

2nd Policy essay due on Oct. 18 by 11:59 pm. Gordon's book discusses the policies "making" St. Louis and Ferguson. Explain whether you think the situation in St. Louis and Ferguson resulted from "rational-comprehensive" decisions or incremental decisions, or a combination of the two? Use specific policy examples to make your case.

3rd Policy essay due on Nov. 15 by 11:59 pm. Discuss whether or not federal government policies toward black families described in Chapter 10 of Rothstein would be considered policy failures as defined by Birkland. If you think that they were policy failures, describe how they failed. If you think otherwise, describe how they succeeded.

Policy brief
- Assignment: Write a policy brief that describes a policy problem and recommends some possible courses of action that a government can take to solve the problem. (20 pages double-spaced or 10 pages single-spaced.)
- Possible topics include:
    - Mass incarceration or school-to-prison pipeline
    - Immigration reform
    - Health care (this is a big one so you will need to narrow the topic down to something more manageable like Medicaid expansion)
    - Education policy (again a big one so narrow your topic down to something like school vouchers or charter schools)
    - Drug policy (opioid abuse, ending the War on Drugs, decriminalizing marijuana, etc.)
    - Law enforcement reform
    - Environmental policy (combating global climate change, lead abatement, etc.)
    - Homelessness
    - Mental health policy reform
- Objective: Reveals the purpose of a policy. Get students thinking about the causes of a social problem and alternatives, governmental and non-governmental, for solving the problem.
- Submit your statement of the problem by Sept. 8

Policy briefs consist of a Statement of the Problem, Main Facts (including national, state and local data), History of Action, Real Life Story/Evidence of Problem, Groups that are Working on this Issue, Top Policy Objectives, and Conclusion/Recommendation (see example below)

There will also be a mid-term and, possibly, final exam to be taken during mid-term and final weeks respectively.

> * Notes on Writing Assignments: There might not be a discussion board assignment where indicated above. I will see how in-class discussions proceed. Both discussion board and quiz assignments will be on Blackboard unless otherwise indicated. More information about the online assignments are posted on the course's Blackboard page.

Breakdown of Assignment Grading:

Discussion Board	10 pts each/100 total
Policy Essays	35 pts each/105 total
Midterm exam	100 points
Policy Brief	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Class attendance/participation	5 points per class/75 total
Total	580 points

Grading Scale
Letter Grade Percentage
A   93-100
A-   90-92
B+   87-89
B   83-86
B-   80-82
C+   77-79

C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	<60

I reserve the right to make alterations in the grading of the assignments, i.e., the final points breakdown of each assignment based on unforseen circumstances that may arise during the semester.

Per the current MA standards, no course in the PA minor is accepted toward the MPA if the student receives a letter grade below "B". Similarly, for the Ph.D. students.

Course Administration:

Honor Code

Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or volunteering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to me and will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. Please refer to the university policy at http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml.

Expectations and Procedures

Face masks: The University's interim policy on face masks details that all persons present on campus shall wear a face mask. A statement about face masks being mandatory will be included in course syllabi. This does not apply to this course obviously.

If any individuals are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons, they may contact the Office of Disability Services (students) or Human Resources (faculty and staff) to discuss their individual situations.

Students should contact Disability Services as soon as possible, prior to the start of the semester, and share those accommodations with their professors as far in advance as possible before classes begin in August.

Social distancing: We will continue to require 6 feet of social distancing in all public University spaces indoors and outdoors. Classrooms, laboratories, dining halls, meeting rooms, elevators and residence hall common areas are being reconfigured to accommodate this requirement

across campus. Again, this does not apply to this course.

Technology

Put everything on mute. You will need to use your laptop or desktop (who has those things anymore?) for this course. You may ask questions by raising your hand just like in an old-fashioned class or by writing it in the Chat box. I will check chat periodically throughout the class. I will email all lecture Powerpoint by the end of the week.

Communication

I will post official grades, send class emails, etc. through the SLU Banner system. Be sure that you can access the email address listed. I will only send email out to your SLU e-mail accounts listed on the course roster in Banner. I will not keep track of any other email addresses you may use.

Disabilities

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:
_Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course in-structor.
_ University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by going to www.slu.edu/success.
Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at the Student Success Center.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

University Writing Services

I encourage you to take advantage of University Writing Services; getting feedback benefits all writers! Trained writing consultants can help with any writing, multimedia project, or oral presentation. During one-on-one consultations, you can work on everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. *These services do fill up*, so please make an appointment! Also, bring your assignment description, and a few goals, to the consultation! For more information, or to make an appointment, visit www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml or call 977-3484.

Attendance Policy:

Your success in this course will depend on your ability to complete the daily reading and weekly writing and discussion assignments. Zoom classes should make it easier for you to attend class but obviously there will be times when you are too sick or if you do not have access to a computer. Absence in three classes without a reason that is out of the control of the student (i.e. illness, work conflict, medical emergency, etc.) will result in a one grade drop in the final grade.

Policy Brief: Solving the Opioids Problem in St. Louis

Following is a brief example of a policy brief. It is really more of an outline than the actual product, which will be approximately 3 times as long. In your own policy brief, I expect to find each one of the sections described below.

The example shows the beginning stages of an actual policy brief. It indicates what the writer needs to do in order to complete the assignment.

Statement of the problem – the City of St. Louis is experiencing an opioid public safety crisis. Our City is an anomaly in that addiction and overdose rates are rising – in most cities and states this is going down. And in the last 3 years, the disparity between whites and blacks has grown significantly. This is an issue of public health, racial justice and real financial concern to our City.

Main facts (include national and local data) This part of the policy brief should be between 2-3 pages in length.
MO is number one state for addiction ([source](#)), within that St Louis has higher rates than most of the state (this section needs need hard numbers) Including:
# overdoses per year for the last 5 years, # fatalities, # lives saved, etc.

Rate of African American men dying of overdose more than doubled between 2015 and 2018 in MO – and officials say it is the St. Louis region that is driving this disparity. Opioid related deaths fell 5% for white males, and rose 50% for black males.

Heroin sells for $5 a capsule and $10 for three
Purity on the streets varies widely and wildly.

Overdose calls for service have become routine for emergency responders. In 2018 and 2019, paramedics from the St. Louis Fire Department responded to 4,944 addresses spread across 29 zip codes – nearly 7 calls per day.

Why No place in St. Louis is safe. While paramedic response varies wildly, no zip code is free of overdoses. [Looking to get actual data]
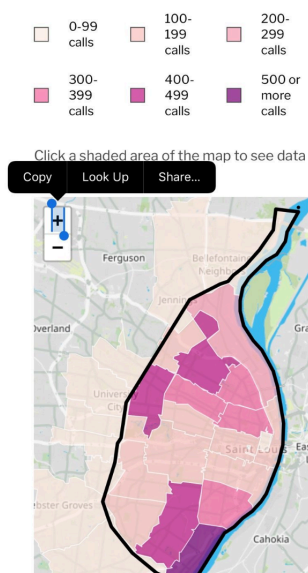
History of Action (include local, state and national wins / losses in this area) This section is also 2-3 pages in length and consists of a brief history of the relevant, recent legislation addressing the problem. The narrative below is for a local law but you can also use national and state laws. You can include acts that have been passed, i.e., became laws or bills that were introduced but never became laws.

Alder Spencer lead the Good Samaritan Bill in [FACT CHECK – year]. The City of St. Louis was the first city in the nation to pass a municipal good Samaritan bill. The state of Missouri followed suit [FACT CHECK – who sponsored it and when did it pass?] [FACT CHECK – how many states have a good same bill on the books?]

Spencer also co-leads the passage of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Database {same year]. The state of Missouri is the only state that does not have one. St. Louis City and County have combined efforts to have one PDMP. [FACT CHECK – where is this in the process of running? What impact has it had? Is it run well, how does it monitor prescriptions.]

Real life story / evidence of problem — make it local, personal, and mean something. This section can be short, at most one page.

Groups in that are working on this issue / representing affected

people are leading this issue locally / nationally. This discussion can be brief, highlighting the work being done on behalf of an issue by activist groups at the national, state or local level. Briefly describe each organization. How long they have worked on the problem. The name of a contact person, e.g., the executive director. All you need are 2-3 organizations.

Missouri Network for Opioid Recovery – Chad Sabora
BASIC – Oval Miller
[FACT CHECK – need some north side providers – are there many?]

Top policy objectives. This section should be 4-5 pages in length. It should provide enough time to address the different approaches to fixing the problem. You can spend more time discussing what you consider to be the best solutions. Include 1-2 examples of each - a city or state that is doing this well with evidence / stats as well as hurdles / problems associated with each. Also include emergency / short term solutions as well as long term solutions and include monitoring evaluation programs when possible.

1. Needle Exchange. Enabling this locally at the municipal level will enable Mo Network to distribute (xx - what's the figure here?) needles this year - creating that many entry points to engage over 300 individuals with substance use disorder a month - placing 20-30 people in treatment.

2. Establish a sobering house - where being intoxicated will not be grounds for eviction.

3. Low barrier buprenorphine.

4. Fight for the expansion of Medicaid. You mentioned this in the convo about buprenorphine. Can you estimate what expansion of Medicaid would do to help address addiction and save lives?

5. Safe Prescribing guidelines. This appears to be working in San Diego. Do you think this is something that could fit into state law and /or work here?

6. Naloxone Access program in Baltimore. In 2015, Baltimore's Health Commissioner issued standing order for naloxone to be dispensed by pharmacies and overdose response program employees or volunteers. This would make it easier for people to get naloxone from their local pharmacist when they need it. Is this as good as it seems?

7. Declared Opioid Health Emergency.

8. Public Awareness campaign. to be included - good samaritan law, safe spaces, resources, numbers to call, etc.

9. Create a drug drop location. We have two federal spots that the DEA could do that - the Federal Reserve and the Arch Grounds. I would say we could do it on the arch grounds - in a discrete, secured location. The DEA just did this in Louisville. https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2020/02/13/dea-installs-drug-collection-box-louisville-federal-building

References