

Eastern Michigan University
Political Science Department
Master of Public Administration Program

PLSC 630, PUBLIC BUREAUCRACIES AND POLICY FORMATION
Fall 2017, Thursday, 6:00 – 8:40

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Campus Office hours: TTh: 12:00-2:00, 3:15-5:00
and by appointment

INTRODUCTION

PLSC 630 is a required three-hour core course in the Master of Public Administration curriculum, in which we explore the complexities and patterns of public policy making in America. This is approached from the perspective of public policy process (problem identification, policy options and agenda setting, policy adoption, policy implementation, and evaluation) and policy domains. *Our major objective is to develop a fuller understanding of the ability of government administrators at all levels to participate effectively in the policy-making process.* This course is built on the premise that policy-making requires substantive, political, and administrative knowledge, technical and interpersonal skills, and a level of moral and critical awareness. Thus, PLSC 630 should be taken after having completed most if not all other required MPA core courses.

Within the context of the course readings, assignments and discussions, each student should develop the following competencies:

- Application of social science theory to public policy making and management;
- Selection of appropriate analytical methods;
- Preparation of oral and written communication for decision-making;
- Communication of quantitative information for decision-making; and
- Ability to draw lessons from specific cases.

Although many of the readings have a predominantly national government perspective, we will attempt to build on the theories and case studies to develop an understanding of local policy making as well. The course concludes with in-depth *group* presentations of a complete game plan for policy development and implementation of a local policy issue/solution.

The course assumes a basic competence in political science and American government. It is intended to operate as more of a graduate research seminar than a lecture-and-exam dominated experience.

COURSE ADMINISTRATION AND GRADES

Students are expected to keep up with all reading assignments, attend class regularly, and participate actively in discussions of the weekly readings. This is a graduate seminar, not a lecture course, although I may do some lecturing to introduce the material.

Class will start at 6:00 PM and will most often end no later than 8:40 PM. It's a late evening, but occasionally, we may need to continue for a few minutes to complete discussion of a case.

All written assignments should reflect professional, graduate-level writing. Papers that contain more than a minimum of writing, spelling, or grammar problems will be penalized one letter grade.

Please turn off cell phones before class. If you are expecting a call, please set your phone to vibrate and leave the room to take the call without answering in class. Thanks.

All written assignments are to be handed in electronically on the course Canvas web site on the date due.

1. Research Paper (40% of grade). *Each student will work with one other student* to prepare a policy analysis paper on a local public policy issue of concern to a specific local government body or group of local governments (city, township, county, or special district government such as a housing authority, road commission, or SEMCOG). If you want to write about a state or nonprofit policy issue, you will need approval of the topic. The paper shall review the nature and evidence of the policy problem, existing policies and activities, and a set of proposed concrete recommendations as to how the community could make such efforts more effective. The paper is due Dec. 7. Specific guidelines for the paper include:

- a. This paper shall be approximately 25 double-spaced pages in length, not including appendices. It must be meticulously documented with embedded citations in the text and formal references at the conclusion. Please follow the guidelines of the APA Style manual.
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01> Papers that do not conform to this style manual will have grades reduced by one letter.
- b. The paper shall include a 2-3 page appendix review of academic and applied literature that relates to the policy area (economic development, planning, education reform, etc.) The purpose of the literature review is to identify research that directly relates to your policy analysis and informs you as to what others know about the policy area. This information should help you understand how your policy problem is defined and measured and what is known about various policy options.
- c. The paper shall begin with an executive summary (maximum 3 pages) targeted to a practitioner board that will be the potential recipient of your paper. All material included in the executive summary should also be in the complete report; this is your opportunity to highlight what you consider to be the most important elements/findings/recommendations of your research. If you are unfamiliar with the format of an executive summary, please read the file: "Executive Summary Guidelines."
- d. The paper will be based primarily on field work including *interviews with key stakeholders inside and outside government, documents available from local government agencies, and policy analysis materials from interest groups and think tanks.*
- e. Each paper shall consider and give special consideration to the role of various stakeholders in the policy process of your project, specifically including elected officials (CEO and council), administrative officials (city manager, department heads, specialized staff), interest groups (Chamber of Commerce and business groups, labor unions, and citizen groups), individual citizens, and intergovernmental players (other cities, counties, state or federal officials).
- f. In order to set the context of your policy environment, your research shall explain the specific government structure, economic constraints, and historical patterns. NOTE: this summary is required!
- g. The Bardach book should provide a roadmap for your research.

This research may focus on any aspect of local public policy, although you are *encouraged* to consider a local economic development issue in a city of your choosing.

The written report will be evaluated on:

- a. Knowledge and analysis of the local policy problem and its conceptual *causal* links; *precise data must be provided to substantiate the problem, including time-based and comparative data*;
- b. Knowledge of the policy context and players;
- c. Knowledge and analysis of various policy options or alternatives;
- d. Explanation and utilization/application of decision criteria;
- e. Persuasiveness of policy recommendation;
- f. Application of policy-making theory to practice;
- g. Quality of writing.

Possible policy problem/topics for research projects include:

- Restrictive building codes and zoning ordinances that negatively impact in-fill housing development and these residential neighborhoods;
- Restrictive building codes and zoning ordinances that negatively impact commercial development in older communities;
- Inadequate amount of park land;
- Out-dated or inadequate recreation, civic center or library facilities;
- Out of date central business district infrastructure;
- Deteriorated, abandoned or out of date public housing complexes/buildings;
- High cost of running local governments in the face of restrictive revenue streams;
- High cost of running a specific local government service (police, fire, recreation, water/sewer, etc.);
- Inadequate public transportation between suburbs or city/suburb;
- Deteriorated neighborhood streets, water/sewer lines, etc.

2. Research Presentations (10% of grade). During the last three weeks of the term, each pair of students will make formal 20 minute professional presentations of their research with PowerPoint slides and handouts. These presentations will be directed to a practitioner board and will outline and defend the policy recommendations of the policy analysis paper. These presentations should be fully rehearsed and polished, as they will be graded on speaking style (audible, coherent, grammar, self-confidence, serious, eye contact), clarity and quality of PowerPoint slides (text, graphics, photos, etc.), and overall effectiveness of professional communications. Your presentation should be conducted as if you were talking to the decision-making body and not your class! If you are uncertain of the ingredients of a “professional presentation,” you should spend some time reading in the library.

3. Research Project-based Policy Assignment (30% of grade). There are six short (1-2 pages each) memos that you will be writing *about your research project* that are due at various points during the semester. They will give you an opportunity to think about your research project in relationship to the course readings and seminar discussions, and will provide feedback to you for your final research paper. There are two files on Canvas that will help provide guidance on memo writing (“memoonmemos” and “WritingMemos”).

4. Mid-term Exam (20% of grade). There will be a closed book take home exam covering the course readings.

5. Class Participation (5% extra credit). At the end of the semester I will record an extra credit grade for class participation. The bar for receiving anything in this category will be set high: students will need

to display evidence on a weekly basis that they have read and understand the assignments, and have actively participated in class discussions applying the class concepts to real world experiences.

BOOKS

John W. Kingdon. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. Update Edition, with an Epilogue on Health Care 2nd Edition (New York: Pearson, 2011).

Cornelius M. Kerwin. Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy. 4th Edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2011).

Eugene Bardach. A Practical Guide to Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving. 3rd Edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2016).

TOPICS, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Sept. 7 1. Introduction. Course requirements and overview, types of policy, policy models (systems, group, elite, rational choice, process), policy instruments, national-local comparisons. Why is problem-solving so difficult? How can public managers assist in problem solving?

Kingdon, Ch. 1; Bardach, Introduction

Sept. 14 2. Agenda Setting: Participants and Environment.
Participants: Who are the inside-government and outside-government key participants in policy making at the local level? Who are in the visible and hidden clusters of participants? What resources do they have to dominate agenda setting and/or the generation of alternatives? Who is unimportant? Why? Who dominates agenda setting and the generation of alternatives? Why? What is blended information?

Environment: What are the environmental constraints of local decision-making – culture, values, history, socioeconomic factors, government structure (iron triangles, sub-governments, fragmentation, federalism, shared power)? What role does the marketplace play in setting a framework for policy-making in the US? You should be thinking about the characteristics of a local community that impact the policy and the policy-making context.

Kingdon, Chs. 2-3

Sept. 28 3. Policy Analysis Overview. Come to class prepared to discuss the central elements of the eight steps to policy analysis. Problem definition, Assemble some evidence, Construct alternatives, Select criteria, Project outcomes, Confront trade-offs, Decide, and Tell your story.

Bardach, Chs. 1-end

Review Policy_memorandum_PowerPoint: “How to write an effective policy memorandum”

#1. Write a 2-3 page research proposal indicating your choice of topic and a summary of what you already know about it, following Bardach's method. Be sure to show evidence that you are familiar with the Bardach method and have organized your knowledge consistent with his framework. (due Oct. 5)

- Oct. 5 4. Agenda Setting: Problems. How do problems come to be recognized by society in general, administrators, and elected officials? What are indicators, focusing events, and feedback? How do conditions become problems? What is the difference between a problem and a condition? What do the various models of policy making contribute to understanding of agenda setting, particularly at the local level? What are the various values of surrounding local communities that influence problem definition? What are some serious problems of surrounding communities that have *not* moved from condition to problem-status? You should be looking for hard data that substantiates the presence of a condition in a community: census data on housing and/or population characteristics, school achievement data, local data sources from SEMCOG, building departments, health departments, transportation departments, police/fire departments. *You must have data to back up any claim of a condition that warrants policy attention.* If you can only find national or state level data and you're focusing your research on the local level, you should find a framework through which you *extrapolate* from the national data to the local level. For example if you find a study that clearly supports a conclusion that 10% of urban population suffers from asthma, you should be able to extrapolate the 10% figure to the local community to determine a reasonable estimate of the asthma suffering population in the community you're studying.

Kingdon, Ch. 5

- Oct. 12 5. Policy Formulation: Policy Proposals. What are policy communities? What are some of the local area policy communities? From whom do successful policy proposals originate? What special or unique role do bureaucrats play in formulating policy options? What decision criteria do/should we use? What criteria must successful proposals meet? You should be looking at local policy communities to see what they are proposing and supporting for solutions to problems that have a direct impact upon their community. Also, you should begin to think about criteria for analyzing these proposals. Don't analyze them haphazardly; think systematically about applying a set of criteria to all policy proposals you have identified.

Kingdon, Ch. 6

Hood, Christopher. 2010. "Can We? Administrative Limits Revisited." Public Administration Review 70: 527-534.

#2. Write a 2-page memo to the policy-making body, in which you explain several ways in which the problem of your research project may be defined and supported. ("The public policy problem that needs to be addressed is" What evidence will you use to support the problem? Be sure to build your knowledge around the kinds of information and data that are cited in the readings for defining problems. You must provide clear hard data to substantiate the problem, including time series, comparative data, and extrapolation from national or state-level studies to the local environment. (due Oct. 19)

- Oct. 19 6. Models of Policy Making. How do the various models (rational-comprehensive, incrementalism, mixed scanning, institutional, group, elite/business) explain policy making? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Why is incrementalism viewed as being desirable? Do groups compete for influence equally? How does Kingdon revise the “garbage can” model? Suggested Format for Papers Discussed.

Kingdon, Ch. 4

Lindblom, Charles. 1959. “The Science of Muddling Through.” Public Administration Review 19:79-88.

Scott, Ronald J. 2010. "The Science of Muddling Through Revisited." E:CO 12/1: 5-18.

Etzioni, Amitai. 1967. “Mixed Scanning: A ‘Third’ Approach to Decision-Making.” Public Administration Review 27: 385-392. [JSTOR]

#3. Write a memo to the policy-making body in which you explain the status of the issue of your research project on the community/organization’s agenda. How specifically would you suggest that the problem might gain greater prominence on the agenda? What actions would have to be taken and by whom? Which agendas and which media outlets will be most important to address? (due Oct. 26)

- Oct. 26 7. Policy Adoption: Role of Politics. How does politics influence development of new policy proposals? What factors influence legislative and executive decision-making? How effective are different styles of decision-making? How do problems, policies and politics “come together”? What role do policy entrepreneurs play? What is a policy window? Why might it close? How do these characteristics influence policymaking: fragmentation, bargaining and compromise, deadlines, leadership, symbols, incrementalism, pork-barrel politics, oversight.

Kingdon, Chs. 7, 8, 9

#4. Write a memo to the policy-making body in which you explain the major policy alternatives to your policy problem and why the policy change you will advocate is both viable and feasible. Remember policy alternatives come from many sources and are ultimately recombinations of policy options suggested by interest groups, government agencies, think tanks, legislative staff, etc. Explain the causal model that shows the linkage between the problem and the solution. (due Nov. 2)

- Nov. 2 Mid-term Exam due by 6:00 pm

- Nov. 2 8. Implementation and Bureaucratic Policy Domain. How to use the word “implementation.” How does implementation differ from other stages of policy making? How do bureaucrats control? How are bureaucrats controlled? What role does the Administrative Procedure Act play? How is compliance achieved? How does a federal framework impact implementation of public policy? What unique implementation patterns emerge in different types of policy? What is the difference between a policy analyst and a policy advocate? For your policy paper, you need to be thinking about what happens after a city council or another policy-making body decides to accept your recommendation. How easy is it going to be to carry it out within an administrative agency?

deLeon, Peter and Linda deLeon. 2002. “What Ever Happened to Policy Implementation? An Alternative Approach” Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART 12: 467-492.

Matland, Richard E. 1995. “Synthesizing the Implementation Literature: The Ambiguity-Conflict Model of Policy Implementation” Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART 5: 145-174.

Patashnik, Eric M. and Julian E. Zelizer. 2013. “The Struggle to Remake Politics: Liberal Reform and the Limits of Policy Feedback in the Contemporary American State” Perspectives on Politics 11: 1071-1087.

#5. Write a memo to the policy-making body in which you explain the various government and non-government actors in the policy process of your project. Consider various stages of the policy process explaining how these actors might be involved. If intergovernmental relations are involved, explain the various roles of the different levels. (due Nov. 9)

- Nov. 9 9. Rulemaking: Part I. What is rulemaking? Why do it? What is the formal process of rulemaking? What are the major issues of rulemaking: volume, quality, timeliness, participation, bureaucratic discretion, and impacts?

Kerwin, Chs. 1-3

http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-10576_35738_5694---,00.html (Michigan) the_rulemaking_process.pdf

#6. Write a memo in which you explain the implementation challenges of the policy recommendation that you have identified. In particular give some consideration to how these implementation issues need to be addressed in the policy that you will recommend. (due Nov. 16)

- Nov. 16 10. Rulemaking: Part II. Management of rulemaking, participation, oversight, reform

Kerwin, Chs. 4-7

Kolber, M. (2009). The Mysteries of the Congressional Review Act. *Harvard Law Review*, 122, 2162-2165. http://cdn.harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/vol_122_the_mysteries.pdf

Nov. 30 11. Program Evaluation. How useful are evaluations in influencing policy making? What do we measure--policy outputs, outcomes and impacts? Major problems?

Xu, Zeyu, Jane Hannaway and Colin Taylor. 2011. "Making a Difference? The Effects of Teach For America in High School" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 30:3 (SUMMER) 447-469.

Joyce, Phillip G. 2010. "The Obama Administration and PBB: Building on the Legacy of Federal Performance-Informed Budgeting?" *Public Administration Review* 71:3, (May/June) 356-367.

Berner, Maureen and Matt Bronson. 2005. "A Case Study of Program Evaluation in Local Government: Building Consensus through Collaboration." *Public Performance & Management Review* 28: 3 (March) 309-325.

Wholey, Joseph S. 1972. "What Can We Actually Get from Program Evaluation?" *Policy Sciences* 3: 361-369.

Dec. 7,
14, 19
(final
period) 12. Class Presentations.

EMU Policies and Regulations

Students should consult “**Student Handbook & Policy Guide**” prepared by the Office of the Ombudsman. It can be downloaded at www.emich.edu/ombuds.

☐ **Religious Holidays** – “Current University policy recognizes the rights of students to observe religious holidays without penalty to the student. Students will provide advance notice in writing or email to the instructor in order to make up work, including examinations they miss as a result of their absence from class due to observance of religious holidays. If satisfactory arrangements cannot be made with the instructor, the student may appeal to the Political Science Department Head.”

☐ **Academic Dishonesty** – “Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating, falsification, and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this course. Penalties for an act of academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment to receiving a failing grade for the entire course. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The Student Conduct Code contains detailed definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty but if you are not sure about whether something you are doing would be considered academic dishonesty, consult with the course instructor. You may access the Code online at:
<http://www.emich.edu/policies/policy.php?id=124&term=student%20conduct>

☐ **Classroom Management Issues** – “Students are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code and assist in creating an environment that is conducive to learning and protects the rights of all members of the University Community. Incivility and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and may result in a request to leave class and referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (SJS) for discipline. Examples of inappropriate classroom conduct include repeatedly arriving late to class, using a mobile/cellular phone while in the class session, or talking while others are speaking. You may access the Code online at
<http://www.emich.edu/policies/policy.php?id=124&term=student%20conduct>

Tech ☒ “Materials in this course, on the course-related Web site(s) or URLs used in connection with this course are protected by copyright and may not be copied, used, lined, revised, or retained in any manner whatsoever without permission of its owner. The content of copyrighted material may be used only, and solely by and for, students officially enrolled in this course for which the transmission is made, and may not be copied, used, linked, revised, or retained in any form, or disseminated in any form or medium whatsoever without permission by an agent of Eastern Michigan University.”

Tech ☒ As availability of laptop computers and wireless access has grown, so have the opportunities for students’ attention to be distracted away from activities being conducted in the classroom.

- Computers are to be utilized for coursework and activities related to coursework. Do not use computers for entertainment during in-class sessions.
- You are encouraged to bring your computer to lecture, but, while in the class, you will use your computer only for purposes related to this course.
- Participation in Internet surfing, gaming, chatting, emailing, text messaging, Tweeting, etc., while in-class will reduce your ability to participate in and focus on in-class content / activities. In addition, it causes you to be a distraction to others sitting nearby and to the course instructor.
- Acceptable uses of computers while in-class include taking notes, following along with the instructor on PowerPoint, with demonstrations, and other whole class activities, as well as working on assigned in-class activities, projects, and discussions that require laptop use. It is easy for your laptop to become a distraction to you and to those around you. Inappropriate uses will be noted and may affect your final grade.
- You are expected to be punctual, alert, and prepared for the class. You will be considerate of the instructor and other students, which includes not keyboarding or checking e-mail while information is being presented. Please turn off instant messaging during class time and refrain from playing games on your computer.
- Please turn off cell phones when you are in the classroom.

❑ Student and Exchange VISitor Statement (SEVIS) – The Student exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) requires F and J students to report the following to the Office of International Students 244 EMU Student Center within ten (10) days of the event:

- Changes in your name, local address, major field of study, or source of funding;
- Changes in your degree-completion date;
- Changes in your degree-level (ex Bachelors to Masters)
- Intent to transfer to another school.

Prior permission from OIS is needed for the following:

- Dropping ALL courses as well as carrying or dropping BELOW minimum credit hours;
- Employment on or off-campus;
- Registering for more than one ONLINE course per term (F visa only)
- Endorsing I-20 or DS-2019 for re-entry into the USA.

Failure to report may result in the termination of your SEVIS record and even arrest and deportation. If you have questions or concerns, contact the Office of International Students at 734.487.3116, not the course instructor.

❑ Special Needs Accommodations – “If you wish to be accommodated for your disability, EMU Board of Regents Policy 8.3 requires that you first register with the Students with Disabilities Office (SDO) in 246 EMU Student Center. You may contact SDO by telephone (734.487.2470). Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the SDO promptly as you will only be accommodated from the date you register with them forward. No retroactive accommodations are possible.”

NOTE: Federal law and good pedagogical practices require instructors to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have provided documentation of a disability. The Students with Disabilities Office, 240 EMU Student Center, or at www.emich.edu/disabilities can provide

you with detailed guidance.

□ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – “The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designated to protect the privacy of a student’s education records and academic work. The law applies to all schools and universities which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education and is applicable to students at EMU. All files, records, and academic work completed within this course are considered educational records and are protected under FERPA. It is your right, as a student in this course, to expect that any materials you submit in this course, as well as your name and other identifying information will not be viewable by guests or other individuals permitted access to the course. The exception will be only when you have given explicit, written, signed consent. Verbal consent or email is insufficient.