**POL 313: Public Policy**

Spring 2019

Dr. Laura C. Bucci ([Lbucci@sju.edu](mailto:Lbucci@sju.edu))

Tuesday & Thursday: 9:30:10:45 AM

Bellarmine 215 Webpage: Canvas

Office/Hours: Barbelin 212 T/Th 2-3 & By Appointment

**Course Description:**

Public policy can help to alleviate societal problems. Or policy can be thought of as a political prize, something that politicians, interest groups, stakeholders, and beneficiaries can use to maintain or grow in power. In this course we will examine the theories of how public policy developed, implemented, and evaluated. From vocalizing or learning that there is a problem, proposing a change, seeking comment from relevant parties, implementing a policy, and then determining whether you make the problem better or worse, the process of creating and analyzing policy can be complicated. Where theories give us clear expectations of what *should* happen, and how we can evaluate public policy, we then look to real world policies where relationships get a bit messier.

When policies work well, constituencies prosper. When policies fail, or nothing alleviates a social problem, the negative consequences can mean life or death for real people.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

**POL Objective 1.1:** Students will identify, define, or analyze the content and core concepts and theories within the sub-fields.

**POL Objective 2.1** Students will articulate verbally or in writing an argument which defines, analyzes or synthesizes relevant theories and concepts.

**POL Objective 2.2** Students will apply relevant theoretical concepts to assess real world issues.

**POL Objective 3.1** Students will apply a variety of tools methods, and perspectives to investigate and interpret issues relevant to the discipline

**JEL Objective 2.4** Explain ways that ethics affects legal regimes (local, national, or global)

**JEL Objective 3.2** Compare and contrast conceptions of social justice in moral, historical, or legal

contexts.

**FJS Objective 1** Engage students directly with the "sufferings of the poor" and explore the call, not only to serve them, but also to stand in solidarity with them.

**FJS Objective 2** Invite students to analyze institutions and social structures and to question prevailing systems of thought or action that systematically contribute to modern-day social problems (poverty, racism, human rights violations, violence).

**Required Materials:** (These books are available at the SJU bookstore, or you can buy them online)

* *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond
* *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics* by Jamila Michener
* Various readings (posted on Canvas and/or handed out in class- Files are saved as Author Last Name Year)

**Graded Components:**

All of the below will be graded on a 100-point scale and then weighted according to the following percentages to determine the final course grade. Due dates are listed under the Schedule of Readings and Assignments section at the end of this syllabus:

* Participation and Preparation: 10%
* Reading Responses: 10% (two, (one must be in the theory comparison weeks) each worth 5%)
* Short Writing Assignments: 40% (four, each worth 10%)
* Midterm Essay + Presentation: 20%
* Final Essay: 20%

**Office Hours and Email Policy:** My office is located in Barbelin 212, and I will be there on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2pm-3pm **or by appointment**. If you cannot attend, then the best way to reach me is by email ([lbucci@sju.edu](mailto:lbucci@sju.edu)). While I check my email regularly, it tends to pile up quickly, so I may need **48 hours** to get back to you. **If you have a question about upcoming assignments, they need to arrive in my inbox at least 24 hours prior to the due date**. Make sure your emails contain a brief question that cannot be answered via the syllabus. If you have a longer question (i.e. how am I doing in class, how do I become a major, how should I study), come to office hours. Those sorts of questions are not well answered in email form.

**Attendance, Participation, and Class Preparation:**

As adults, there is no need to reveal personal details or provide absence notes. If there is an ongoing concern, please see me in office hours or the associate dean, Dr. Matthew Anderson. He can vouch for extensive absences (without revealing personal details). **Class participation is affected by absences. If you are absent from class more than six times, you will receive an FA (failure due to absences) grade, unless verified in writing by the Associate Dean.**

When you skip class, you deprive your classmates of **your** insights! If you have an unexcused absence, you are not entitled to special instructions or accommodations.

The best advice I can give anyone in how to succeed in this course is to come to class every day, stay for the duration, and be ready and willing to ask questions about the assigned readings or to engage in the day's scheduled activity. How does the current material fit with what has been presented previously? Do you have questions about how theories might be applied to real life? Participating in class is easy; participating well is difficult. In most cases, the quality of your comments will matter more than the quantity of your participation. **There may be pop quizzes to assess participation.**

**“Attendance” means that you are in class, on time, and stay for the duration.** Please be on

time for class. It is understandable when you must occasionally arrive late, but trends are unacceptable and will result in a loss of points for that day. Please be considerate to the rest of the class and the instructor by arriving to class promptly.

**Please turn cell phones OFF and only use computers for note-taking during class, and please DO**

**NOT text during class – this is disrespectful to both the instructor and your classmates.**

Students MUST bring hard copies of the relevant readings with them to class. **If a student neither participates nor prepares faithfully, then they should not be surprised to receive a D *or lower* as a participation grade (10% of the course grade).** In short, students **must** be active members in class to do well in this course, as indicated in the following guidelines:

“A” - a student who always attends class and makes **frequent contributions** that demonstrate an **excellent** understanding of the assigned materials, lectures, and ongoing discussions;

“B” - a student who always attends class and makes **frequent contributions** that demonstrate a **good understanding** of the assigned materials, lectures, and ongoing discussions;

“C” - a student who has **excellent attendance** but **infrequently** or never contributes OR has **irregular** **attendance** (more than 2 absences) but makes **good contributions** when they do;

“D” - a student who has **sporadic attendance** (more than 3 absences) and makes **infrequent** and **ill-informed** contributions;

“F” - a student who has **poor attendance** (more than 4 absences) and **never contributes** or does not contribute usefully to the discussion.

**Assignments:**

Directions will be distributed separately for each of the assignments and also posted to Canvas. Electronic copies should be submitted before the *beginning of class* of the assigned day. In general, and unless otherwise noted, all assignments should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point New Times Roman font, 1-inch margins. **NOTE: No late work is accepted in this class. Students MAY turn assignments inearly.**

While most assignments will be submitted on Canvas, any assignment that is a hard copy must be stapled. No, a folded corner is not the same thing as a staple.

**Make-up exams are not offered in this class**, unless a student experienced an extraordinary emergency, **verified in writing by the Associate Dean**.

**Computer/Hard Drive Failure Policy**

Given the proliferation of free “cloud" based storage and backup, there is no reason that a

hard drive failure should render all of your work lost. (*SERIOUSLY, even if not for this class, save yourself the potential headache!*) One program, Dropbox, is free and allows you to automatically backup your work to the cloud. I expect you to use a program like this and “computer errors” will not excuse missed/late assignments.

**About grades:**

If you disagree with your grades on an assignment or would like to discuss it further, I would be happy to discuss it with you. I am happy to meet with you at least 48 hours after the assignment is returned, outside of normal class time, provided you explain why you believe your grade is in error.

**Technology Policy:**

[Studies show](http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away) that you will retain more information if you take notes by hand rather than using a laptop or tablet. You are likely to do better in the course taking notes by hand.

You are expected to bring a printed copy of all assigned material to class with you.

**Reward for Reading this far:**

Send me a gif/regular photo of Gritty being his best self by January 15th at 9:30AM for extra credit.

**Academic Honesty:**

Read the [Academic Honestly Policy](http://hawkcentral.sju.edu/link/portal/16125/16171/Article/95/Academic-Honesty-Policy) and see me in office hours if you have questions. Plagiarism includes copying materials from the internet. If you block copy text from any source into a document, you must use quotation marks and cite the source. If you violate the Academic Honest Policy, you will the assignment and the course.

At the end of each assignment or test, write **“I have read the SJU Academic Honesty Policy and abided by its requirements” then sign your name. If the assignment is submitted online, type the statement at the very end of the paper and type your name. Assignments will not be graded without this signed statement.**

**ALSO NOTE:** The University’s Academic Honesty Policy states that “the unauthorized recording, sale, or use of lectures and other instructional materials” is a violation of the Policy and is considered an act of dishonesty. **Let me be very clear: no one EVER has my permission to RECORD or DISTRIBUTE my words, emails, lectures, comments, or any of our class discussions in ANY format.**

**An Open Classroom:** It is important to me that you leave this class better able to engage critically with political topics. However, there will be times in class, as there will be times in life, when not everyone agrees. You are not required to adopt any particular viewpoint (as someone who studies political behavior, I don’t think I could change your mind even if I wanted to). You can engage with your peers in a constructive manner, and derogatory comments will not be accepted. Interrupting speakers, attacking speakers personally, speaking aggressively, disregarding statements made by the instructor are all types of conduct that are unacceptable.

**Resources on Campus:**

**The Writing Center:** The Saint Joseph’s University Writing Center is free to all members of the SJU community. Both appointments and drop-in sessions are available. The main Writing Center is located in 162 Merion Hall. The Center also has a satellite location in the Post Learning Commons (room 128). For more information, including hours of operation and instructions on how to make an appointment, please visit the SJU Writing Center website at [sju.edu/writingcenter](http://sju.edu/writingcenter).

**Students with Disabilities:**

Reasonable academic accommodations may be provided to students who submit appropriate documentation of their disability. Students are encouraged to contact Dr. Christine Mecke in the Office of Student Disability Services, Bellarmine, B-10, at cmecke@sju.edu; or at 610-660-1774 for assistance with this issue. The university also provides an appeal/grievance procedure regarding requested or offered reasonable accommodations through Dr. Mecke's office. More information can be found at: [www.sju.edu/sds](http://www.sju.edu/sds).

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

ALL MATERIALS SHOULD BE READ *BEFORE* THE CLASS DATE INDICATED

**Notes about the schedule:**

1. The content and schedule may change from this outline to meet the needs of this group
2. All points of view–argued carefully and persuasively–are encouraged in all assignments and discussions.

**Week One: Power**

***Questions****: How does policy empower and disempower? What can public policy do for people?*

**Tuesday 1/15/19**

* Course overview, read the syllabus

**Thursday 1/17/19**

* John Gaventa. 1981. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (University of Illinois Press), 3-20.
* Deborah Stone. 1988. “Intro” *Policy Paradox* pp. 1-10

**Week 2: Policy Process**

***Questions:*** *How do we begin to theorize public policy? How do we study policy?*

**Tuesday 1/22/19**

* Jamila Michener Ch. 1 *Fragmented Democracy* page 1-19

**Thursday 1/24/19**

* Aaron Wildavsky. 1979. “The Art of Policy Analysis.” In *Speaking Truth to Power: The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company. p. 1-19.
* Edella Schlager and Christopher M. Weible. 2013. “New theories of the policy process”. *Policy Studies Journal*, *41*(3), p.389-396.

**Week 3: Agenda Setting, Asking the Right Questions**

***Questions:*** *What social problems do we believe are possible to solve/urgent/problems at all? How does problem definition lead to problem solution?*

**Tuesday 1/29/19**

* Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones, Agendas and Instability in American Politics, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 59-82.

**Thursday 1/31/19**

* Sarah Zhang. 2015. “Why America Still Doesn’t Have Any Good Data on Guns.” *Wired.*
* Rebecca Goldin. 2009. “Spinning Heads and Spinning News: How a Lack of Statistical Proficiency Affects Media Coverage,” *STATS*.

**Week 4: Policies for Which People?**

***Questions:*** *Who do we think of as the primary beneficiaries of policy? Does this perception influence how policies are written?*

**Tuesday 2/5/19:**

* ***Problem Definition Assignment Due***
* Anne Schneider, and Helen Ingram. 1993. "Social construction of target populations: Implications for politics and policy." *American Political Science Review* 87.2: 334-347.
* Deborah Stone. 1988. “Symbols” in *The Policy Paradox* pp.108-126

**Thursday 2/7/19**

* Rebecca J. Kreitzer and Candis, Watts Smith. 2018. “Reproducible and replicable: An empirical assessment of the social construction of politically relevant target groups”.*PS, Political Science & Politics, 51*(4), 768-774.
* Jamila Michener *Fragmented Democracy*, Ch. 2

**Week 5: Policy Change Over Time**

***Questions:*** *Is change in policy inevitable? Are changes small and steady, or large and occasional?*

**Tuesday 2/12/19: Incrementalism**

* ***Target Population Assignment Due***
* Charles Lindblom. 1959. “The Science of ‘Muddling Through’” *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring), pp. 79-88
* Michael M. Atkinson. 2011. “Lindblom’s Lament: Incrementalism and the Persistent Pull of the Status Quo”, *Policy and Society*, 30:1, 9-18.

**Thursday 2/14/19: Punctuated Equilibrium**

* James True, Bryan Jones, Frank Baumgartner."Punctuated equilibrium theory: Explaining stability and change in public policymaking." *Theories of the policy process* 8 (2014): 59-103.

**Week 6: Policy Inaction is Action**

***Questions:*** *What happens when policies aren’t updated over time?*

**Tuesday 2/19/19: Drift**

* Jacob Hacker. 2004. “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State: The Hidden Politics of Social Policy Retrenchment in the United States,” American Political Science Review 98: 243-260.

**Thursday 2/21/19**: Comparing Theories: In class activity

**Week 7: Variation**

Question: *Why is the same policy area so different across each of the 50 states?*

**Tuesday 2/26/19** In class activity continued

**Thursday 2/28/19**

* Jamila Michener, *Fragmented Democracy* Chapter 3-4

**Week 8: Policy Innovation and Diffusion**

**Question:** *Can states learn from each other?*

Tuesday 3/5/19

* Charles Shipan and Craig Volden. 2008. “The mechanisms of policy diffusion”. AJPS 52(4): 840-857.

**Thursday 3/7/19**

* ***Policy Comparison Essay Due***
* Adam Butz, Michael Fix. And Joshua Mitchell. 2015. “Policy Learning and Diffusion of Stand Your Ground Laws” *Politics and Policy* 43:3: p. 347-377

**Week 9: SPRING BREAK 3/12 and 3/14 (Read for Week 10)**

**Week 10: Implementation/Evaluation**

***Questions:*** *How is policy applied in the real world? Once you implement policy, how do you know if it’s working? What does good policy look like in the short, medium, long-term?*

**Tuesday 3/19/19**:

* Joseph Soss. 1999. “Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action.” *The American Political Science Review* 93 (2): 363-380.

**Thursday 3/21/19**:

* Virginia Eubanks. “The Allegheny Algorithm” *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor.* p. 127-173

**Week 11: Influence**

***Questions:*** *Who shapes policies? Who do legislators hear from most frequently?*

**Tuesday 3/26/19:**

* Richard L. Hall and Frank W. Wayman. "Buying time: Moneyed interests and the mobilization of bias in congressional committees." American Political Science Review 84, no. 03 (1990): 797-820.

**Thursday 3/28/19: \*Last day to withdraw from the course**

* Jamila Michener, *Fragmented Democracy* Ch. 5

**Week 12: Economic Policy**

***Questions:*** *How do we distribute money? How does that look differently for rich and poor people?*

Tuesday 4/2/19:

* Christopher Faricy. 2016. “The Distributive Politics of Tax Expenditures: How Parties Use Policy Tools to Distribute Federal Money to the Rich and the Poor,” Politics, Groups, and Identities, 4 (1): 110-125 [on order]

Thursday 4/4/19:

* Andrea Louise Campbell. 2014. Ch. 3.“The Place of the Poor in the American Welfare State” in *Trapped in America’s Safety Net: One Family’s Struggle* pp. 30-56.
* Michener, Ch. 7

**Week 13: Housing**

***Questions:*** *How does housing policy fit into our theories of policy formation and change? How does housing policy affect groups of people differently?*

Tuesday 4/9/19

* ***Assignment due, comparing redistribution***
* Matthew Desmond *Evicted* Ch.1-3

Thursday 4/11/19

* Matthew Desmond *Evicted* Ch.4-5

**Week 14: Housing**

Tuesday 4/16/19

* Matthew Desmond *Evicted* Ch.9-11

Thursday 4/18/19

* Matthew Desmond *Evicted* Ch.12-14

**Week 15: Housing**

Tuesday 4/23 **\*No Class Monday Schedule\***

Thursday 4/25/19

* Chloe Thurston. 2018 “Politics, Markets, and Boundaries” *At the Boundaries of Home Ownership: Credit Discrimination and the American State.* Pp. 1-33 [on order]

**Week 16: Reflecting on Policy and Democracy**

Tuesday 4/30/19

* Jamila Michener, *Fragmented Democracy* Ch. 8
* Matthew Desmond *Evicted* Ch.17-18, 24

Thursday 5/1/19

* ***Assignment due, reflecting on the policy process***
* ***Final exam distributed***
* Reflection and Peer Review

Exam to be submitted online, exam week: date TBD.