

Department/Program: Political Science

Year: Winter 2010

Course Title: POLI 350A (001), Public Policy

Course Schedule: Tuesday, Thursday 12:30-2:00pm

Location(s): Lasserre 102

Instructor: Dr. Raul Pacheco-Vega

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Course website address: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/poli375a/>

Course Description:

This course will provide the student with an overview of the various political science theories that apply to the public policy-making process. It will also allow students to “get their feet wet” in the policy analysis field. The focus is on the domestic level of Canadian public policy, as POLI 352A (Comparative Politics of Public Policy) examines the comparative dimension using a cross-national lens. We will, however, look at some theoretical debates that draw on cross-national comparisons. We will examine current debates such as the politics of urban sprawl in the Greater Vancouver area, climate change policy in Canada, abortion policy, housing policy, same-sex marriage and legislation, etc. The course has no formal pre-requisites, although POLI 351, and POLI 352A are very useful complements.

The course has a number of learning objectives:

- to introduce you to concepts of market failure, efficiency, equity, policy learning, etc.
- to develop a set of theoretical tools that will help you analyze policy problems and suggest recommendations for policy makers
- to understand the context of Canadian public policy making within an increasingly globalized world
- to allow you to build analytical models to reflect and understand the interaction between civil society, industry and governments
- to provide opportunities for you to practice and improve your written and oral communication, group work, and research skills.

Understanding public policy requires familiarity with both abstract concepts and substantive issues. The course is designed to combine these two elements by using case studies to illustrate concepts and generate class discussion. The focus of the course will be on domestic public policy, primarily within Canada but with examples from and comparisons to other industrialized and developing countries. We will consider the impact of international factors on domestic policy, but will not focus on cross-national variations of public policies.

An innovation this course has over previous years is that we'll have direct involvement from folks in various policymaking contexts (Translink, Metro Vancouver and City of Vancouver, for starters).

Format of the course: Two 1 hour, 20 minute lectures per week. My teaching combines both seminar-style (in-class discussion) and lectures. For the term January-April 2011, I'll be doing most of the lecturing. I expect that **all students** will participate in class, either in person (*viva voce*) or via discussion forums and on the blog.

Required Reading:

My courses require intensive reading and you should be prepared for this. In keeping with the spirit of my research in environmental politics, I have made it as paper-less as possible. The syllabus contains a listing of required readings (journal articles, for the most part). You are required to have done the reading by the beginning of the first lecture of the week (e.g. by Tuesday – or Thursday if there is at any point, no lecture on Monday). **You are also responsible for downloading your own readings.** Google Scholar is your best friend, and so is MyVPN – ask me if you need to learn how to access journals from home. If you require any assistance using UBC's Online Journals do let me know and I will put you in touch with a librarian or suggest resources.

I treat third year university courses as a prelude for graduate coursework and post-graduation work life. I strive to build my students' research, policy analytical and critical thinking skills. Therefore, I insist that you examine the readings with a critical eye. Could the author have explored the topic in more detail? What is missing from the analysis? If you were to do the research shown in the article, what would you have done differently? These are useful questions to ask oneself.

Based on feedback from student evaluations, I will be experimenting this term by only lecturing (no in-class discussion) on Tuesdays, and by doing in-class exercises on Thursday.

The following is highly recommended. Students should note that if I consider papers not to meet a minimum standard for third year university writing, I will return them unmarked -- with late penalties accruing during the rewrite.

William Strunk, E.B. White, and Roger Angell, *The Elements of Style*, 4th Ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. This book is now available online at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>. It's a quick read that will have a big impact on your writing!

Important Note on Amount of Reading: In previous years, I have taught very reading-intensive course. While this course does not have a high quantity of reading material, I do expect you not only to have done the readings, but also to have understood them. I am quite comfortable cold-calling on any student, and I expect you to be able to answer the questions. I understand that some students may be shy and do not feel comfortable when asked a direct question in the classroom. However, this course should help you build confidence to speak up. Fair warning!

I would recommend that you purchase the following book: Bardach, E. (2009). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eighthfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly Press. It is a very nicely written book, and will be useful to you for the remainder of your career. It's not "required" but it'd be useful for you to have it.

The Mug-Shot

Years after they have graduated, many of my former students ask me to write them letters of reference. It is almost impossible to write said letters of reference if I don't actually know all of you by name. And I can't do that either if I don't have a visual reference. Thus, I will ask you to provide me with a 'mug-shot' card **by the beginning of the third class**. You can do it either electronically or in an index card.

Your mug shot should include at least clear, recent picture and your name. You can also include the rationale why you're taking the course. *Please also bring a 'placeholder' card with your first name in large letters so that I can see it from the front of the classroom. This will only be necessary for the first couple of weeks (I have very good memory).*

Course Assignments, Due dates and Grading:

Based on feedback from previous years, I have decided not to schedule a final examination.

There will be two written assignments (individually), one written assignment as a group, and one presentation (as a group too).

1. Undertaking a quick, back-of-the-envelope policy analysis (20%)

The first assignment will see you analyzing an issue within 48 hours. You could call it "a take-home exam", I prefer to call it "analyzing policy under pressure". The maximum length you have for this assignment is 1,500 words. I'll penalize and subtract marks for going over the word limit. I will assign different policy problems to each individual. There might be repetitions, but of course, while you can confer with your colleagues about how to approach your project, your policy analysis should be yours and only yours. You will submit this policy analysis **at 12:30 pm on February 12th**. I will give you your policy problem at the beginning of class on February 10th. I fully understand that it's NOT a working day. You can submit your policy analysis electronically first and then a paper copy in class.

2. Writing a research paper on a topic around Canadian public policy (40%)

Your research paper can be on any topic associated with Canadian public policy. As you can imagine, there's a plethora of textbooks out there that you can use, or journal articles. The paper should be a 4000-word maximum paper (allows you for 16 pages double-spaced on Times New Roman 12). On the course website I will post a handout that provides guidelines on how to write solid papers. Also, check the course website for my grading scheme (it will allow you to discern the kind and amount of work you need to put in for a specific grade). The final research paper is due **at the beginning of class on March 15th**.

3. Preparing a policy analysis and in-class presentation on a policy problem of relevance to Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada (30%)

Much of my own work outside the university and in my own research is applied policy analysis. I'm keen to showcase the talent of my UBC Political Science students. Thus, I have connected with officials at Translink (the regional transportation authority), the City of Vancouver and the intergovernmental body Metro Vancouver and requested that they come to the class and talk to us about potential problems they may have. These presentations will occur hopefully at the end of February. I might have to make some adjustments to the course syllabus to accommodate official's busy schedules. The last few weeks of the course will be dedicated to presentations. **Attendance to EVERY presentation is mandatory.**

Feedback for Students' Presentations

Each group will analyze a current Canadian public policy issue. Each debate-centered lecture will feature 3 groups, each giving a 10 minute presentation. 20 minutes of the lecture will be allotted to classroom discussion. You should be able to provide constructive, useful feedback to your peers. You should focus on issues where there's room for improvement, and always phrase your comments in a positive light. I will not tolerate non-respectful commentary. It would be most useful to your classmates if you provided your feedback in writing.

Along the same lines, presenters could provide handouts with an outline of their presentation (not necessarily a printout of the Power Point slides!) so that listeners could follow more easily. All handouts and electronic materials should be submitted to me at least one week before the date of the presentation. If your presentation is on April 3rd, I expect your presentation one week earlier.

Thus, the breakdown of grades will be as follows:

- **Presentation/group analysis** **30%**
- **Final research paper** **40%**
- **Participation** **10%**
- **Individual policy analysis** **20%**

Participation in Class

Public speaking/discussion/critical thinking skills (Participation)

When I first started teaching, I only lectured. For a couple of years, I ran my courses entirely seminar-style, with some lecturing here and there. This year, I have built-in online participation as a result of feedback I received in the previous year's student evaluations. Participating in class builds your self-confidence in public speaking. It also allows your fellow students to learn from your own view of the issues.

I encourage everyone to speak during class and strive to make my classroom a comfortable and safe place for students to share their opinions/thoughts. For those of you who are not as comfortable speaking up in class, you should participate in the online forums and answering questions or discussions on the blog. The feedback that students have given me is that they are concerned about privacy. Thus, when leaving a comment, you don't need to post with your full name. We will figure out a way to anonymize conversations on the blog. I will provide more information about these forums in the weeks to come.

I strive to provide everyone with "air time". *Be forewarned that raising your hand and speaking in class just for the sake of saying something without actually providing insightful comments will lower your mark rather than increase it.* Furthermore, you should always maintain a critical and analytical stance, but ALWAYS respectful. Students should note that grades on written work will be based on clarity of presentation as well as content. I will provide more information on written assignments in the weeks to come. Alas, given the size of my classes, I regret that I cannot read drafts of written assignments. I do, however, encourage you to ask your peers to provide feedback and proofread your papers, particularly if English is not your native language.

Attendance:

As stated in the UBC Academic Calendar, "*Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes.*"

Regular attendance at lectures is expected. In evaluating examinations and assignments, I will assume that students are familiar not only with assigned reading but also with all material discussed in class. Since I try to use an interactive lecturing style, your fellow students will make many insightful remarks, for which you are also responsible. You should not assume that "getting the powerpoint notes" is a substitute for attending lectures. **Students who have tried to rely on PowerPoint® notes alone in the past have been very disappointed with their marks in the course!**

I normally make announcements concerning deadlines, assignments, and the like at the beginning of class. Similarly, handouts concerning assignments and projects are distributed at the beginning of lectures. If you miss class or arrive late, it is your responsibility to catch up on such information. Students who cannot attend class also remain responsible for the content of lectures. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on notes and readings, though if the content still remains unclear, do not hesitate to come and see me.

Email communications:

I will respond to student emails sent to my email account, pachecoh@interchange.ubc.ca. I usually take 24-48 hours to respond to email. Please make sure that you begin the Subject heading with the key **[POLI-350A]**. That allows me to sort out which messages are specific to the class. Also, PLEASE DON'T SEND ME ATTACHMENTS to my UBC email address. For attachments, you should e-mail raul.pachecovega@gmail.com

If you don't include the POLI 350A heading, there is a chance that my spam filter may block Hotmail, Yahoo or GMail addresses. To prevent this, please clearly mark your email subjects. If there's an assignment due date or an exam coming up, you'll need to figure out your questions early enough to make sure my response is timely. I won't be responding to students' last-minute messages the night before an assignment is due! Please check the course website and with fellow students concerning recent announcements before sending me an email query. If you have a more substantive question or a personal matter you wish to discuss, please come and see me during office hours or make an appointment to see me at another time if you have a conflict during office hours.

Finally, in sending me email, **please don't forget that I'm your professor**. I'd appreciate if you would treat email correspondence with as much seriousness as you would any other written work you submit to me. In other words, use actual sentences, punctuation, and proper grammar (within reason of course – we all make a spelling error here and there in our email messages). Be polite and courteous. No, “Hey prof” or “Hey Raul” doesn't cut it. *It's Dr. Pacheco-Vega or Professor Pacheco-Vega*. And don't forget to sign your name, which is often far from obvious from email addresses!

Course Withdrawal:

Last date for withdrawal without a W on your transcript: January 17th, 2011

Last date for withdrawal with a W instead of an F on your transcript: February 11th, 2011

Academic Accommodation:

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments should not assume they will receive accommodation though they are welcome to approach me individually.

Late assignments:

Late assignments will be penalized 2% per weekday. The date a paper will be considered received will be the later of the date that I receive a hard copy and the date an identical version is submitted to Turnitin (see below). I only accept assignments during class and regularly scheduled office hours. Given that, you should thus bear in mind that there can be up to 3 days between opportunities to submit your paper (ie., from Thursday class till Tuesday class). I do not grant deadline extensions for reasons related to academic workload. However, if you encounter medical or personal problems, please contact me **before the deadline**. Academic concessions are discussed on the 2010/11 UBC Calendar.

Scaling:

Marks in this course may be scaled (see Calendar, under Grading Practices). If scaling is required, it will be carried out after each assignment, so that students will know where they stand going into the final examination. If scaling is done on the final examination, students will be informed if they ask to review their examination according to the usual policy.

Academic Integrity:

Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic regulations” for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without giving them due credit. Students should be aware that even if material is widely available via the internet it is still plagiarism to cut and paste it into their work without appropriate attribution. If the words are those of the original source, it is not enough to just cite the source. You must indicate with quotation marks which words were drawn from that source. Students should also note that it is not sufficient to merely change a word or two in each sentence. If a reasonable person reading both your text and the original text would recognize the sentence, paragraph, or passage as originating from the original source, it is still plagiarism.

Plagiarism is considered the ultimate academic offense; as such, the penalties for plagiarism are severe. Students who plagiarize may face expulsion from the university. Further information on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it is available on the Faculty of Arts' web page at http://www.arts.ubc.ca/Plagiarism_Avoided.373.0.html. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this material. However, if after reading it you are still not sure what you should cite and how, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification.

All students will be required to submit any form of written assignments in electronic form to TurnItIn.

You will not receive credit for your essay unless it is submitted to TurnItIn. The same late penalty day will apply to submitting your paper to TurnItIn as for the hard copy (2% per day). This does not mean that a student who has not yet handed in either their hard copy or electronic copy to TurnItIn will incur a double penalty of 6% per day (2% per hard copy + 2% for TurnItIn). However, the late penalty will be assessed based on that last one submitted.

Students should retain a copy of all rough notes and research (for term papers, prospecti and regime analyses), submitted assignments (in case of loss), and all their marked assignments until their mark is finalized or until an application for Review of Assigned Standing has been processed (whichever is later). Students have the right to view their marked final papers with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

Tutoring:

Students are encouraged to read and edit each other's work. Editing a peer's writing is not only useful to your fellow student but is also one of the best ways to improve one's own writing. However, the papers you submit must be your own original work, and also must not have been submitted whole or in part in any other course. In accordance with university regulations and academic conventions, you must do the research and write the papers yourself.

Class Schedule and List of Readings

(Note: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus – if I do make any changes, I'll notify you in advance)

January 4th: Course Overview

January 6th: Defining public policy and public policy analysis.

Simeon, R. (1976). "Studying Public Policy." Canadian Journal of Political Science 9(4): 548-580. (E-journal)

Schwindt, R. and A. R. Vining (2003). "A Policy Analysis of the BC Salmon Fishery." Canadian Public Policy 29(3): 73-94. Available from the CPP website.
<http://economics.ca/cgi/jab?journal=cpp&view=v29n1/CPpv29n1p073.pdf>

January 11th: Thinking beyond geographical boundaries: Geography and public policy

Martin, R. (2001) "Geography and public policy: the case of the missing agenda" Progress in Human Geography 25(2):189-210
<http://geography.fullerton.edu/550/public%20policy.pdf>

January 13th: Theories of the policy process I: The policy regime framework.

Hoberg, G. (2002). Policy Cycles and Policy Regimes: A Framework For Studying Policy Change. In Search of Sustainability: British Columbia Forest Policy in the 1990s. B. Cashore, G. Hoberg, M. Howlett, J. Rayner and J. Wilson. Vancouver, Canada, UBC Press: 1-30. Chapter 1. Available online from the UBC Vista site for POLI 350A.

January 18th: Theories of the policy process II: Rational choice.

Sabatier, P. A. (1991). "Toward Better Theories of the Policy Process." PS: Political Science and Politics 24(2): 147-156.

January 20th: Theories of the policy process III: New institutionalism

Hall, P. and R. C. R. Taylor (1996). "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." Political Studies 44(5): 936-957.

January 25th: Theories of the policy process IV: Constructivism.

Schneider, A. and H. Ingram (1993). "The Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." American Political Science Review 87(2): 334-347.

January 27th: Theories of the policy process V: Feminism and public policy (Guest Lecture by Dr. Janni Aragon, University of Victoria)

February 1st: Efficiency, equity

Stone, D. (1988). Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making. New York, NY, Norton. Chapter 2, "Equity" AND Chapter 3, "Efficiency" (I'll scan these chapters and upload them to Vista)

February 3rd: Market failure

Brander, J. (1995). *Government Policy Towards Business*. Toronto, ON, Wiley. Read pages 13-47. (I'll scan these pages on to Vista)

February 8: Collective action and public policy.

Ostrom, E. (2000) "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14(3):137-158

February 10th: Public policy analysis I: Using the Bardach Eight Steps

Bardach, E. (2004). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eighthfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly Press.

I will be giving you an individual policy problem for 48 hour turnaround. Even if it's outside school hours, you should be submitting your policy analysis electronically.

February 15th and 17th – READING WEEK – enjoy your break!

February 22nd. Transportation policy problems – Meeting with Translink.

February 24th. Urban, homelessness, social policy problems – Meeting with City of Vancouver

March 1st. Regional development, waste management, drinking water policy problems – Meeting with Metro Vancouver

March 3rd. The policy cycle – from agenda-setting to policy formulation.

Kamieniecki, S. (2000). "Testing Alternative Theories of Agenda Setting: Forest Policy Change in British Columbia, Canada." *Policy Studies Journal* 28(1): 176-189.

Schneider, A. and H. Ingram (1990). "Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools." *Journal of Politics* 52(2): 510-529

March 8th. Federalism, races to the bottom and provincial interdependence

Harrison, K. (2005). *Follow the Leader and Dominoes: Games that Provinces Play in Tobacco Taxation. Racing to the Bottom? Provincial Interdependence in the Canadian Federation*. K. Harrison. Vancouver, BC, UBC Press: 73-112.

March 10th: Beyond traditional policy analysis: The comparative method

Mackie, T. and D. Marsh (1995). *The Comparative Method. Theory and Methods in Political Science*. D. Marsh and G. Stoker. New York, St. Martin's Press: 173-188. (Reading packet)

Lambright, W. H., S. A. Chjangnon, et al. (1996). "Urban Reactions to the Global Warming Issue: Agenda-Setting in Toronto and Chicago." *Climatic Change* 34(3/4): 463-478.

March 15th: Instrument choice and evaluation of policy styles

Howlett, M. (1991). "Policy Instruments, Policy Styles, and Policy Implementation: National Approaches to Theories of Instrument Choice." *Policy Studies Journal* 19(2): 1-21.

March 17th : Beyond traditional policy analysis: Policy learning, policy transfer and policy convergence

Dolowitz, D. P. and D. Marsh (1996). "Who Learns What from Whom: A Review of the Policy Transfer Literature." *Political Studies* 44(2): 343-357

March 22nd through April 5th – Presentations on policy problems/solutions.

Apr 7th Last lecture of the term – depending on how we're doing with the presentations, there might be presentations this day too.