



University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

PS 321: American Public Policy

Fall 2023

About your Professor:

Dr. Amber Lusvardi
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Pronouns: She/her/hers

Find me:

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<https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/>

About this class:

American Public Policy
PS 321
3 credit hours
When: TR 1:20-2:50 p.m.
Where: Sage 2221

“Can I ask you a question?” ↓

About Student Hours:

My student hours are time set aside specifically for you. We can discuss course content, any barriers you are facing, or broader questions about political science. I highly encourage students use this available time to discuss their class progress or college journey. If you are not available during my office hours, please let me know and I can accommodate you.

Student Hours 🕒

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays (Fox) and 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Thursday (Oshkosh) in person (preferred) or via Teams





Struggling? Find me!
On Canvas
Via E-mail
In person: Sage
4619 (Osh), M1502
(Fox)

Mental Health Help:
uwosh.edu/counseling
Call/Text: 888- 531-2142
Emergency: Text 988

The best predictor of student success is **class attendance.**

Check Canvas:
Announcements
Messages
Rubrics
Prompts
Readings



Course Description from Catalog

An examination of some of the major political issues facing American society today, including the environment, criminal justice issues, equality, education, and health care politics. The issue of how public policy is made in this country will also be examined in some detail.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Critically and professionally analyze major areas of public policy in the United States
- Understand the legislative and bureaucratic factors impacting the development of public policy
- Effectively communicate, verbally and in writing, high quality policy arguments
- Understand the role of non-institutional influences on public policy
- Demonstrate complex problem-solving ability in relation to pressing social issues

Strategies for Success

- ✓ Check your Canvas page regularly for dates, grades, and assignments.
- ✓ Class attendance is the greatest predictor of academic success in college (Crede, Roche, and Kieszczyńska 2010). I count on your attendance as a valued member of this class. If you are not attending class regularly, I will reach out to you for an office hours meeting.

Required textbook

None. All readings will be provided via Canvas.

Assessment

Advocacy toolkit portfolio (160 total, breakdown below): Throughout the semester, you will work on a project that will put you in the position of expert/advocate. What is an unaddressed domestic policy issue you feel passionate about? You are going to create the resources to build your advocacy community and create awareness. Your final project will be a toolkit that will include a flyer, presentation, five targeted social media posts, and reference sheet. (Projects by ES students should focus on an environmental (broadly defined) policy issue).

Issue proposal (10): Submit a proposal of the issue you think needs to be addressed. It should be something specific (ex. Vehicle emissions in Wisconsin v. climate change). What do you think needs to be done? What group of people do you think you could target to grow your coalition? Due Sept. 22

Annotated bibliography (25): An annotated list of 10 sources you will be using to build your toolkit. At least six of these need to be peer reviewed sources. Due Oct. 13

Flyer (50): You will create a one- to two-page creatively designed flyer meant to spread information and grow the audience for your issue. What do people need to know? What is persuasive? How can you draw people in to get more involved? Submitted for feedback Oct. 20, final Nov. 10.

Presentation with transcript (35): Pretend you will be presenting to a local civic group of your choosing. Create a presentation you would give to this group and write out a transcript of what you would say. If you would rather, you can record a video of yourself giving the presentation.

Targeted social media posts (20): You will create five social media posts (social media site of your choosing) that you believe would gather momentum for your movement. To consider: who is your target audience? How

would you best reach that audience? Should your appeal be fact-based? Or should it be a persuasive/emotional appeal? Due Dec. 1

Final pitch (20): In the last week of class, you will take your materials to make a five-minute pitch to your classmates to join your movement.

Annotation of readings (100): You have one or two readings assigned each week that will be posted on your Canvas page. Each week, you will write comments and questions on the readings through Canvas annotations. Your annotations are worth 10 points each week and are expected to be turned in on time.

Extended quizzes (3 x 25): We will have three essay quizzes completed via Canvas to assess what information and themes you have taken from the course. I will drop your lowest quiz grade. If you miss a quiz, that will be your dropped grade. Quizzes: Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7

Simulation participation (50): We will be doing the Isle of Ted environmental policy simulation with the assistance of Dr. Janel Jett on Oct. 12 and Oct. 17. This simulation focuses on how groups deal with common pool resources. We will consider how regulatory policy might relate to common goods. Your attendance and participation is important to help your team defeat pirates and become the wealthiest group on the island.

Simulation reflection (40): You will receive a prompt to complete in response to the simulation and your understanding of the complexity of regulating common pool resources.

Final Reflection (30): This final assignment will ask you to evaluate your own learning over the course of the semester. To consider: What are the most important concepts you learned this semester? How do they help you understand the social world? What is something you did that you are proud of?

Grading Scale

Your final grades are calculated by points earned/total points.

100-97 - A+
97-94 - A
93-90 - A
89-87 - B+
84-86 - B
80-83 - B
79-77 - C+
76-74 - C
73-70 - C
69-67 - D+
66-64 - D
63-60 - D
59 and below - failing

Course schedule

All readings will be posted on Canvas.

Sept. 7: Introduction to the class and policy process

Sept. 12, 14: Types of policy, pathways to policy

Readings:

Birkland, Chapter 1, Introduction to the Policy Process

Cochran, Clark E. et al. American Public Policy, An Introduction, 8th Ed. Chapter 1.

Section 1: Morality Policy

Sept. 19, 21: Smoking policy

Readings:

Pacheco, Julianna, and Graeme Boushey. 2014. "Public Health and Agenda Setting: Determinants of State Attention to Tobacco and Vaccines." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law*.

Additional discussions: research and design for projects

Sept. 26, 28: Marriage equality

Readings:

Beigel, S. 2018. "Marriage Equality and its Aftermath." *The Right to be Out: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in America's Public Schools*, 2nd ed. University of Minnesota Press.

Kowal, John F. "The Improbable Victory of Marriage Equality." Brennan Center.

Oct. 3, 5: Reproductive Justice

Readings:

Norrander, Barbara, and Clyde Wilcox. 2005. "Public Opinion and Policymaking in the States: The Case of Post-Roe Abortion Policy." *Policy Studies Journal* 27(4): 707-722

Kreitzer, Rebecca. 2015. "Politics and Morality in State Abortion Policy." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 15(1): 41-66

Extended quiz 1 Oct. 5

Section 2: Environmental Policy

Oct. 10, 12: Common pool resources

Reading:

Oct. 10 -- Battersby, Stephen. 2017. "Can Humankind Escape the Tragedy of the Commons?" *PNAS* 114(1): 7-10

Oct. 12 – Isle of Ted Simulation Day 1

Oct 17, 19: Common pool resources

Oct. 17: Isle of Ted simulation Day 2

Oct. 19: Reading:

Hardin, G. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons: The Population Problem has no Technical Solution; it Requires a Fundamental extension in Morality." *Science* 162(3859): 1243-1248.

Oct. 24, 26: Addressing environmental issues

Readings:

Maniates, Michael F. 2001. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" *Global Environmental Politics*

Vig, Norman J., Michael E. Kraft, and Barry G. Rabe. "US Environmental Policy." *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, 11th Edition. Sage.

Section 3: Inequality Policy

Oct. 31, Nov. 2: Poverty

Desmond, Matthew. "Why Work Doesn't Work Anymore." *New York Times Magazine*.

Desmond, Matthew. "Why is Poverty in America so Intractable?" *New York Times Magazine*.

Nov. 2 -Extended quiz 2

Nov. 7, 9: Segregation

Reading:

McGhee, Heather. 2021. Chapter 2. *The Sum of Us*.

Cottom, Tressie McMillan. 2019. Chapter--Know Your Whites. *Thick: And Other Essays*.

Nov. 14, 16: Paid family leave

Reading:

Boling, Pat. 2015. Chapter--Why the United States Cannot be like Sweden. *The Politics of Work-Family Policies*.

Nov. 21: Reading day

Section 4: Education Policy

Nov. 28, 30: School Funding

Reading/Listening:

Chingos, Matthew M., and Kristin Blagg. 2017. "Do Poor Kids Get Their Fair Share of School Funding?" Urban Institute

Schooled. "A Tale of Two Schools." NPR Podcasts. <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/536825550/schooled>

Dec. 5, 7: High Stakes Testing

Point/Counterpoint – No Child Left Behind – Journal of Policy Analysis and Management – Ladd and Jacob
Jacob, Brain. "The Changing Role of the Federal Government in School Accountability."

Ladd, Helen F. "No Child Left Behind, a Deeply Flawed Policy."

Dec. 7 – Extended Quiz 3

Dec. 12, 14: Presentation week

Note: If substantive changes are made in course syllabus, such as changes in schedule or assignments, notification will be provided in a timely manner and a revised syllabus made available

All About YOU

bell hooks writes in *Teaching to Transgress*, “The professor must genuinely value everyone’s presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources” (8). In this spirit, I affirm that without exception every person is a valued member of this class. Your experience and contribution as a member of this class is important to me. If you are experiencing barriers that are preventing you from being a fully present member of this group, please come speak to me.

All About Others

The scholar Brené Brown says (paraphrased) that we cannot understand other people’s point of view by pretending to walk in their shoes. This is insufficient because we are only imagining what they have experienced. It is better to actually listen to other people. Listen to them and believe them about their experiences. This is where understanding begins.

On Language

Each person in this course is a valued member of the group and you should feel free to share your experiences as they are relevant to this class. No student in this class is ever expected or believed to speak for all members of a group. Do be thoughtful and inclusive in your language when adding to class discussion.

What About My Technology?

You will never be required to bring a laptop or tablet to class. I discourage students from the use of laptops or tablets in my courses due to the extensive research that shows it to be a hindrance to learning and a distraction to classmates (see Dontre 2020). It is your choice whether to use your laptop/tablet while we are taking notes, but it

should be stowed away at other times. As engagement and discussion are important, please refrain from wearing headphones during class.

In other words: *Hi! Don’t be the problem.*

Note to Poli Sci Majors

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. Political Science 245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently. If you are currently a political science major or if you think you will be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. If you have questions, please see me or any faculty member after class.

Student Right to Know

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990:

<https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>

Disability Statement:

This course is for all UWO students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that could negatively impact one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space or content of this course, please contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I am happy to discuss how to best accommodate you. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessibility Center in Dempsey Hall 215 or at accessibilitycenter@uwosh.edu for further assistance.

Caregiver statement:

I recognize that some of you may be caregivers to others (siblings, children, partners, parents, etc.) and that places an added consideration to your availability. If you are a caregiver, please reach out to me if there are additional ways that I can support you.

Grievance Statement:

The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. Tracy Slagter. She can be reached at slagtert@uwosh.edu. Should he be unable to resolve your concerns, he will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

Academic Honesty

A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Graded assignments are designed to work on these items. Thus, to gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence of a college-educated person all graded work is to be your own. When you are directed to work alone, an assignment or test must be done by you, its primary ideas are to be your own, and any outside

materials should be dealt with properly (quoted when using someone's words, and cited when quoting or referencing them in any other way). When your teacher directs you to work in teams, the work is to be done by the team.

Artificial Intelligence statement

Increasingly the use of AI programs such as ChatGPT are used to assist in generating ideas and responding to writing and editing prompts. However, the goal of our course is to be intellectually curious and grow our writing and critical thinking skills. As such, I expect anything written for class to be generated by you from the idea stage to the writing stage.

Course Prerequisites:

None – this course is open to students at any level and in all majors and is the first in a series of introductory courses in Political Science.

Mental Health Support

The Counseling Center is available to you 24/7. The Counseling Center at Fox Cities is in room 1848 in person every Wednesday. Counseling services are available at other times 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. through telehealth, make an appointment at 920-424-2061. After hours, call 920-424-2061 and choose option 2 or text 1-888-531-2142. You can chat with a counselor through uwosh.edu/counseling. Winnebago County Crisis Mental Health can be reached at 920-233-7707