

**CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY  
MAXINE GOODMAN LEVIN SCHOOL OF URBAN AFFAIRS,  
LEVIN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION**

**UST 458: URBAN POLICY  
WRITING ACROSS CURRICULUM COURSE**

**COURSE OUTLINE  
FALL 2023**

<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Valencia Prentice	<b>Course Format:</b>	Online Delivery
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:v.prentice@csuohio.edu">v.prentice@csuohio.edu</a>	<b>Virtual Office Hours:</b>	W 1:30pm - 3:30pm

**Course Description**

In this course you will learn about the public policymaking process in the United States. What is public policy? Why do we need it? Why do we end up with the policies we do? Why do we not end up with better policies? These questions will be examined with emphasis on the urban context.

This course approaches these questions from the perspective that policymaking involves a struggle between problem solving and politics. U.S. policymakers at various levels of government face an array of demanding problems, for example, economic instability, failing schools, social unrest, and environmental degradation. From one perspective, these issues are problems to be solved. Policymakers must define and measure the problems, determine goals, and develop effective action plans. From another perspective, these policy issues are political, confronting policymakers with a unique set of hurdles. While policymaking experience is torn between problem solving and politics, in the end, some mixture of the two processes prevails, whether in the form of new policy or gridlock and inaction.

To examine these processes and the conflict inherent in them, we will use two approaches. First, with the help of Kraft's and Furlong's *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*, we will learn about concepts and theories of policymaking. As you have probably gathered, the policy process is complicated in ways that cannot be fully appreciated with basic accounts of "how a bill becomes a law." These theories of policymaking attempt to unpack the process.

Secondly, we will analyze the substance of public policy issues relevant to cities in the United States. With the help of CQ Researcher's, *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy*, we explore salient policy issues in the areas of social welfare, education, healthcare, and other urban issues. We draw upon these analyses for class discussion and written assignments.

### **Course Objectives**

This course focuses on developing skills in critical thinking and writing ability. At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the reasoning for government action on public policy issues.
- Describe the process of public policy formulation, and the complexity of issues and challenges associated with it.
- Describe the internal and external influences on the policy process and discuss how the influences affect policy outcomes.
- Utilize the internet, public documents, academic journals and scholarly literature to conduct research about public policy issues.
- Produce written deliverables that demonstrate critical thought about public policy issues.

### **Required Textbooks**

Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives, Seventh Edition by Kraft and Furlong.

A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving, Sixth Edition.

### **Course Requirements**

Grades in this course will be awarded based on your performance during the semester. The grade is determined entirely by a student's scores on the midterm exam, quizzes, policy analyses, discussion board posts, and the term paper proposal and final draft.

#### ***Course Grading Breakdown:***

Discussion Board Posts (4)	20%
Policy Analyses (3)	15%
Midterm Exam (1)	20%
Quizzes (2)	10%
Term paper proposal	5%
Term Paper	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Discussion Board Posts**

To help stimulate interest and facilitate discussion in the course, students are required to answer questions related to the readings. Responses are expected to be no less than 150 words - roughly the length of a full paragraph. Discussion posts require evidence of mastery of written communication skills, including, but not limited to, organization, clarity, grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation, and persuasiveness.

### **Policy Analyses**

There will be THREE (3) policy analysis assignments for this course. Each policy analysis is based on the assigned readings and should be 2 - 3-pages (500-750 words) in length. The policy analyses are designed to both develop analytical and written communication skills. The specific requirements for each assignment may vary and will be presented separately.

### **Midterm Exam**

There will be ONE (1) exam for this course, which is the midterm exam. The exam will be based on the reading materials, the video lectures and the class discussions. The midterm exam will be open book, but students are encouraged to prepare, especially given the time constraint. The specific format will be communicated prior to the exam date.

### **Term Paper**

This is a Writing Across Curriculum class. Therefore, a major paper is a component of this course. This final writing assignment is a policy proposal in which students identify and describe a problem (e.g. why is this a problem? What caused the problem?), provide a potential solution or solutions (e.g. what are the goals and values you are trying to work toward? How will this policy meet those goals and fix the problem? What are potential drawbacks?), and discuss the ways in which someone might work to enact this policy (e.g. what levels of government could you target? Which actors? What choices have you made that will make allies/enemies? What strategies could be used to promote your proposal's passage?). Details on this assignment will be provided separately.

The final paper will be between 2200 and 3000 words (roughly, 8-10 pages). A term paper proposal will be submitted during Week 4. The specific requirements for the proposal will be presented separately.

### ***Final Grade Determination***

Final grades are assigned based on the following grade scale: 92.5 - 100 → A; 90 - 92.5 → A-; 87.5 - 90 → B+; 82.5 - 87.5 → B; 80 - 82.5 B-; 77.5 - 80 → C+; 70 - 77.5 → C; 60 - 70 → D; below 60 → F.

### ***Incomplete Grade***

A grade of "Incomplete" is only granted to students who have legitimate excuses or crises, and who make requests prior to the end of the course.

An "I" grade can be assigned by the instructor when **all three** of the following conditions are met:

1. The student is regularly attending/participating in the class and has the potential to pass the course.
2. The student has not completed all assignments and has stopped attending/participating for reasons deemed justified by the instructor.
3. The student has made the request for an “Incomplete” prior to the end of the course.

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

### **Blackboard**

Blackboard is a primary source of teaching/reading materials and means of communication between you and the instructor for this course. You will find the course syllabus, required readings, assignments, and lecture notes on the Blackboard site. You will submit your assignments, quizzes, and exams to Blackboard. More importantly, students are expected to check Blackboard frequently for course announcements and materials.

### **Late Homework and Extra Work**

Late submission is strongly discouraged. Late homework will be penalized unless the student has a legitimate excuse or crisis causing the delay in completing work (i.e., illness, family death etc.) You will lose 5% of your total score if you submit within 48 hours after the deadline. You will lose 10% of your total score if you submit beyond 48 hours after the deadline. Your assignment will not be accepted beyond 7 days of the deadline with no legitimate reasons or no communication with the instructor. Please email the instructor BEFORE the deadline to request any accommodation to waive the late policy.

In most cases, I do not allow students to do extra work (i.e., an additional paper) to improve their grade in the course. This is not fair to other students who are not given the same opportunity.

### **The Learning Environment**

The instructor is strongly committed to maintaining a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Please give the professor and your classmates the same respect students have the right to expect. The instructor expects students to always be respectful of others in our space. Students do not necessarily have to agree, but students do have to respect the public space and its dialogue. The instructor will not tolerate abuse or insult of any individuals or groups. It is the instructor's right and responsibility to inform students when there is a violation of the rights of others to a respectful, focused class environment.

### **Original Work and Plagiarism**

This class encourages students to work together; therefore, working together where it is clearly indicated is entirely appropriate. However, if you are preparing a written product that will be submitted for evaluation, that product is expected to be the result of your work alone. Where questionable situations arise, always ask the instructor for clarification.

Submitting another person's work as your own is considered plagiarism and will be dealt with according to CSU's Academic Misconduct Policy. Also, students must cite their sources where relevant. Failure to use proper citation is also considered plagiarism.

As CSU's guidelines on academic honesty will be enforced in this course, you should familiarize yourself with the policy which can be found at the following website:

(<https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/3344-21-02.pdf>).

### **Technical Assistance**

For technical assistance with the online Blackboard system, contact [CSU Technical Support](#). Please contact the professor for questions about the material, assignments, or any other concern pertaining to the course material. Email is the best way to reach me. I am always available for questions, suggestions, or other discussions related to your educational goals.

## **ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES AT CSU**

CSU offers several free academic and personal support services. These services are helpful if students encounter academic and personal challenges.

[CSU Tutoring and Academic Success Center](#) (TASC). TASC offers free academic support for all undergraduate students at CSU. TASC uses research-based strategies and approaches for learning to help students achieve their academic goals and ultimately to graduate. TASC does this in an informal, student-centered environment that assists students to not only achieve academically but to also socially integrate into college life.

[The CSU Writing Center](#). Writing is an important skill for all students, teachers and professionals of every kind. As a student at Cleveland State University, you will find that classes in every discipline use writing to help students explore, create and communicate ideas. Student writing can take many forms, from lab reports to research papers, group projects to journal entries.

[CSU Counseling and Academic Success Clinic](#) (CASC). The Counseling & Academic Success Clinic is a free, confidential, supportive counseling and coaching center available to students of Cleveland State University. The clinic provides support and guidance in navigating the typical concerns of today's busy college student. CASC seeks to provide excellent care, guided by identifying the unique strengths of each student, while supporting the development and utilization of positive coping skills to enhance and promote both personal and academic success.

[Lift Up Vikes! Resource Center and Food Pantry](#). Lift Up Vikes! offers a convenient, dignified, and compassionate process through which CSU students are connected to resources that supplement nutrition and other basic human needs as they strive to earn a college degree.

[The CSU Community Assessment Response and Evaluation \(CARE\) Team](#). The goal of the CARE Team is to work collaboratively to support the wellbeing and safety of students, faculty, and staff, and to promote a culture on campus that encourages reporting of concerns. Care

Management may be useful if:

- You want to know more about support services offered at the university.
- You would like information on how to connect with medical and mental healthcare providers.
- You would like to withdraw from your classes for personal or medical reasons and want more information on your options.
- You are feeling stressed about school and finding it difficult to cope.
- Your life outside of the classroom has become more difficult to manage.
- You are feeling overwhelmed and want to find help, but you're not sure where to start.

### **Students with Academic Accommodations**

Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) at (216) 687-2015. The Office is located in MC 147. Accommodations need to be requested *in advance* and will not be granted retroactively. If you have an Accommodation Memo from ODS or would like to discuss another special circumstance, please make an appointment with me to discuss your situation.

### **Statement from the CSU Office of Institutional Equity**

Federal law, including *Title IX*, and University policy require that CSU address discrimination, harassment and sexual violence, and enable students affected by these issues to have the same opportunity to succeed as other students. To do this, the [CSU Office for Institutional Equity \(OIE\)](#) provides information, identifies resources (counseling, medical, advocacy, safety planning), issues academic accommodations (excused absences, extended deadlines, late withdrawals, alternative assignments) and other accommodations (No Contact Directives, changing living arrangements). Any student affected by discrimination, harassment and/or sexual violence and seeking assistance, should contact the Office for Institutional Equity by calling 216-687-2223, sending an email to [OIE@csuohio.edu](mailto:OIE@csuohio.edu) or visiting the CSU Administration Center, 2300 Euclid Ave., Room 236.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule as needed.

Week	Date	Topic	Tasks	Due Dates
1	Week of August 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course Introduction</li> <li>Public Policy and Politics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View Introduction Video</li> <li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 1 (pg. 1 - 19)</li> <li>View Video Lecture 1</li> <li><b>Discussion board introductions</b></li> </ul>	September 5
2	Week of September 4	Why it is Hard to Make Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Wheelan Chapter 2</li> <li>View Video Lecture 2</li> <li><b>Discussion board posts</b></li> </ul>	September 11
3	Week of September 11	Understanding Individual Behavior – The Rational Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Wheelan Chapter 3</li> <li>View Video Lecture 3</li> <li><b>Research Proposal</b></li> </ul>	October 9
4	Week of September 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding Group Behavior – Collective Action</li> <li>The Reason for Government Involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Wheelan Chapter 4</li> <li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 1 (pg. 20 - 30)</li> <li>View Video Lecture 4</li> <li>Read CQ Researcher Article</li> <li><b>Policy Analysis 1</b></li> </ul>	October 2
5	Week of September 25	Government and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 2</li> <li>View Video Lecture 5</li> <li><b>Discussion board posts</b></li> </ul>	October 2
6	Week of October 2	Policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 3</li> <li>View Video Lecture 6</li> <li>(Read Bardach Part 1)</li> <li><b>Quiz 1</b></li> </ul>	October 9
7	Week of October 9	Introduction to Policy Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 4</li> <li>View Video Lecture 7</li> </ul>	
<b>Midterm Due October 22</b> (Covers Weeks 1 - 8 material)				
9	Week of October 23	Public Problems and Assessments of Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 5</li> <li>View Video Lecture</li> <li><b>Discussion board posts</b></li> </ul>	October 30

Week	Date	Topic	Tasks	Due Dates
10	Week of October 30	Analytical Approach to Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 6</li><li>View Video Lecture 9</li><li>Read CQ Researcher Article</li><li><b>Policy Analysis 2</b></li></ul>	November 13
11	Week of November 6	Economic and Budgetary Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 7</li><li>View Video Lecture 10</li></ul>	
12	Week of November 13	Welfare and Social Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 9</li><li>View Video Lecture 11</li><li>Read CQ Researcher Article</li><li><b>Policy Analysis 3</b></li></ul>	December 4
13	Week of November 20	Education Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 10</li><li>View Video Lecture 12</li><li><b>Discussion board posts</b></li></ul>	November 27
14	Week of November 27	Policy Choices and Their Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Read Kraft et al. Chapter 13</li><li>View Video Lecture</li><li><b>Quiz 2</b></li></ul>	December 4
15	Week of December 4	Term Paper Work Week		
16	Week of December 11	Term Paper Due		