SMPP 8331 Doctoral Seminar in Business-and-Public Policy, Fall 2013
Department of Strategic Management and Public Policy,
The George Washington University

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Class Times: Wednesdays 12:45-3:15, Monroe B33
Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-6:30 p.m. or by appointment

OBJECTIVES
The relationship between business and public policymaking is one of the most critical for business competitiveness and more generally for the prosperity of nations. The main objective of this doctoral seminar is to provide students with the ability to critically evaluate the different streams of the business-and-public policy literature. The seminar also seeks to help students to design sound theory-based research projects for the study of business-and-public policy questions.

FORMAT
Class sessions will be discussion-based and everybody is expected to actively participate. Therefore, students are required not only to complete the readings before class but also be ready to critique them.

GRADING
(1) Class Participation: 20%
(2) Exams: 40%
(3) Research project: 40%
- Statement of Research Problem/Journal Literature/References 3%
- Detailed Outline of Research Problem/Question 7%
- Research Methods for Your Project 10%
- Full Proposal 10%
- Project presentations: 10%

COURSE MATERIALS
Readings:
All assigned journal articles will be provided by the professor.

Books to buy:


**RESEARCH PROJECT**
Throughout the semester you will work on preparing a research proposal. Your proposal can be focused on any business-and-public policy research question –mutually agreed upon with the professor- and does not have to be your dissertation topic. The assignments are geared toward helping you through the process of preparing a dissertation proposal. The goal of the project is to get you to focus on how to design a sound research project.

1. Your first assignment is to identify a research problem, its related questions, and the appropriate journals and other relevant resources that will aid in your review of the literature. *(3 pages maximum, due on Oct. 5)*

2. Your second assignment is to write a paper outlining your research problem, contextualizing and justifying it in the extant literature and identifying salient variables and hypotheses. *(8 pages maximum, due on Oct. 26)*

3. Your third assignment is to identify the appropriate research methods for your research problem. *(4 pages maximum, due on Nov. 16)*

4. You will also be required to prepare a presentation of your proposed research. *(Due on the last three weeks of class: Nov. 23 to Dec. 7)*

5. Finally, your fifth assignment is to hand in a full research proposal that incorporates the feedback from students and professor. *(15 pages maximum, due on Dec. 7)*

*Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided well in advance during the semester.*

**GRADING SCALE**
The following scale distribution will be used to determine all your grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.0% - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0% - 93.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.0% - 89.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0% - 83.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.0% - 73.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60.0% - 69.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.9% and below</td>
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**CLASS PARTICIPATION**
Your active class participation is critical for producing a rich learning environment. The evaluation of participation includes a variety of factors such as:
• Reading the assigned material: The amount of reading for this course is significantly large. All students are required to read all the material for each day.
• Class discussions: Actively and constructively engaging in class deliberations and group activities.
• Attendance: Everyone is expected to be on time and attend all classes. Students missing more than three classes will earn an “F” for participation.
• Courtesy: All students are expected to be respectful and courteous to other class members. This includes turning off cell phones and refraining from checking email/surfing the Internet on any electronic devise.

The participation grade will be determined based on these criteria and I will provide mid-term feedback to each student (see evaluation of participation guide at the end of this syllabus).

EXAMS:
At the beginning of each class, students will be required to write a short essay responding to a question that tests their knowledge of the readings as well as their ability to integrate and criticize them. These essays are excellent preparation for your future comprehensive exams.

COURSE CALENDAR: TOPICS AND READINGS
Week 1. Introduction to the course


Week 2. The public policy process I: Main theoretical views

Week 3. Public policy making II: Multiple streams theory

Week 4. Overview of perspectives on business-and-public policy


**Weeks 5. Traditional views on business-and-public policy**


Other suggested readings:


**Week 6. Behavioral perspectives I**

**First research proposal assignment due today.**


Optional:

Weeks 7.. Behavioral perspectives II


Oetzel, J. & Oh, C.H. 2014. Learning to carry the cat by the tail: Firm experience,

Week. 8. Neo-institutional theory perspectives I
Second research proposal assignment due today.


Other recommended reading:

**Week 9. Neo-institutional theory perspectives II**


Other recommended reading:


**Week 10. Political science perspectives on business-and-public policy:**

**Third research assignment due today.**

1. Examine in detail the tables and graphs available on the website of the Center for Responsive Politics at: [http://www.opensecrets.org/](http://www.opensecrets.org/)
   - In particular look at the Influence & Lobbying section of the website

**Readings:**

Other recommended reading:


**Weeks 11. Nov. 23. Student research presentations (or “bonus topic”)**

**Weeks 12. Nov. 30. Student research presentations**

**Weeks 13. Dec. 7. Student research presentations**
**Fourth research proposal assignment due today.**
Evaluation of participation in class

“The majority of class time will be devoted to discussion of the assigned and readings. Class participation is evaluated on quality rather than quantity. Comments need not mirror the position of the readings or the professor. You are graded not on the “correctness” of your position, but rather on your analysis of the material and your ability to articulate your ideas. You don’t have to be at the center of every debate, but students who make little or no effort to enter discussions will receive a lower participation grade. Discussion will become lively, heated even. Always respect the positions of others. When you disagree with someone, be sure to criticize the idea and not the person. Participation will be graded according to the following criteria:

A
The student in this grade range arrives in class each day thoroughly prepared with comments and questions on the assigned reading. Comments reveal that the student has read carefully; this student occasionally initiates the discussion without waiting for the professor to do so. This student does not, however, try to dominate the class, but listens carefully to the remarks made by fellow class members, and responds as readily to these as to the instructor’s questions.

B
The student in this grade range participates in most discussions, although not as fully or reliably as the student described above. There is evidence of having done the reading. This student pays attention to the comments of the other students.

C
The student in this grade range participates only intermittently, and is more willing to discuss broad, general questions than to engage in concrete analysis of an assigned text. Sometimes unprepared, this student lacks interest in the ideas of other members of the class, neglects to bring the proper text to class, and is often inattentive.

D
The student in this grade range seldom if ever participates.

F
Missing more than 2 class sessions without a legitimate excuse.”

Things that lower your participation grade:
* Missing class
* Talking to your neighbor or holding conversations separate from the class discussion
* Not paying attention in class
* A ringing cellphone, checking email or surfing the internet.

1 Source: University Honors Program. Social Science Seminar Semester #1 Model Syllabus, Fall 2008.