Course Objectives

The four central aims for this course are to improve students’…

1. understanding of normative theory: How are different alternative ethical frameworks used to rationalize public policies?

2. understanding of positive theory: How do political forces (identities, interests and institutions) determine the types of public policies that actually occur?

3. application of policy theories: How are the theoretical ideas discussed in the class used to support real policy positions?

4. ability to engage in civic discourse: Can students participate intelligently in three vital areas?: a) critical reading; b) persuasive writing; c) public speaking

Pre-Requisites

As noted in the University Catalogue, the pre-requisites for this class are:

- Econ 110: Economic Principles and Problems
- PLSC 110: American Government and Politics
- PLSC 200: Political Inquiry

(Concurrent enrollment in Econ 110 and PLSC 110 are acceptable to satisfy the pre-requisite, but students must have completed PSLC 200 prior to enrollment in this course).
Required Texts

I have tried to select texts that 1) are very high quality and 2) won’t break your budget. I have also tried to make sure that we read enough of each text to justify its purchase. The required texts are:

   ISBN13: 9780195335125


Additional Required Readings

Throughout the Course there will be other required readings. These will all be available on Blackboard. Some of these will be research articles and book chapters put up well in advance of the due date, but some will be analysis of and opinion on current policy topics, which means it may be posted only a day or two before class (these will typically be short, and I will always give you at least 12 hours advance warning).

Course Requirements:
(Weights for grading are given in parentheses)

Reading Responses (15%):

There is a reading assignment for every session of the course, and for each session you must complete a written “Reader Response.” For each session, you will respond to a few questions based on your readings. The following policies apply to the Reader Response assignments:

- All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard.
- Assignments are due at 3 pm on the day the assigned reading is due.
- No late assignments will be accepted.
- To get full credit, the reader response must be at least 250 words.
- Reader responses are not intended to be well-crafted essays, but they should be thoughtful and reasonably well-written (spelling and grammar must exceed “text-message quality”). The following grades will be given:
  - 2: Good Enough (or better!)
  - 1: Not So Good (or incomplete)
  - 0: Lousy
- You may drop your two lowest scores.
- I will not provide individual feedback on your Reader Response’s. However, after each session, I will post a few of the best quality responses on Blackboard for the class to read.
Students who distinguish themselves on the Reader Responses will receive bonus points on the course exams.

**Persuasive Essays (20%)**

During the term we will write 4 short essays. These are expected to be highly polished short essays. Sloppy, hastily written and poorly constructed arguments will not receive high grades. A grading rubric for the essays is provided on Blackboard.

The following policies apply:

- Each essay must be submitted on Blackboard
- Each essay must be between 800 and 1,200 words.
- Late papers will be assigned a penalty of 5% each calendar day they are late up to a total of a 30% reduction. After that, no additional penalties will be assessed.
- No late papers will be accepted after midnight on the last day of class, except with prior approval for reasons such as serious illness.
- One of the papers can be re-written for a higher grade

Specific assignments for essays will be provided. The due dates are:

- Essay 1: Jan. 15, noon
- Essay 2: Feb. 4, 5pm
- Essay 3: Mar. 3, 3pm
- Essay 4: Mar. 17, 3pm
- Re-write: April 7, 3pm

The “re-write” assignment provides you with the opportunity to improve your grade on one of the essays. This re-write is not required.

**Policy Brief (15%)**

A policy brief is a document whose purpose is to provide the rationale for taking a particular course of action. Your assignment is to write a convincing brief on a policy issue of your choice. The brief should be concise (2,000-2,500 words), highly professional, and effective. It should be both intellectually and visually appealing—something that an intelligent person would want to pick up and read if she stumbled across it.

Briefs are due on March 31. More information on policy briefs, including grading criteria and examples are found on Blackboard.

**Civic Discourse**

As noted above, improving our civic discourse is a major aim of the course. We practice this in the classroom. Class time will be devoted to discussion, group activities and presentations and writing exercises. Grades in civic discourse will consist of the following four areas:

1) **Class Discussion (5%)**: This happens two ways. First, you are expected to participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Second, you are expected to participate in on-line discussion forums that will be available on Blackboard.
**iClicker:** All students will be required to have an iClicker that we will use for a variety of purposes in class. You can obtain an iClicker from the Bookstore. Remember to bring your iClicker to class each day.

3) **In-Class Assignments and Quizzes (5%):** On some days we will do in-class written assignments based on the topics we have been reading about and discussing in class. On other days we will have short quizzes (you will need your iClicker to take the quiz) on readings, including newspaper readings. **No scores will be dropped.**

**Exams**

There will be a midterm and a final exam:

- Midterm Exam (15%): **February 17-23, Testing Center & Take Home**
- Final Exam (25%): **Wednesday, April 20, 11am – 2pm.**

*You are responsible for knowing the hours and policies of the Testing Center.* Also, per university policy, **NO EARLY FINAL EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.**

**Grades**

I will assign grades according to the standard scale (A: 95%+; A-: 90-94%; B+: 87-89%, B: 83-86%, etc.) based on the course requirements listed above. I anticipate that grades will be approximately normally distributed. It is very likely that I will “curve up” the grades (meaning you will get a better grade than your raw percentage entitles you too). I will not “curve down” the grades. This means, for example, if you get 88% you are guaranteed at least a B+, but you may get a higher grade depending on the curve.

**Managing the Workload**

**Time Management**

I value your time. There is a lot of work in this class, but hopefully no busywork. I always appreciate student input on how class-time and out-of-class-time can be used more effectively.

The *BYU Undergraduate Catalogue* says, “The expectation for undergraduate courses is three hours of work per week per credit hour for the average student who is appropriately prepared; much more time may be required to achieve excellence.” The Catalogue also states that “excellence” is required to achieve an *A* grade in the course. Given that this is a 3-credit course taken on the block, **you should be prepared to spend at least 9 hours per week outside of class.** Because there is tremendous variation in the intellectual preparation and background of students, some students may do well with less effort, while some will require significantly more.

My estimation of how you will need to allocate this outside class time is as follows (for an average week):

- Reading: 4 hours (2 hours per session, including newspaper reading)
Reader Responses: 1 hour (1/2 hour per session)
Writing Papers: 3 hours per week
Studying Material: 1 hour per week

Again, these are average

Strategies for success:

- **Always read before class.** The productivity of class discussion—both for you and for other students—is greatly reduced if you are not prepared.
- **Review readings immediately following class.** Class discussion will help you see what you read in a different light.
- **Take notes in class.** The act of writing something down makes it more likely you will remember it. Some class notes will be made available to you electronically, but these shouldn’t be a substitute for taking your own notes. Keep in mind, your instructor often says brilliant and insightful things that are not on any of the Powerpoint slides.
- **Start papers early.** Writing is better if you have time to think in between your writing sessions. All-nighters rarely produce good papers.
- **Get feedback on your writing.** Read each others papers. Visit the FHSS Writing Center for help. Talk with your instructor.
- **Review your class notes regularly.** Regular study is far more effective and efficient than cramming—and you might actually remember something after you take the exam.
- **Utilize office hours.** I’m here to help. Please come see me.
- **Study with classmates.** As long as you don’t spend too much time flirting or watching You-Tube together, study groups can be very effective means of helping one another master the material.

University Policies

**Sexual Harassment:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 378-2847.

*Students with disabilities:* Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (378-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB.
Reading Schedule:

The concepts you are expected to master in this course will be covered in readings and lectures. Be advised, however, that some important ideas will be covered only in the readings. Similarly, we will discuss some ideas in class that are not covered explicitly in the readings. I know that some people prefer to learn by reading, others by listening. However, part of being an educated person is developing both skills.

In your readings, try not to get bogged down in details; instead try to identify the authors’ central arguments. Ask yourself questions such as: “What is the author trying to convince me of? and “What kind of evidence does the author provide to support his claims?”

As with most of the theory courses in the Political Science Department, there is a lot of reading in this course. I have tried to spread the reading out, but some days will be harder than others. Also, some readings will be more challenging than others. Fortunately, two of the main texts (by Wheelan and Ridley) are very well written books and the ideas in those should be very accessible to you without too much difficulty.

The following acronyms indicate where the reading can be found:

- JUSTICE: Justice: A Reader, Edited by Michael Sandel
- WHEELAN: Introduction to Public Policy, by Charles Wheelan
- RIDLEY: The Rational Optimist, by Matt Ridley
- OTHER: Other readings (Blackboard)

PART 1: Making Policy in a Complex World: An Overview

Session 1 (Tues., Jan. 4): What is Good Public Policy and How Does it Happen?
WHEELAN (pp. 3-31), Ch. 1: “Public decision making”
RIDLEY (pp. 1-10), Prologue: “When ideas have sex.”

Session 2 (Thurs., Jan. 6): The Intellectual Challenges of Policy Analysis
WHEELAN (pp. 32-68), Ch. 2: “Why is it so hard to make the world a better place?”
RIDLEY (pp. 11-46), Ch. 1: “A better today: the unprecedented present.”

PART 2: Human Nature and Human Flourishing

Session 3 (Tues., Jan 11): The Natural Man: The Evolution of Homo Economicus
WHEELAN (pp. 69-85), Ch. 3.1-3.2: “Understanding behavior: rational man and woman”
RIDLEY (pp. 47-84) “Chapter 2: “The collective brain: exchange and specialization after 200,000 years ago.”
**Session 4 (Thurs., Jan. 13): Man’s Search for Happiness**

JUSTICE (pp.9-14): Bentham, “Morals and Legislation.”
JUSTICE (pp. 14-31): Mill, Chapters 1-3 in “Utilitarianism”

**Session 5 (Tues., Jan 18): Humans as Political Animals**

WHEELAN (pp. 106-138), Ch. 4: “Understanding group behavior: collective action.”

**Session 6 (Thurs., Jan. 20): Humans as Moral Animals**

JUSTICE (pp.295-299): Aristotle, Book II, Ch. 1-3. “Moral Virtue” from *Nichomachean Ethics*
RIDLEY (pp.85-120), “Chapter 3: The manufacture of virtue: barter, trust and rules after 50,000 years ago.”

**Session 7 (Tues., Jan. 25): Our Divine Nature**

OTHER: David A. Bednar, “Ye are the Temple of God,” *Ensign* (Sept. 2001).
OTHER: C.S. Lewis, Book 1 from *Mere Christianity* (pp.3-32)

**Session 8 (Thurs., Jan. 27): Empirical Indicators of Human Welfare**

WHEELAN, Ch. 5.1 (pp. 139-149) “Measuring Social Welfare.”

**PART 3: Freedom and Equality**

**Session 9 (Tues., Feb. 1): Classical Liberalism**

JUSTICE (pp.84-87, 90-96): John Locke, Chapters 1, 2, & 5, *Second Treatise on Government.*
JUSTICE (pp.49-60): Milton and Rose Friedman: “Created Equal” from *Free to Choose*
JUSTICE (pp. 73-82): Friedrich A. Hayek: “Equality, Value and Merit” from *The Constitution of Liberty*

**Session 10 (Thurs., Feb. 3): Freedom and Autonomy:**

**Session 11: (Tues., Feb. 8) : Contemporary Views on Freedom**

**Session 12: (Thurs., Feb. 10): Equality**

**Part 4: Justice**

WHEELAN (pp. 214-249): “Ch. 7: The Market System”
RIDLEY, Ch. 5 (pp. 157-190), “The triumph of cities: trade after 5,000 years ago.”
OTHER (pp. 3-64) [Optional]: Amartya Sen, “Introduction,” *Rationality and Freedom*.

**Session 14: (Tues., Mar. 1) Markets, Economic Freedom and Justice, Part 2**
WHEELAN (pp. 250-290): “Ch. 8: The Role of Government”
JUSTICE (pp. 35-47): John Stuart Mill "Chapter V.: On the Connection between Justice and Utility." from *Utilitarianism*
JUSTICE (pp. 60-73): Robert Nozick, “Distributive Justice,” from *Anarchy, State and Utopia*
OTHER (pp. 170-79) [Optional]: Friedrich Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Selections), University of Chicago Press, 1944.
Session 15 (Thurs., Mar. 3): Egalitarian Conceptions of Justice
WHEELAN, Ch. 5-2-5.6 (pp. 150-174), “Evaluating Social Welfare”
OTHER (pp. 54-86): Amartya Sen, “Freedom and the Foundation of Justice” from Development as Freedom.

Session 16 (Tues., Mar. 8): Rawls’ Liberal Defense of an Egalitarian State

Session 17 (Thurs., Mar. 10): Virtue and Justice:

Session 18 (Tues., Mar. 15) Communitarianism and Justice
JUSTICE (p. 315-327): Alasdair MacIntyre, Selections from After Virtue
JUSTICE (pp. 335-342): Michael Walzer, Selections from Spheres of Justice:
JUSTICE (pp. 328-334): Michael Sandel, Selections from Democracy’s Discontent

Part 5: Collective Action

WHEELAN, Ch. 6: The Political Process
OTHER (pp. 136-54): Hinich and Munger, “Ch. 7: The Voting Decision and Collective Action,” Analytical Politics (Cambridge, 1997).

Session 20 (Tues., Mar. 22): Interest Group Politics
OTHER: James Madison, “Federalist 10.”
OTHER: David Truman, The Governmental Process (Selections), (Knopf, 1951).

Session 21 (Thurs., Mar. 24): Elite Leadership in a Democracy
Session 22 (Tues., Mar. 29): Setting the Agenda


PART 6: Policy Analysis

Session 23 (Thurs. Mar. 31): Policy Design

WHEELAN (pp. 511-547: “Ch. 15: Policy Design.”

Session 24 (Tues, April 5): Incorporating Risk

WHEELAN, Ch. 3.3-3.7 (pp. 85-105), “Understanding behavior: rational man and woman.”

RIDLEY, Ch. 9 (pp. 279-312), “Turning points: pessimism after 1900.”


Session 25 (Thurs., April 7): Pragmatism in Policy Analysis:


JUSTICE (pp. 359-77): Michael Sandel, Selections from Political Liberalism.

Session 26 (Tues., April 12): The Future of Public Policy

RIDLEY, Ch. 10 (pp. 313-348), “The two great pessimisms of today: Africa and climate after 2010.”

RIDLEY, Ch. 11 (pp. 349-359), “The catallaxy: rational optimism about 2100.”