

POLS 2120-080: Introduction to Public Policy
Dr. Martha Kropf
University of North Carolina-Charlotte
Centra Meetings (on-line meetings) Tuesday afternoons, 2-3pm
Class platform: Blackboard Vista

Course Description: This course examines the formation, implementation, and evaluation of U.S. public policy. We will begin with a general understanding and overview of public policy. Next, we will look at the policy process and the players involved in the process. Finally, we will study policy implementation and evaluation. I should note that the language used in public policy is slightly different than used in Introduction to American Politics, as is the focus. But in many ways, there are similarities.

This is an exclusively on-line class (we have a Blackboard/Vista website which everyone can access via 49er Express), but with some limited interactive discussions with the professor. You must have internet access in order to complete the work in class, and must not be afraid to learn new programs (I learned the Centra program last year, so I assume you all can, too.). **If you are afraid of computers and/or do not have regular internet access, drop this class. You have been warned! ☺**

- We will do our tests and discussion through Blackboard. Your grades will be posted in Blackboard as well. Here is the link to access it:
<https://ncvista.blackboard.com/webct/entryPage.dowebct>
- We will also be using the software Centra to interact once each week. Centa is licensed to UNCC so you do not have to buy special software for your computer. Here is the link to access it: (<http://centraone.uncc.edu>).

Several points are important:

1. You will need to buy a headphone/microphone set (just like you have to buy a book for class). They are available at any office supply store (\$15-25), but apparently, they are not available at Target or UNCC's bookstore.
2. Go to <http://centraone.uncc.edu> and practice with the very brief tutorials before class starts.
3. You should have received an email from Centra before class with your Centra password. If you do not have one, contact technical support.
4. When using Centra, *for the best results*, plan on using a hard-wired internet connection. Many of us have wireless technology, but it is my understanding that Centra works best when you actually connect to the internet.
5. Plan to be to "class" 10 or 15 minutes early. I'll be hanging around for mic checks, etc.
6. Please do not text on the public text to each other. Use it for questions or comments.
7. The first week we get together, I plan on using it as orientation time. After that, our weekly "class" will consist of class questions and current event presentations.

8. If you have technical problems with Centra or Blackboard/Vista, you should contact technical support: 704-687-4791 OR 1-877-396-8462. (If it is right before class, you should let me know you'll be late via email). You may also use on-line help if your problem occurs and you have time to solve it more slowly. Please be nice and remember that I am not responsible for technical problems with the system here at UNCC ☺. I understand such problems happen, and will do everything I can to minimize the effect on you.

Required Readings:

Anderson, James E. 2006. *Public Policymaking: An Introduction*. 6th Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Theodoulou, Shelia Z. and Matthew A. Cahn. 1995. *Public Policy: The Essential Readings* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Current Events

Suggested Readings:

Try to read at least one newspaper each day such as *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, or *The Christian Science Monitor*. You should have access to these papers on line.

Watch evening television newscasts, "The Jim Lehrer Newshour", CNN, and listen to National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered" (WFAE, 90.7).

Contacting the Professor:

I will not be in the office this summer, but working from home. You may expect a fairly quick response from me if you email me during the five weeks of class at mekropf@uncc.edu.

Grades:

Your final grade for the course will be based upon several assignments for a total of 500 points, as follows:

Current Events (4 current events, @25 points each): 100 points

Discussion Threads: 50 points

Participation: 50 points

Examinations (4 exams @50 points each): 200 points

Grades are assigned based on the following:

360-400: A

320-359: B

280-319: C

240-279: D

239 and below: F

Expectations and Assignments:

Class Attendance: Attendance at all five Centra sessions is expected. If you are unable to attend, you may play back the session and send me a brief (1-2 page) summary of what was discussed. That summary is due no later one week after the session.

Here is a description of the assignments:

Current Events (100 points total): Every Tuesday is current events day. I will expect you each to read and write a summary of a newspaper article or an internet site dealing with some aspect of politics or policy in which you are particularly interested. You will include a link to the relevant webpage with your summary. Please email me to turn in your assignment.

Every Tuesday after the first one, you may be randomly selected to summarize your article for the class and we will discuss the articles or internet site summaries as a class.

Discussion Threads (5@10 points each; 50 points total): During the course of the five weeks, I will post a discussion question once each week. I expect at least a paragraph in response to my question and trying to interact with each other. You will be expected to post five times during the five-week session (once each week). I will give you up to ten points for your participation in the discussion, so don't just write "[**Blah person**] is dumb." Or "Happy July 4."

Participation (5@10 points each; 50 points total): I expect you to "come" to class on Tuesdays. How will I know you are there? At various random points, I will ask you to raise your "hands" if you are there and then take them down. It requires action. I may also call on you to respond, which also takes action. If you do not raise your hand, then I will assume you are not there, unless you have briefly noted that you have "stepped out" which had better not be long.

I understand this is on-line and many of you are taking the class for the sake of flexibility. If you cannot attend (or I discover you are not there for the entire session), then I will expect a one-page summary of the class turned in to me via email. You can play back tapes of the session on Centra. I know there are technical problems, so you do have the option of the summary. I hope we will find this interaction helpful.

Examinations (50 points each; posted with one hour to complete)

Your exams are designed to test your competency in public policy. It should not come as a surprise that they are open book, open note. However, you will only have a limited amount of time to complete the exams, so I'd study, if I were you. Expect multiple choice, short answer, and true/false questions. I had some technical problems with matching questions last summer, but if I can figure them out, expect those too! You should also note that the exams will be posted for only a certain amount of time so that you are not trying to finish all the exams on the last day of class.

Late Policy:

The current events are due by the date listed on the schedule unless I indicate otherwise. I expect there will not be any late papers or assignments. However, if you feel you need more time on any given project you can have it, but you will lose five percentage points of the grade for that project each day that it is late (for example, instead of getting 90% of the points for the

assignment, you will only receive 85%). I want you to know I will leave this choice to you. Exceptions may be illness or family emergency, but I expect you to discuss these problems with me in advance. I reserve the right to ask for official documentation (i.e., a note from your doctor). If you are participating in an official university function (such as an athletic or student government event) or have an excused absence of some sort, you must let me know in advance of when you will be gone. **I expect such assignments to be turned in before you leave for your event, or late points will be subtracted as usual (commencing the day the paper is late whether that is when you are gone or not).**

Final Notes

1. If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services in the beginning of the semester. For more information regarding accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 704-687-4355 or stop by their office in 230 Fretwell". Please know that I will bend over backwards to work with you.
2. Students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. This code forbids cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submissions of academic work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Any special requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor, and are binding on the students. Academic evaluations in this course include a judgment that the student's work is free from academic dishonesty of any type; and grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. Students who violate the code can be expelled from UNC Charlotte. The normal penalty for a first offense is zero credit on the work involving dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases the course grade is reduced to F. Copies of the code can be obtained from the Dean of Students Office. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor.
3. It is my personal policy that there will be no discrimination on the basis of racial, religious, or ethnic background, or on the basis of gender. You will be evaluated solely on the quality of your work.

Class Outline (July 6-August 11):

1. What is Public Policy?

Anderson, Chapter 1

Theodoulou & Cahn, Chapter 1, 2, 3 & 11

Examine “What is Public Policy?”—Powerpoint posted on Blackboard

2. The Policy Environment

Anderson, Chapter 2

Theodoulou and Cahn, Chapters 7-10 and Chapter 22

Examine: “The Policy Environment” Powerpoint posted on Blackboard

Test 1: Take it no later than July 14

3. Problem Definition

Anderson, Chapter 3, pp. 80-86

T & C, Chapter 12

The Politics of Problem Definition, Chapter 1 (posted on Blackboard)

4. The Policy Process: Agenda Setting

Anderson, Chapter 3, pp.86-116

T&C, Chapters 13-15, 25-26

Test 2: Take it no later than July 21

5. The Policy Process: Policy Adoption

Anderson, Chapter 4

T&C, Chapters 23-24; 35-36

Brooker and Schaefer, Chapter 12 (posted on Blackboard)

6. The Policy Process: Budgeting

Anderson, Chapter 5

T&C, Chapter 21

Test 3: Take it no later than July 28

7. The Policy Process: Bureaucracy and Policy Implementation

Anderson, Chapter 6

T&C, Chapter 27-29

8. The Policy Process: The Courts and Policy Implementation

T&C, Chapters 30-31

9. Policy Impact, Evaluation and Change

Anderson, Chapter 7

T&C, Chapters 19-20

Test 4: Take it no later than August 11.