SYLLABUS
Fall 2013

POLS 3342.001
T 4:20 – 6:50
EN 107
Fall 2013
361-825-2387

Instructor: Dr. Jo Marie Rios
Office: BH 3.02
Office Hours: MW 12 – 2 pm; T 3:15 – 4:15 pm
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Introduction to Public Policy

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will survey the policy process in the United States. The course will examine factors affecting development, implementation and impact of public policies as well as a discussion of policy alternatives and controversies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The objectives of this course are to analyze the process by which laws are made. Inherent in this process are problems of values, interests, and a democratic polity. The central theme of this course is that public policies foster social change. Toward this end, this course will analyze and assess substantive policy areas primarily at the national level.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Specifically, the objectives of this course are:

- To assess the American political system and policy structure.
- To recognize the role of the policy cycle as it relates to substantive policy areas.
- To develop critical thinking skills in order to analyze current policies.
- To debate salient policy issues through the use of presentations of substantive policy areas.
- To evaluate a substantive policy area and develop of policy research paper.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The requirements for this course include: two exams, presentation of a policy issue area, a policy research paper, and a final exam. The grade distribution is described below:

Exam 1 15%
Exam 2 15%
Issue area presentation 15%
In-class activities 10%
Policy research paper 30%
Final exam 15%

You are expected to come prepared for class and to make thoughtful contributions in class. Since we will be discussing numerous controversial issues, you should respect opposing opinions and use them to reflect on why people hold different views. You will also participate in numerous activities during class which will be graded.

GRADING STRUCTURE
A = 90 – 100  
B = 80 – 89  
C = 70 – 79  
D= 60 – 69  
F = below 60

POLICY RESEARCH PAPERS:

You will be required to write a policy research paper in this course. These papers will be based on the debate presented in the CQ Researcher, the Cochran text and the videos. You must cite your references using the APA format. The paper must be 9 - 11 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. Guidelines will be provided about the expectations for these papers.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS:
As a member of a small group, you will present one of the issue areas presented below. Guidelines will be provided.

**Class Attendance:**
All students are expected to attend EVERY class. The major valid excuses for missing a class are illness and death. Notes and grades are available through Blackboard.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of F.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. _____. 2013 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Classroom/professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Academic Etiquette:**

There are certain rules that apply to my classes. It is difficult to learn in an environment that is not conducive to learning. Such activities include: talking to neighbors during class, reading newspapers, walking in late, napping, walking out of class prior to being dismissed. It is disrespectful to me and to the class. If you do not abide by these rules, you will be asked to leave my class. **Please turn off your cell phones during my class.**

**Incomplete:**
A grade of incomplete will be given only for extreme emergencies and will necessitate appropriate documentation. You must request a grade of “incomplete” and sign a form agreeing to the terms for a grade of I. However, you must have completed 75% of the coursework.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities:* The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

***Grade Appeal Process.* As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
PROVISIONAL
COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1:
Introduction and the nature of public policy
  • Syllabus presentation
  • Overview

Weeks 2 – 3:
The structure of policy making
  • Policy structure
  • Tools of Public Policy
Cochran, et al., Chapter 1; handouts

Week 4:  Exam 1  October 1\(^{st}\)

Weeks 5 – 6:
The public policy process
Actors in the policy process
  • Institutional Framework
  • Stages of the policy process
Cochran, et.al., Chapter 2; handouts

Week 7:  Library day

Week 8:  Exam 2  October 29\(^{th}\)

Week 9:
Crime and Criminal Justice
Cochran, et al., Chapter 6
Video
Presentation on issue area (group) and debate
Week 10:
   Energy and the Environment
   Cochran, et al.  Chapter 5
   CQ Researcher, Chapter 3
   Video
   Presentation on issue area (group) and debate

Week 11:
   Health Care
   Cochran, et al. Chapter 8
   CQ Researcher, Chapter 15
   Video
   Presentation on issue area (group) and debate

Weeks 12:
   Education
   Cochran, et al. Chapter 9
   CQ Researcher, Chapter 9
   Video
   Presentation on issue area (group) and debate

Week 13:
   Poverty and Social Welfare Policy
   Cochran, et al. Chapter 7
   CQ Researcher, Chapter 13
   Video
   Presentation on issue area (group) and debate

Week 14:
   Immigration
   Cochran, et al., Chapter 11
   CQ Researcher, Chapter 14
   Video
   Presentation on issue area (group) and debate
Research paper due December 3, 2013

Last Day of Class – December 10th

FINAL EXAM   December 17th, 4:30 p.m.