

EOL 577
Public Policy in Higher Education

Educational Organization and Leadership
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Instructor: Debra D. Bragg, Professor
Office: 343 Education & 121 Children's Research Center
Email: dbragg@uiuc.edu
Phone: 333-2155 & 244-8974
Hours: Prior to class on, 3-4 pm Tuesday

Course Texts:

Sabatier, P. A. (2007). *Theories of the policy process* (2nd edition). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Shaw, K. M., & Heller, D. E. (Eds.) (2007). *State postsecondary education research: New methods to inform policy and practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Stone, D. (2001). *Policy paradox: The art of political decision making* (Revised Edition). New York: W.W. Norton.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual*. 5th ed. Washington, DC: author. (Some formatting info can be found by searching websites by the *APA publication style manual*.)

Course Description:

The *Public Policy in Higher Education* course introduces students to formal and informal policy making and policy implementation in the public arena, focusing primarily on how federal and state legislative policies are adopted, implemented and researched at the state and local institutional levels. Because the course focuses on multiple theories and theoretical frameworks, the course makes a concerted effort to connect theory to practice by exploring current policy issues and introducing students to the literature, formal legislation, and engaging them in an dialogue with their peers, higher education leaders, and policy makers and policy analysts. Active instructional activities give students the opportunity to connect theory to practice, and see how higher education leaders implement federal and state policies that are integral to institutional policy and practice.

Goals:

The primary aim of the course is to increase student understanding of contemporary public policy issues in higher education, the implications of alternative policy choices, and the processes of policy advocacy, adoption, implementation, and evaluation/research.

Students will gain an understanding of the interaction and tension about higher education at the local, state and federal levels.

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Grasp the range of public policy issues that are associated with the systems of higher education in the United States.
2. Understand selected theories of policy making in the United States.
3. Become a literate reader of policy literature in higher education.
4. Understand the methods used to study policy.
5. Articulate the political processes that constrain and facilitate policy making and policy implementation.
6. Discuss the difficulties of policy implementation and various strategies for avoiding pitfalls.
7. Demonstrate an in-depth grasp of at least one contemporary policy issue in higher education.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation. The quality of your class participation is worth 20% of your final grade.

Students are considered a co-owner of this class and collectively responsible for its quality and outcomes. The instructor takes responsibility for the overall design and direction of the course and for the academic requirements, but the course will be facilitated as a seminar or inquiry in which all participants hold themselves and each other accountable for a strong and rich intellectual enterprise and dialogue. Your attendance is essential to a successful collective experience.

The format of this class requires that each person come prepared to take an active role in class. This means not only having read the assigned materials, but also being prepared to discuss the salient issues, questions, and problems emerging from the readings, to utilize your knowledge and professional experiences in addressing the readings and any class activities, case problems, etc. Class participation also involves opening oneself to challenge and to be challenged by the ideas and topics of the session.

Please notify Dr. Bragg by email in advance if you are unable to attend any class session. Students who miss the equivalent to four or more regular class sessions (the equivalent to 16 hours of instructor or one weekend of cohort course) will fail the course. All missed classes need to be reconciled through the completion of comparable assignments, and these arrangements must be made with the instructor prior to the missed class time.

Memos. Students will write three 2-4 page memos (single-spaced) (e.g., address concern to public official, e.g., governor, college president, board of trustee, state senator, state agency executive) addressing policy issues and integrating relevant readings from the course. This assignment provides an opportunity for students to create an authentic dialogue by applying the readings and course content to current policy issues. One memo prepared by each student will be discussed in class based on a schedule agreed upon by instructor and students in the beginning of the course. Memos should be emailed to the instructor by 5pm on the Sunday night prior to class. (10% for each paper – 30% of your final grade.)

Policy body observation. Students will prepare an observation of an active policy-making or governance body. This assignment gives students the opportunity to observe firsthand how an official governmental body operates. Students are expected to investigate the history, purpose, and membership of the group in preparation for the observation. Public policy issues under discussion should be documented and set into the larger context of this course. Like the memos, a schedule for sharing policy body observations will be agreed upon by instructor and students in first class. Observations should be emailed to the instructor by 5pm on the Sunday night prior to class presentation. (15% of your final grade.)

Final Paper/Project. The intent of the final project is to give you a chance to conduct your own analysis of a policy issue related to a public policy integral to higher education that is of interest to you. There are a number of possibilities for the format of this project, including research paper, case study, or a policy evaluation. This paper will be approximately 20-25 pages (double-spaced), including references. The instructor will provide you with feedback throughout the process. (This final paper is worth 35% of the final grade).

1. A brief description of the topic will be due in class **Tuesday, September 30.**
2. An outline of the major aspects of the paper is due **Tuesday, October 21.** Students should not change their paper topic after this time.
3. An initial draft of the paper is due **Tuesday, November 18.** Papers will be reviewed by the instructor and returned to students for finalizing.
4. The final paper should be submitted no later than **Tuesday, December 9.**

Optional Book Review and Critique. Students can gain extra credit (equivalent to 10% of the final grade) by reviewing and critiquing a text that deals with public policy or public policy analysis. Students who are interested in pursuing this assignment should present a proposal to the instructor (including text and submission date) before carrying out the book review/critique. Assignments will not be graded and given credit without prior approval.

Selected publications and scholarly journals pertaining to higher education:

Community College Journal
Chronicle of Higher Education

Community College Review
Community College Times
Community College Week
Community College Quarterly of Research & Practice
Higher Education Quarterly (British)
Innovative Higher Education
Journal of Applied Research in the Community College
Journal of Higher Education
Journal of Career-Technical Education Research
Journal of Career and Technical Education
New Directions for Community Colleges
New Directions for Higher Education
New Directions for Institutional Research
Research in Higher Education
Review of Higher Education

Grading/Evaluation Policy

The grading/evaluation policy for this course is consistent with UIUC policy. The final grade will be determined by each student's performance on all assignments and class participation. All assignments must be a student's own original research and writing for this course. Papers completed for other courses are not considered original to this course and will be given a failing grade. On the other hand, papers that allow students to continue to build an area of expertise are encouraged as long as students submit original work. Students are encouraged to discuss ideas with the instructor so that strategies can be devised to meet student needs at the same time course expectations are met.

All assignments and examinations are due at the beginning of the class session for which they are assigned. Late papers will not be accepted without prior approval. It is essential that students notify the instructor as soon as any special circumstances arise that could interfere with the timely completion of assignments. Even with prior approval, the instructor reserves the right to lower grades in accordance with the tardiness of the late assignments (e.g., assignments 1 week late may be lowered at least 1 letter grade; 2 weeks late may result in a lowering of the grade by at least two letter grades, etc.)

Academic Integrity Policy

Every student is expected to comply with the academic integrity policy of UIUC and is held accountable for compliance to the policy as stated on UIUC campus website at: http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/article_1/a1_1-401.html. It is critical that students read and understand the UIUC academic integrity policy, as stipulated in the campus code. The policy also clearly stipulates a graduate student's rights in the event he or she is charged with misconduct or some violation of University regulations.

DRAFT

**EOL 577, Public Policy in Higher Education
Course Roadmap**

Aug. 26 – Course Overview

Sept. 2 – How Legislative Process & the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008;

Assignment:

1. Search the web and find a good resource on how federal laws are made. Good options include:
 - <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>
 - http://www.house.gov/house/Tying_it_all.shtml
 - http://www.congresslink.org/print_basics_lawsmade.htm
 - http://clerkkids.house.gov/laws/bill_begin.html
2. Go to the link of the Committee on Education and Labor of the U.S. House of Representatives and review carefully the text of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. You'll find the legislation at: <http://edlabor.house.gov/micro/coaa.shtml>
3. Find at least three additional news articles, editorials, critiques, etc. about the new higher education legislation. Bring the articles to class and be prepared to discuss what you believe to be the significance to the field of higher education.

Sept. 9 – The *Policy Paradox: Politics, Goals and the Spellings Commission Report*

Assignment:

1. Read the Introduction and Chapters 1-3 of the *Policy Paradox*
2. Read (or re-read) the Spelling's Commission Report titled, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education* at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/final-report.pdf>
3. Analyze the Spellings Commission Report, drawing on the assigned text in *Policy Paradox*. Pay particular attention to how the report addresses equity and efficiency (or not). Bring a list of ideas and questions to class to share with the group. Be prepared to challenge and be challenged!

Sept. 16 – The *Policy Paradox: Security and Liberty*

Assignment:

1. Read Chapters 4-5 of the *Policy Paradox*

2. Read (or re-read) the platforms of the presidential candidates of the two major political parties in the United States:
 - a. Democrats: http://marcambinder.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/08/obamas_democratic_platform_inc.php
 - b. Republicans: <http://www.gopplatform2008.com/thankyou.htm>
3. Compare and contrast the two platforms from the perspective of Chapters 1-5 addressing Goals of the *Policy Paradox*. Pay particular attention to how the platforms position education, especially higher education, and think about the ideas of equity, efficiency, security and liberty. Are these ideas addressed? How so? Bring a list of ideas and questions to class to share with the group. Again, be prepared to challenge and be challenged!

Sept. 23 - *The Policy Paradox*: Part III – Problems (Chapters 6-10)

Sept. 30- *The Policy Paradox*: Part IV – Solutions (Chapters 11-15)

Oct. 7 – *Theories of the Policy Process* – Introduction and Alternative Views (Chapters 1-2)

Oct. 14 - *Theories of the Policy Process* – Alternative Views (Chapters 3-4)

Oct. 21 - *Theories of the Policy Process* – Policy Networks and Subsystems (Chapters 5-7)

Oct. 28 - *Theories of the Policy Process* – Frameworks for Comparing Policies (Chapters 8-9)

Nov. 4 - *Theories of the Policy Process* – Conclusions (Chapters 10-11)

Nov. 11 – *State Postsecondary Education Research* – Chapters 1-3

Nov. 18 – *State Postsecondary Education Research* – Chapters 4-6

Dec. 2 – Final Paper/Project presentations

Dec. 9 – Final Paper/Project presentations and Wrap-up