Western University
Department of Political Science

**The Policy Process in Local Government**
Public Administration 9902B
Winter 2020

**Instructor:** Dr. Zack Taylor
**E-mail:** zack.taylor@uwo.ca
**Phone:** 519-661-2111 ext. 85169
**Office:** SSC 4166
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 3:30–4:00pm

**Time and Location:** Wednesdays, 4:30–6:30pm, SSC 4255

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**
Building on PA9901 Advanced Local Government, this course examines the scope and potential of Canadian municipal policymaking. We begin by examining the structural and institutional constraints on local policymaking before moving on to matters of process: how policy problems are identified, where solutions come from, how the public is engaged, and how policies are implemented and evaluated. These issues will be explored through examples.

**COURSE WEBSITE**
This course makes use of OWL. Please refer to the course website regularly for announcements and course information: [https://owl.uwo.ca/portal](https://owl.uwo.ca/portal).

**COURSE MATERIALS**
We will use a modestly priced textbook that can be purchased at the campus bookstore, or from popular on-line book retailers:


All readings from the Peters book are marked with a T in the reading schedule. Readings to be retrieved from publicly available websites are marked with a W. Readings marked with an E are electronic journal articles that can be retrieved through the Western Library website. All other readings are made available as PDFs on the course website.

You are encouraged to do as much reading as possible prior to the start of the course. You are also encouraged to print out posted case study packages so that you can refer to them in group discussion.
# SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Cases discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan. 8</td>
<td>Introduction to studying public policy: A design perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan. 15</td>
<td>The structural context: economic forces and ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>The institutional context: intergovernmental and internal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
<td>Defining policy problems <em>Introduce assignments</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5     | Feb. 5    | Interpreting the policy process                                       | 1. Emergency management in Sarnia  
2. Tower Renewal in Toronto  
3. Regulating pesticides |
| 6     | Feb. 12   | Framing problems and solutions *Outline due*                          | 1. Water privatization in Hamilton  
2. Urban densification |
|       |           | ** *** Feb. 17–21 is Reading Week ***                                |                                                                                 |
| 7     | Feb. 26   | Policy innovation and diffusion *Frame Analysis due*                  | 1. Tobacco control  
2. Smart Cities |
| 8     | Mar. 4    | Engaging the public                                                  | 1. TTC second exit policy in Toronto  
2. Atlanta 2020 visioning process |
| 9     | Mar. 11   | Instruments and implementation                                        | 1. Plastic bag regulation  
2. Back yard chickens  
3. Solid waste collection |
|       | Mar. 18   | ** *** Mar. 16–20 is March Break *** Submit draft Policy Analysis Assignment for peer review by March 20.** |                                                                                 |
| 10    | Mar. 25   | Evaluating public policies *Return peer review by March 25*          | 1. Municipal performance measurement  
2. User fees in Canadian cities |
| 11    | Apr. 1    | Concluding discussion: Is policy design possible?                     |                                                                                 |
|       | Apr. 8    | *Policy Analysis Assignment due*                                      |                                                                                 |

Note that in recognition of the family responsibilities of many of our mature students, no class will be held on March 18.
EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame analysis</td>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy analysis assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>Mar. 20</td>
<td>Required, but ungraded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>Apr. 8</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online quiz</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 quizzes x 2% = 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frame analysis (20%)**: You will select a case of a contested municipal policy problem or issue and develop a brief (1,500 word) analysis of alternative definitions or framings advanced by various actors in the case.

**Policy Analysis Assignment (60%)**: You will prepare a 15-page (approximately 3,500-word) paper aligned with one of the following options. To get you started, a **two-page outline** is due on Feb. 12. To receive additional feedback, you will submit a **draft paper for anonymous peer review** on March 20. The final paper is due April 8.

- **Option 1: Municipal policy case study**: Analyze a specific municipal policymaking process using theoretical perspectives on policymaking discussed in class. Working professionals are encouraged to draw on their own experience and access to information and data. For example, you could apply the multiple-streams model to the City of Toronto’s adoption of the plastic bag fee, or to the construction of border infrastructure in Windsor.
- **Option 2: Intergovernmental policy case study**: Analyze and evaluate the implementation or impact of a specific federal-municipal or provincial-municipal policy within a municipality of your choice. For example, you could examine how a municipality has made choices in the context of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, the Federal Gas Tax transfer, or in the context of provincial mandates and regulations.

**Online quiz (20%)**: You will complete 10 on-line quizzes designed to reinforce and evaluate your understanding of core concepts found in the readings and lecture. The quizzes are delivered through the OWL platform. Most questions are multiple choice, but some are paragraph-length short-answer-style questions. You may complete the quizzes without penalty at any time before midnight on the Sunday following each class, but it is recommended that you do them the same day. The quizzes will **not** cover the case study materials.
COURSE POLICIES

Electronic devices: Research shows that levels of student performance and participation are lower when computers, tablets, smartphones, and other devices are present in the classroom. In order to create a pleasant environment conducive to everyone’s learning and free from distractions, please refrain from using phones for texting or any other purposes during classes. The use of laptops and tablets is allowed for course-related activities and note taking only.

E-mail policy: All Western University students are required to have an @uwo.ca e-mail account. The instructor will only respond to e-mails sent from a Western University account, that clearly identify the sender, and have “PA9902” in the subject line. The instructor will not accept assignments by e-mail.

Submitting assignments: Written assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com). Note that you will be able to view your Turnitin Originality Report after submitting. You may resubmit at any time before the deadline.

Late assignments: The penalty for late assignments is two percentage points per day (including weekend days). A grade of 80% on an assignment therefore becomes 72% in four days. Assignments more than 10 days late will not be accepted. Extensions due to illness require a medical certificate. If you foresee problems meeting submission deadlines please consult the instructor early; accommodations can always be made with adequate advance notice. This means at least before the deadline, not the night before the work is due!

Academic integrity: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf
ASSISTANCE

If you are having trouble with the course material or are falling behind in your work, please contact the course instructor as soon as possible. We can only help you if the lines of communication are open.

Help with writing: Learning to express ideas clearly is a central goal of the university experience. If academic writing does not come easily to you, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Support Centre: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/.

Accommodations on medical grounds: Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Please refer to the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm and download a Student Medical Certificate (SMC): https://studentservices.uwo.ca/ under the Medical Documentation heading. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accommodations on religious grounds: Every effort has been made to avoid scheduling assignment due dates on religious holidays. Please inform the instructor at the beginning of the course if you will be unable to attend class for reason of religious observance.
READING SCHEDULE

**Class 1  Jan. 8  Introduction to studying public policy: A design perspective**


T Chapter 1, “Public Policy: A Design Perspective.”


**Class 2  Jan. 15  The structural context**


**Class 3  Jan. 22  The institutional context**


E Siegel, David. 2010. “The leadership role of the municipal chief administrative officer.” Canadian Public Administration 53(2): 139–61. (You’ve all read this before!)


**Class 4  Jan. 29  Defining policy problems**

T Chapter 2, “Policy Problems.”


**Class 5   Feb. 5   Interpreting the policymaking process**

T Chapter 3, “Models of Policymaking” *(all)*  
Chapter 4, “Agendas, Agenda-setting, and Framing.” pp. 66–78.

*Examples:*


**Class 6   Feb. 12   Framing problems and solutions**

T Chapter 4, “Agendas, Agenda-setting, and Framing.” Read pp. 76–78.


*Examples:*


Class 7  Feb. 26  Policy innovation and diffusion


Examples:


Additional materials distributed in class.

Class 8  Mar. 4  Engaging the public


Example: The Toronto Transit Commission’s Second Exit Project


Additional materials are on OWL.

Case Study: Atlanta 2020 visioning process

Class 9 Mar. 11 8. Instruments and implementation

T Chapter 5, “Designing Intervention and Implementation.”

T Chapter 6, “Policy Instruments.”


Example: Regulating plastic bags


Additional materials pertaining to Toronto’s plastic bag regulation are on OWL.

Example: Solid waste collection


Additional materials pertaining to Toronto’s experience with contracting out are on OWL.

Class 10 Mar. 25 Evaluating public policies

T Chapter 7, “Evaluating Public Policy: An Introduction.”

T Chapter 8, “Evaluating Public Policy: The Utilitarian Dimension.”

T Chapter 9 “Normative and Ethical Analysis of Public Policy.”

Example: Municipal performance management in Ontario

*Example: Comprehensive User Fee Review in Toronto*

Staff report dated 20120104 posted on OWL.

**Class 11  Apr. 1  Concluding discussion**

Chapter 10, “Conclusion: Policy Success and Failure.”