

Western University
Department of Political Science
The Policy Process in Local Government
Public Administration 9902B
Winter 2021

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Consultation: By Zoom – make an appointment!

Time and Location: Wednesdays, 4:30–6:30pm, on Zoom

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>.

COURSE MATERIALS

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

Peters, B. Guy. *Advanced Introduction to Public Policy*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2015.

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

Class	Date	Topic	Cases discussed
1	Jan. 13	Introduction to studying public policy: A design perspective	
2	Jan. 20	The structural context: economic forces and ideas	
3	Jan. 27	The institutional context: intergovernmental and internal	
4	Feb. 3	Defining policy problems <i>Introduce assignments</i>	
5	Feb. 10	Interpreting the policy process	1. Emergency management in Sarnia 2. Tower Renewal in Toronto 3. Regulating pesticides
<i>*** Feb. 15–18 is Reading Week ***</i>			
6	Feb. 24	Framing problems and solutions <i>Outline due</i>	1. Water privatization in Hamilton 2. Urban densification
7	Mar. 3	Policy innovation and diffusion <i>Frame Analysis due</i>	1. Tobacco control 2. Smart Cities
8	Mar. 10	Engaging the public	1. TTC second exit policy in Toronto 2. Atlanta 2020 visioning process
<i>*** Mar. 15–19 is March Break ***</i>			
9	Mar. 24	Instruments and implementation	1. Plastic bag regulation 2. Back yard chickens 3. Solid waste collection
10	Mar. 31	Evaluating public policies	1. Municipal performance measurement 2. User fees in Canadian cities
11	Apr. 7	Concluding discussion: Is policy design possible?	
	Apr. 14	<i>Policy Analysis Assignment due</i>	

Note that in recognition of the family responsibilities of many of our mature students, no class will be held on March 17, which falls on London-area public and Catholic schools' March Break.

EVALUATION

Evaluation	Due Date	Value
Frame analysis	March 3	20%
Policy analysis assignment		
Outline	Feb. 24	10%
Final paper	Apr. 14	50%
Online quiz		10 quizzes x 2% = 20%

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. 24. The final paper is due April 14.

- *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

Draft only: Reading list (beyond the required textbook) and assignment values subject to change.

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. 13 Introduction to studying public policy: A design perspective

Wolman, Harold, assisted by Robert McManmon. 2012. Ch. 21, “What Cities Do: How Much Does Urban Policy Matter?” In Karen Mossberger, Susan E. Clarke, and Peter John, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics*. Toronto: Oxford UP. pp. 415–441.

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

E Howlett, Michael and Ishani Mukherjee. 2014. “Policy Design and Non-Design: Towards a Spectrum of Policy Formulation Types.” *Politics and Governance* 2(2): 57–71.

Class 2 Jan. 20 The structural context

Peterson, Paul E. 2007 [1981]. “The Interests of the Limited City.” In Elizabeth A. Strøm and John H. Mollenkopf, eds., *Urban Politics Reader*. New York: Routledge. pp. 120–129.

E Fischell, William A. 2001. “Homevoters, Municipal Corporate Governance, and the Benefit View of the Property Tax.” *National Tax Journal* 54(1): 157–173.

E Dalton, Russell. 2005. “The Social Transformation of Trust in Government.” *International Review of Sociology* 15(1): 133–154. **Read pp. 133–140 and pp. 148–150 (skip over the statistical section in the middle.)**

Class 3 Jan. 27 The institutional context

Taylor, Zack and Neil Bradford. Forthcoming in 2020, “Governing Canadian Cities.” In Markus Moos et al., eds., *Canadian Cities in Transition*, 6th ed. Toronto: Oxford UP. Typescript.

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!)**

E Miller, Gary J. 2005. “The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 8: 203–225.

Class 4 Feb. 3 Defining policy problems

T Chapter 2, “Policy Problems.”

E Rittel, Horst W.J. and Melvin M. Webber. 1973. “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning.” *Policy Sciences* 4(2): 155–169.

E Head, Brian W. and John Alford. 2015. “Wicked Problems: Implications for Public Policy and Management” *Administration & Society* 47(6): 711–739.

Class 5 *Feb. 10* **Interpreting the policymaking process**

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

Examples:

E Henstra, Daniel. 2010. “Explaining local policy choices: A multiple streams analysis of emergency management.” *Canadian Public Administration* 53(2): 241–58.

E Pralle, Sarah. 2006. “The ‘Mouse that Roared’: Agenda Setting in Canadian Pesticides Politics.” *Policy Studies Journal* 34: 171–194.

Class 6 *Feb. 24* **Framing problems and solutions**

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

E Schneider, Anne and Helen Ingram. 1993. “The Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy.” *American Political Science Review* 87(2): 334–47.

Examples:

E Ohemeng, Frank K. and John K Grant. 2008. “When markets fail to deliver: An examination of the privatization and de-privatization of water and wastewater services delivery in Hamilton, Canada.” *Canadian Public Administration* 51(3): 475–99.

E Whittemore, Andrew H. and Todd K. BenDor. 2018. “Talking about density: An empirical investigation of framing.” *Land Use Policy* 72: 181–91.

Sasson, Theodore. 1995. *Crime Talk: How Citizens Construct a Social Problem*. New York, NY: Aldine De Gruyter. Ch. 2, pp. 13–28.

Class 7 *Mar. 3* **Policy innovation and diffusion**

E De Vries, Hanna, Victor Mekkers, and Lars Tummers. 2015. “Innovation in the Public Sector: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda.” *Public Administration* 94(1): 146–166. **** Skip “Methodology” section (pp. 148–151). ****

E Potts, Jason. 2009. “The Innovation Deficit in Public Services: The Curious Problem of Too Much Efficiency and Not Enough Waste and Failure.” *Innovation: Management, Policy, & Practice* 11(1): 34–43.

E Shipan, Charles R. and Craig Volden. 2012. “Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners.” *Public Administration Review* 72(6): 788–796.

Examples:

E Nykiforuk, Candace I.J., John Eyles, and H. Sharon Campbell. 2008. “Smoke-free spaces over time: a policy diffusion study of bylaw development in Alberta and Ontario, Canada.” *Health and Social Care in the Community* 16(1): 64–74.

Additional materials distributed in class.

Class 8 *Mar. 10* **Engaging the public**

E Fung, Archon. 2006. “Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance.” *Public Administration Review* 66(S): 66–75.

E Baker, William H., H. Lon Addams, and Brian Davis. 2005. “Critical Factors for Enhancing Municipal Public Hearings.” *Public Administration Review* 65(4): 490–99.

E Shipley, Robert. 2002. “Visioning in planning: Is the practice based on sound theory?” *Environment and Planning A* 34(1): 7–22.

Example: The Toronto Transit Commission’s Second Exit Project

W Office of the Ombudsman, City of Toronto. “Tunnel Vision: An Investigation into the Toronto Transit Commission Second Exit Project at Donlands and Greenwood Stations.”

Excerpt: Executive Summary (pp. 4–6).

<http://ombudstoronto.ca/sites/default/files/Final%20Report.pdf>

Additional materials are on OWL.

Case Study: Atlanta 2020 visioning process

E Helling, Amy. 1998. “Collaborative Visioning: Proceed with Caution! Results from Evaluating Atlanta’s Vision 2020 Project.” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 64(3): 335–49.

Class 9 *Mar. 24* **8. Instruments and implementation**

T Chapter 5, “Designing Intervention and Implementation.”

T Chapter 6, “Policy Instruments.”

E Béland, Daniel and Michael Howlett. 2016. “How Solutions Chase Problems: Instrument Constituencies in the Policy Process.” *Governance* 29(3): 393–409.

Example: Regulating plastic bags

E Murdoch, Maggie. 2010. “The Road to Zero Waste: A Study of the Seattle Green Fee on Disposable Bags.” *Environmental Practice* 12(1): 66–75.

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

Example: Solid waste collection

E McDavid, James C. 2001. “Solid-waste contracting-out, competition, and bidding practices among Canadian local governments.” *Canadian Public Administration* 44(1): 1–25.

E Zhu, Jinxin, and Gordon Huang. 2017. “Contract-out planning of solid waste management system under uncertainty: Case study on Toronto, Ontario, Canada.” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 168: 1370–1380. **OPTIONAL**

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

Class 10 *Mar. 31* **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.”

Draft only: Reading list (beyond the required textbook) and assignment values subject to change.

Example: Municipal performance management in Ontario

E Charbonneau, Étienne, Daniel E. Bromberg, and Alexander C. Henderson.
2015. “Performance improvement, culture, and regimes.” *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 28(2): 105–120.

Example: Comprehensive User Fee Review in Toronto

Staff report dated 20120104 posted on OWL.

Class 11 *Apr. 7* **Concluding discussion**

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