Lakehead University   Winter 2025
Department of Political Science

POLI 4911
Special Topics: Public Policy
Thursdays, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Open the Navigation Pane for easy navigation (under the View menu).

I   General Information

Instructor: Elsa Piersig
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
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II   Course Description

Public policy is what governments decide or does not decide to do (Dye, 1978). Governments have,
especially since the post-war period, decided to do a lot of things and now administer a diverse
array of services and programs that are underpinned by policy. Deciding public policy is inherently
political. Governments control scarce resources, so political decision-making is needed do
determine where to allocate those resources. The values behind those policies, how societies view
problems requiring public policy responses, and the possible solutions, are also contested, and thus
political. In this course, we look at the politics decision making behind public policy and the
paradox that individuals face when confronted by competing policies that seem to contradict. To do
so, we utilize Stone's (2012) method of probing the goals, problems, and solutions of public policy.

III   Course Format

The course is synchronous, in-person, seminar-style class. All participants – learners and the
instructor – have the responsibility to read and prepare for each class. Without completing at least
some of the readings each week, it will be difficult to maintain the seminar discussion.

IV   Learning Outcomes

1. **Working with Feedback**: By the end of this course, you will be able to *formulate*
    constructive feedback and comments and deliver it respectfully to others.

2. **Inquiry and Analysis**: By the end of this program of study, you will be able to *demonstrate*
    the six components of critical thinking, namely:
    o   *Identify* a manageable topic
    o   *Assess* and *synthesize* existing knowledge,
    o   *Apply* a theoretical framework or methodology for the research process,
    o   *Generate* an analysis to reveal insightful patterns and findings,

- o *Develop* conclusions that logically flow from the analysis, and
- o *Show/recognize* the limitations and implications of the analysis.

3. **Content 1:** By the end of this course, you will be able to *determine* and *assess* the goals, problems, and solutions that make up political decision-making in the field of public policy.

4. **Content 2: Major Public Policy Fields**: By the end of this course, you will be able to *breakdown* and *dissect* leading public policy questions and concepts that are part of public policy decision-making.

V   Texts

- Stone, Deborah. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-Making*. 3rd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. (Available online from Vital Source for $78.66.)
    - o Used editions may also be available on eBay, etc. Also available through interlibrary loan from several Ontario universities.
- Additional readings as listed in the syllabus and posted on the course page.
    - o Currently, a number of weeks have no readings beyond the textbook. These will be filled following the first seminar's discussion.

VI   Evaluation at a Glance

Assignment/Course Component	Assignment Due Date	Percentage	Running Total
Participation	Throughout the semester	10%	10%
Syllabus Quiz (Quiz 1)	Friday, January 24, 2025	1%	11%
Reading Responses	Weekly, 2 free passes	20%	31%
Seminar Discussion Leader	Twice per semester	15%	46%
Bilateral Meeting 1	Due by Friday, February 14, 2025	2%	48%
Briefing Note	Friday, February 28, 2025	15%	63%
Essay	Friday, March 28, 2025	30%	93%
Reflection Assignment	Friday, April 4, 2025	5%	98%
Bilateral Meeting 2	Due by Friday, April 4, 2025	2%	100%

*** Remember, the instructor is here to help! Please reach out through email, office hours, the Course Questions discussion forum, or schedule a meeting (make it a bilateral meeting by drafting up a few questions to serve as the agenda and satisfy a course assignment!).

VII   Course Evaluation in Detail

Participation – 10% of Final Grade – Ongoing (Weeks 1-12)

In a seminar format, participation is essential to creating an engaging learning environment. Regular attendance and preparation for each seminar is important for all learners. Attendance in seminars is mandatory – *learners who miss more than two seminars will not pass the course*.

Learners will be evaluated based on regular, active, informed, and thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Quality contributions will demonstrate an understanding of the weekly assigned

readings by being able to identify and evaluate the core argument(s), synthesize the readings, critically comment on the method or approach, and assess the evidence and analysis. Every participant in the seminar must engage with each other's ideas constructively and respectfully.

Syllabus Quiz – 1% of Final Grade – Due Friday, January 24, 2025 (Week 3)

The Syllabus Quiz is a quick review of the course components and communication with the course instruction team. Quizzes completed on time will receive 1% and all late submissions will result in a grade of 0.[1]

Bilateral Meetings – 2% each of Final Grade – Due by end of Week 6 and Week 12

Learners are required to schedule and attend **two bilateral meetings** (2% each) with the professor. The first should be before Reading Week and the second before the end of classes and the exam. These meetings are for introductions and discuss course material and *upcoming* assignments. *Meetings to review an assignment grade do not count* towards these meetings.

Learners are expected to lead the bilateral meeting by a) drawing up a brief agenda for the meeting, b) submitting it to Brightspace prior to the meeting, and c) ensuring all agenda items are covered in a timely fashion.

Reading Responses – 20% of Final Grade – Throughout the Term

The reading responses are based on the weekly readings. The responses should analyze the individual readings and draw connections between them. Ways to do this include (but are not limited to): determine the main arguments of the readings, how arguments are justified, what assumptions or perspectives underpin the author's work (either explicitly or implicitly), similarities and differences between the readings (compare and contrast), themes across the readings, and questions about/from the readings/items for clarification.

Reading responses are due by end of day on Tuesdays to provide time for review (by learners and instructor). Responses should be approximately 300 words to a maximum of 500 words. Please submit responses on Brightspace to the weekly reading responses discussion forum.

Reading responses will be graded out of 2: 0 for non-submission, 1 for partially complete, and 2 for substantially completed. The lowest two reading responses will be dropped from the final grade calculation.

Seminar Discussion Leadership – 7.5% each of Final Grade – Throughout Semester

Learners will help lead the seminar discussion twice per semester. This should be done by reviewing the readings, finding common themes and connections, and preparing questions to spark discussion during the seminar. Learners should prepare a short set of remarks or a brief presentation to kick start the discussion (up to 15 minutes). The reading response is a good way to start preparing to help lead the discussion – start by writing your own and then give a read through of your colleague's reading responses that are posted on Brightspace.

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[1] The last day to register is January 17, 2025. All learners, regardless of registration date, will have until the end of the following week to complete the Syllabus Quiz.

Briefing Note – 15% of Final Grade – Friday, February 28, 2025

The briefing note is an opportunity to practice concise and clear writing. Learners will draft a briefing note for information for a decision-maker (such as a senior bureaucrat or other administrative/governance role). The decision-maker should be identified in the briefing note. The briefing note can be on policy issue related to the course and run by the instructor. One option could be to choose one of the weekly policy case studies or readings to build on material we are already covering.

Briefing notes should present a targeted background, discussion/analysis of the topic or issue, and a concise couple of next steps for the decision-maker to choose from or take. The assignment can be up a maximum of two pages (excluding the bibliography). Briefing notes will be graded based on the inquiry and analysis skills, as well as formatting and writing style. The briefing note can involve a combination of headings, short paragraphs, and bullet points to highlight essential information and improve reader accessibility.

Research Essay – % of Final Grade – March 2025

The research essay is an opportunity to investigate a particular issue or question of the learner's choice. Learners should select an issue in conjunction with the instructor (great topic for a bilateral meeting!). The research essay should examine the background and context of the issue, what the current state of the issue is, what attempts or things that have been done to try and address it, and what options could be pursued in the future (and possible implications of said options). Learners are also encouraged to think about how they are approaching the policy issue, such as whether they are using a particular theoretical approach or perspective.

The research essay prioritizes synthesizing existing knowledge, analysis, developing conclusions and recognizing limitations and implications. It will be graded on the use of course content, inquiry and analysis skills, structure, and writing and grammar. As part of the existing knowledge component of inquiry and analysis skills, it is important to properly cite all sources employed in a submission. The assignment should also include a thesis to tie the document together. All submissions should be single-spaced can range from 6-8 pages, excluding the bibliography.

Reflection Assignment(s) – 5% of Final Grade

The Reflection Assignment is due following the final Policy Brief submission. It is an informal journal entry for learners to reflect on their experience with the Policy Brief process and critically review their work and thought processes/preconceptions. The suggested length is approximately 500 words in length.

NOTE: The Research Essay must be completed to open the dropbox for the Reflection Assignment.

VIII   Course Schedule and Topics

Week	Topic	Case Study Suggestions	Readings	Assignments
Week 1 Jan. 8	Course Introduction and Syllabus Construction	• Syllabus Construction	• Syllabus • Inquiry and Analysis Skills Rubric	• Syllabus Quiz due Friday, January 24, 2025
Week 2 Jan. 16	Introduction – What is Public Policy	• N/A	• Stone – Introduction and Chapter 1 • Goodin, Rein and Moran – "The Public and its Policies" in *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*	•
Week 3 Jan. 23	Making Public Policy – Power and Persuasion	• N/A	• Stone – Chapter 16 and Conclusion • Cairney – "Power and Public Policy" • Crawford – "Homo Politicus and Argument" in *Perspectives on Politics* (Journal)	• Syllabus Quiz Due (Friday, January 24, 2025)
Policy Goals				
Week 4 Jan. 30	Equity and Efficiency • How do the different theoretical approaches conceptualize equity and efficiency?	• Public goods vs. private provision: Is government inefficient? Should public services be privatized?	• Stone – Chapter 2 and 3 • Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl – "Chapter 2: Understanding Public Policy: Theoretical Approaches" (2020)	•

Week 5 Feb. 6	Welfare and the Welfare State • How to distribute welfare in an industrial society/state?	• Childcare	• Stone – Chapter 4 • Esping-Andersen – "The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State" (1990) • Lewis – "Gende and the Development of Welfare Regimes" (1998)	•
Week 6 Feb. 13	Liberty and Security	• Candidate nomination and the Canada Elections Act (Liberty) • Safety of public Officials (Security) • Abortion	• Stone – Chapters 5 and 6	• [Bilateral Meeting 1](#) (Friday, February 14)
READING WEEK (February 17-21, 2025)				
Policy Problems				
Week 7 Feb. 27	Symbols and Numbers	• Federalism and equalization?	• Stone – Chapters 7 and 8	•
Week 8 Mar. 5	Causes and Interests	• Dairy and Poultry organizations and supply management • Housing	• Stone – Chapters 9 and 10	•

Week 9 Mar. 13	Decisions	• MAID and dialogue between parliament and the courts • Health policy success in Canada	• Stone – Chapter 11	•
Policy Solutions				
Week 10 Mar. 20	Incentives and Rules	• Environmental restrictions, Carbon Tax and Rebate • Immigration policy	• Stone – Chapters 12 and 13	•
Week 11 Mar. 27	Facts and Rights	• Indigenous rights advocacy	• Stone – Chapters 14 and 15	• [Major Written Assignment](#) (Friday, March 28)
Week 12 April 1-3	Concluding Week – The Field of Public Policy in Review	•	• Recall Stone's Conclusion • Allison – "Emergence of Schools of Public Policy: Reflections by a Founding Dean" (2006)	• [Reflection Assignment](#) (Friday, April 4, 2025) • [Bilateral Meeting 2](#)

Online Readings

Week 2 – What is Public Policy?

- Stone – Introduction and Chapter 1
- Cairney, Paul. 2020. "What is Policy and Policymaking?" In *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues.* 2nd Edition. London: Red Globe Press.
  - Updated Chapter for 3rd edition on Cairney's blog: chapter-1-upp-3rd-ed-22.9.23.pdf

Supplementary Readings:

- Goodin, Robert, Martin Rein, and Michael Moran. 2006. "The Public and its Policies." In *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy.* Eds. Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert Goodin. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 3-37. (Online via library)

Week 3 – Making Public Policy – Power and Persuasion

- Stone – Chapter 16 and Conclusion
- Cairney, Paul. 2020. "Power and Public Policy." In *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues.* 2nd Edition. London: Red Globe Press.
  - Available on Cairney's blog here: chapter-3-power-upp-2nd-ed-18.5.19.pdf

Supplementary Readings:

- Crawford, Neta. 2009. "Homo Politicus and Argument (Nearly) All the Way Down: Persuasion in Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 103-124.

Week 4 – Equity and Efficiency

What are equity and efficiency and what is the equality-efficiency trade-off? How do the major theoretical approaches to public policy conceptualize equity and efficiency?

- Stone – Chapter 2 and 3
- Howlett, Michael, M. Ramesh, and Anthony Perl. 2020. "Understanding Public Policy: Theoretical Approaches." In *Studying Public Policy: Principles and Processes.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 20-53.

Week 5 – Welfare and the Welfare State

- Stone – Chapter 4
- Esping-Andersen, Gosta. 1998 [1990]. "The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State." In *Power, Resources, Theory and the Welfare State: A Critical Approach.* Eds. Gregg Olsen, Julia Sile O'Connor, and Walter Kopi. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 123-153.
- Lewis, Jane. 1998 [1992]. "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes." In *Power, Resources, Theory and the Welfare State: A Critical Approach.* Eds. Gregg Olsen, Julia Sile O'Connor, and Walter Kopi. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 229-249.

Supplementary Readings:

- Olsen, Gregg M. 1998. "Locating the Canadian Welfare State: Family Policy and Health Care in Canada, Sweden, and the United States." In *Power, Resources, Theory and the Welfare State: A Critical Approach.* Eds. Gregg Olsen, Julia Sile O'Connor, and Walter Kopi. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 183-206

Week 6 – Liberty and Security

- Stone – Chapters 5 and 6

Week 7 – Symbols and Numbers

- Stone – Chapters 7 and 8

Week 8 – Causes and Interests

- Stone – Chapters 9 and 10

Week 9 – Decisions

- Stone – Chapter 11

Week 10 – Incentives and Rules

- Stone – Chapters 12 and 13

Week 11 – Facts and Rights

- Stone – Chapters 14 and 15

Week 12 – Concluding Week, the Field of Public Policy in Review

- Allison, Graham. 2006. "Emergence of Schools of Public Policy: Reflections by a Founding Dean." In *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy.* Eds. Moran, Michael, Martin Rein, and Robert Goodin. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 58-79. (Online via library)
- Cairney, Paul. 2023. "The Politics of Policy Analysis: Theoretical Insights on Real World Problems." *Journal of European Public Policy* 30(9): 1820-1838.

IX   Course Procedures and Policies

Assignment Submission

- All assignments are due on Brightspace. Learners are responsible for ensuring that the correct file has been uploaded. Assignments should be uploaded as <u>Microsoft Word documents</u> (not PDFs) to the appropriate online dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on the due date.
- The recommended length for an assignment reflects both the expected effort of the learner and the time available to the course instructional team for providing feedback. Please respect the recommended length. Assignments over or under the expected length by 10% will receive a reduction in the assigned grade.
- Lakehead offers MS Office 365 (including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, etc.) for free from the Technology Services Centre: [Office 365 | Lakehead University](#).

Citation is Required!

- Citing is important for a) giving credit where credit is due (intellectual property), b) justifying evidence, and c) avoiding plagiarism. Find more about academic integrity [here](#).
- Learners <u>must</u> use proper citation for all evidence and arguments derived from sources other than themselves. Citation is required for all sources beyond the course material.
- The preferred citation format is an in-text option such as MLA, Chicago Author-Date system, or the [Canadian Journal of Political Science](#) guide. Please avoid APA.

Late Penalties and Extensions

- Late papers will lose 3% per day, inclusive of weekends and holidays.
- If you yourself needing an extension, please contact the professor and *recommend a new due date before* the deadline. Learners are asked to keep in mind that many of the assignments are linked and should consider how the extension will impact other work in the course so that, if needed, an appropriate schedule can be worked out.

Communication

- Please make use of email, discussion forums, lectures, and office hours to get in touch.
- All email communication must be via official Lakehead University e-mail accounts.
- Email formatting to contact the course instruction team:
  - Please use a formal greeting, such as 'Hi,' 'Hello,' or 'Dear' and *include the name of the person* to whom the email is addressed.
  - Avoid writing everything in one paragraph – it is hard to read and obscures information!
- There is no expectation of email responses for *anyone* in the course after regular business hours – both learners and the instructor.
- Suggested communication options for questions/comments:
  - Lakehead University email for technical concerns, course procedures,
  - Lectures and office hours, or scheduled meetings for substantive questions,
  - Submit general questions to the Course Questions discussion forum,
  - Schedule a meeting with the instructor for personal questions and issues.

X   Student Mental Health

As a university student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. This can happen to any of us, and everyone can benefit from support when feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope. If you or anyone you know is in need of help with difficult life events, anxiety, or depression, please reach out to Student Health and Wellness. The office offers free, confidential services to Lakehead students. You can find more information here: Health Services | Lakehead University.

XII   Academic Accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. An accommodation could be needed for health, religious obligations, student activities pregnancy, or (dis)abilities. For an accommodation request, please contact me as soon as the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Accommodation for Students with (Dis)Abilities

Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please visit Student Accessibility here: Support for Students with Disabilities | Lakehead University

XII   Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Lakehead University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Lakehead's Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Response Policy. For more information and/or support, visit: Sexual Violence | Lakehead University

XIII   Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful academic career. Lakehead's Academic Integrity Code addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the university's academic integrity rules.

Plagiarism

The Academic Integrity Code defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes reproducing or

paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, research findings, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement; and
- Failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Intellectual Property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).