

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 8300**  
**POLICY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**  
**SUMMER 2003**

**LOCATION AND TIMES**

Durham Science Center, Room 110, Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:00 pm to 9:05 pm.  
May 12 through June 25

**INSTRUCTOR**

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**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This graduate course in the UNO School of Public Administration examines the formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of public policy. One of the capstone courses in the Master of Public Administration program at UNO, students take this class towards the end of their plan of study, and apply concepts, principles and methodologies learned earlier in their public administration coursework. Because of this emphasis on application, then, independent scholarship and "action" or applied research constitutes an important part of this course.

**SUMMER SCHOOL**

Taking graduate level classes in the summer presents the student with special obstacles. Most important is the time constraint. The same amount of material is covered in two weekly sessions over 7 weeks as in the 15- week regular semester. Students need to be prepared to devote the time to successfully complete the course, especially during the week.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Gain an understanding of public policy, the policy process, and policy instruments.
2. Learn about the important role of public administration in the policy process, especially in the "design" of policy.
3. Understand the responsibilities public administrators have in the development and implementation of public policy.

**COURSE TOPICS**

- American government, non-profits, and the policy environment

- Causes and determinants of public policy
- Obstacles to successful public policy programs
- Methods and criteria for planning, analyzing, and evaluating public policy
- The policy process
- Policy tools and policy instruments
- Implementation networks and policy communities

## INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

People learn in different ways. Accordingly, the instructor employs several learning techniques in this course. In addition to lectures (or lecture outlines) and assigned readings, the class includes structured discussions that follow a graduate seminar format, small group and focused discussions of readings, and independent research.

Lectures normally consist of summaries and material not included in assigned readings. There will be considerable class discussion and analysis of the readings. Students should read the assignments before class and contribute to discussions in a scholarly manner. This type of learning approach will make the course more meaningful and enjoyable. But it will only succeed if students are prepared for class!

## ELECTRONIC MAIL AND COMMUNICATION

Some course materials, occasional discussion questions, and miscellaneous correspondence will be available on UNO Blackboard and Lotus Notes. Students should periodically check Blackboard for these materials. You can contact Nancy Krzycki, Public Administration computer and e-mail technical support staff, at 402/ 554-3480 if you have problems.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**1. Class participation.** A significant part of the graduate school learning experience includes the use of a seminar format for discussion. Students are expected to contribute to discussions and participate in the lively exchange of ideas and experiences. This syllabus includes a set of questions that provide a starting point for class discussion. The instructor will add discussion questions throughout the semester.

Because of the participatory nature of the instructional methods, class attendance is especially important. Please inform the instructor of anticipated absences. Class participation will be evaluated in the following manner: one-half of the points for class discussion, one-half for class attendance. In-class and on-line discussions (through Blackboard) will be evaluated in general on the quality of information provided, the successful integration of class materials, the incorporation of other student's responses, and the overall scholarly approach of the respondent. Students should respect others opinions, but should not hesitate to challenge unsubstantiated lines of reasoning.

**2. Policy analysis paper.** A critical responsibility of public administrators is analyzing and recommending courses of action and options for dealing with complex public policy problems and issues. Public policy analysis skills are best learned by doing an exercise or a problem. Students will select **one** case from the texts and engage in policy analysis using methodologies discussed in class. The paper will be 5 to 6 page maximum, double-

spaced. Cases include: “Cost-Benefit Analysis of an Interstate 69 Extension,” p. 216, B&W, “At-Sea Incineration of Toxic Waste,” p. 96, L&S; and “Roads, Rails, Trams, and Trains,” p. 201, SS&G.

**3. Program planning paper.** Planning and organizing programs and activities for the implementation of public policy has been traditionally one of the more important tasks of public administrators. Program planning skills are best learned by doing an exercise or a problem. Students will select **one** case from the texts and engage in program planning using methodologies discussed in class. The paper will be 5 to 6 page maximum, double-spaced. Cases include: “Toxic Waste Management,” p. 119, L&S; and “The Drug Alternative,” p. 181, SS&G.

**4. Program evaluation paper.** Determining the outcomes and impacts of public programs that have been implemented to address public problems have increasingly become a critical task of public administrators. Program evaluation skills are best learned by doing an exercise or a problem. Students will select **one** case from the texts and conduct program evaluation using methodologies discussed in class. The paper will be 5 to 6 page maximum, double-spaced. Cases include: “Impact Analysis of Milwaukee School Choice Program,” p. 232, B&W; “Impact Analysis of Community-based versus Consolidated Policing,” p. 236, B&W; “Compensatory Education,” p. 136, L&S; “Teacher’s Aides,” p. 195, SS&G.

**5. Research teams and presentation.** In order to learn about systematic public policy research in public administration, students will form research teams that examine the administrative dimensions of a specific policy area. Teams will consist of approximately 4 students that share an interest in a policy topic. (The instructor will organize the teams based on individual interests and form discussion groups on Blackboard to help facilitate communication.) Each team will select a policy research question that in general describes or analyzes the role or function of public administrators in a policy area. Public policy areas may include, but are not limited to: health care, education, employment, community development, environment, economic development, criminal justice, etc.

Each policy research team will make a short presentation (20 to 25 minutes) to the class near the end of the semester. The material for the team presentation will be based on each student’s Policy Research Paper (see below). Using available technology within strict time frames, the presentation should be an interactive experience with fellow students, including audio-visual materials, structured class discussion, role-playing, field trip, guest speakers, etc. At the end of this syllabus is a form that will be used to evaluate your presentation by the instructor and fellow students.

**6. Policy research paper.** Each student will submit a short policy research paper (7 to 9 page, maximum, doubled-spaced) that examines the role and function of public administration in a public policy area. Data for this paper will come from two places: two articles from scholarly journals, and two pieces of information from management or practitioner sources. The two research-based articles should be found in **scholarly or academic journals** (not a practitioner-oriented publication) on public administration or public policy. (The journals should be less than five years old if possible. Journals can be

found in the Library or over the Internet. Contact me if you are not sure if a specific journal is appropriate as a scholarly source.) The information from management or practitioner sources can be acquired in three ways. One way is through the Internet. The UNO Public Administration and UNO Library home page provides useful links to government agencies, non-profit organizations, and public policy organizations. A second way is to research appropriate articles from practitioners or management publications. And the final way to collect this type of information is through personal interviews, observations, or other qualitative methods of field research. In other words, each policy research paper should only have 4 or 5 sources of information that meet the above descriptions.

One approach to conducting policy research in public administration is to describe the policy (e.g. public problem, policy community, specific policy goals) and then outline the programs and the administrative mechanisms (e.g. resources, public-private partnerships, intergovernmental arrangements, etc.) used by the agency (or the implementation network) to deliver the policy or program. Other approaches to policy research may focus on the role of administrators in various steps of the policy process, or policy impact evaluation. In general, a good policy research paper will incorporate class discussion, class readings, and the student's personal experience (if appropriate). Analysis of the scholarly articles may include comparing and contrasting findings or conclusions of the author with concepts and ideas discussed in class, or found in the texts.

**7. Examination.** A comprehensive, written final exam will be taken the last night of class. The specific format of the examination will be discussed in class, but generally it will be a time-constrained, open book, essay.

#### GRADING AND STUDENT EVALUATION.

The 400 total points will be allocated in the following manner:

1. Class participation.	50 points
2. Policy analysis paper	50 points
3. Program planning paper.	50 points
4. Program evaluation paper.	50 points
5. Policy research team and presentation.	25 points
6. Policy research paper	75 points
7. Examination.	100 points

Assignments handed in late will be downgraded a minimum of 1 grade for each day late.

Final course grades will be awarded according to the following scale:

Letter Grade	Total Points	Approximate Percent
A+	387 to 400	96.7 To 100.0
A	373 to 386	93.3 To 96.6
A-	360 to 372	90.0 To 93.2
B+	347 to 359	86.7 To 89.9
B	333 to 346	83.3 To 86.6

B-	320	to	332	80.0	To	83.2
C+	307	to	319	76.7	To	79.9
C	293	to	306	73.3	To	76.6
C-	280	to	292	70.0	To	73.2
D+	267	to	279	66.7	To	69.9
D	253	to	266	63.3	To	66.6
D-	240	to	252	60.0	To	63.2
F		below	240		Below	60.0

Only in extreme cases of hardships will a course incomplete be given.

## TEXTBOOKS

James P. Lester and Joseph Stewart, Jr. 2000. *Public Policy: An Evolutionary Approach*. Belmont CA: Wadsworth (ISBN 0-534-55008-8).

Kenneth N. Bickers and John T. Williams. 2001. *Public Policy Analysis: A Political Economy Approach*. Houghton Mifflin. (ISBN 0-395-85263-3)

Ronald D. Sylvia, Kathleen M. Sylvia, and Elizabeth M. Gunn. 1997. *Program Planning and Evaluation for the Public Manager*. Waveland Press. (ISBN 0-88133-920-2)

Other readings available through UNO Library Reserves or Blackboard.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

May 12 INTRODUCTION. Review syllabus and course expectations. Student and instructor introductions. Students identify policy interest areas and policy research teams are formed. Possible research questions are explored within teams. *Final research question to be submitted May 21.*

May 14 PUBLIC POLICIES AS TOOLS OF GOVERNANCE: THE BASICS. The first step to understanding is examining the basic nature of public policies, how they are studied, and their function in civil society.

What is public policy?

What is the evolutionary approach? What is the political economy approach?

What are some ways to study public policy?

Why do we need to study public policy?

**Read, Lester and Stewart (L&S), Chap. 1, 2; Bickers and Williams (B&W), Chap. 1, 2**

May 19            **MODELS AND THEORIES: UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS.**  
There are a variety of ways to study the processes, people and institutions involved in policy development and delivery. There is also a foundation to the systematic study of policy.

What are explanatory models? Why do we use typologies?

What is the systems theory? What are its components?

What is the importance of Arrow's Theorem?

Who is involved in the making of public policy?

**Read L&S, Chap. 3, 4; B&W, Chap. 3; Sylvia, Sylvia and Gunn (SS&G),  
Chap. 1**

May 21            **THE POLICY PROCESS I: AGENDA-SETTING, FORMULATION.**  
Administrators help define public problems, and identify and recommend alternative courses of public action. Administrators function as policy experts when they engage in policy analysis. *Policy analysis methods introduced.*

How is policy-making initiated? How do administrators influence agenda-setting?

What is the link between policy analysis and policy formulation?

Why is cost-benefit analysis useful to administrators?

What is Kingdon's model?

**Read L&S, Chap. 5, 6; B&W, Chap. 11; SS&G, Chap. 7**

**Policy research question due from policy research teams**

May 26            **No Class, Memorial Day Holiday**

May 28            **THE POLICY PROCESS II: ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION.**  
Organizing for public service delivery is the traditional task of the administrator. Changes in implementation include the growing involvement of public/private/nonprofit partners, privatization, and the role of market forces. *Program planning methods introduced.*

Can we clearly separate policy making from implementation?

Can we form a theory of implementation?

What are ways we deliver public services today?

Why do we need to plan for program implementation?

How can program planning improve implementation?

**Read L&S, Chap. 7; SS&G, Chap. 2, 3, 4**

**Policy analysis paper due**

June 2            **DEMOCRATIC THEORY AND PUBLIC POLICY: THE PROBLEM WITH COLLECTIVE ACTION.** There are practical and theoretical constraints in implementing public policies in a democratic society. A public economy approach provides suggestions to public administrators.

Why is it difficult to implement policies in democracies?

What are some competing values between administration and democracy?

How is the market an important mechanism for collective action?

Why do we need to understand collective action?

What is the link between market failure and public goods?

**Read B&W, Chap. 4, 5, 6, 7**

June 4            THE POLICY PROCESS III: EVALUATION, MODIFICATION, REFORMULATION. Policy evaluation and policy measures for effectiveness have become an important task for public administrators. There is much more demand for programmatic accountability. *Program evaluation methods introduced.*

What do we learn from the policy process model?

Why don't we have better public policies?

How do we evaluate public programs? What are some measurement criteria?

What is the difference between outcome and process evaluation?

**Read L&S, Chap. 8; B&W, Chap. 12; SS&G, Chap. 5, 6, 8**

**Program planning paper due**

June 9            POLICY TOOLS: ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION. Governments employ specific sets of actions, or instruments, for delivering services. Implementation has evolved.

What is a tools approach to understanding public policy?

What are some policy tools?

How can policy tools improve implementation?

Why has the nature of government action changed?

**Readings available through UNO Library reserves or Blackboard.**

June 11           POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS. Administrators play an important but often an uneasy and often controversial role in the policy process. Policy communities have replaced iron triangles.

What is federalism? How does it affect public policy and administration?

What is a policy subsystem? What is a policy community?

What is top-down public policy development?

How does a policy community affect public administration?

**Read B&W, Chap. 8, 9,10; readings provided through Blackboard.**

**Program evaluation paper due**

June 16           STUDIES OF POLICY DOMAINS: UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS. The application of the policy process to specific policy areas helps administrators understand their role in policy development.

What is a policy domain? Can you identify policy communities?

How does the policy process help us understand these policy domains?

Can you identify the different steps in the policy process in the domains?

What is the role of the administrator in this domain? Has it changed?

**Read L&S, Chap. 10-13**

**Research teams will have class time to prepare for presentation.**

June 18        **POLICY DESIGN: LEARNING AND CHANGE.** There are ways to learn about improving the effectiveness of public policy and public administrators play a key role in the process. Public administrators function as policy experts.

How do we design public policy? What is policy learning?

What is a policy paradigm? Why is policy change important?

What is the proper role for administrators in the policy process?

What does the future hold for public policy and the public administrator?

**Final Examination Review**

**Read L&S, Chap. 9, 14, 15; B&W, Chap. 13**

**Policy research paper due**

June 23 **Research Team Presentations**

June 25 **Final Examination**

CLASS PRESENTATION EVALUATION

ROBERT BLAIR, SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

STUDENT/ TEAM \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY/CRITERIA	POSSIBLE POINTS	EARNED POINTS
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1. QUALITY OF INFORMATION

How much did the audience learn?  
Was useful information provided?

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

How did the audience participate in the presentation? What was done to engage the audience?

3. PRESENTATION APPROACH

What presentation techniques were used?  
Were the techniques interactive and interesting?

4. ORGANIZATION

Was the presentation within the time limits? Was it well organized and structured?

5. CREATIVITY

How was the presentation original?  
How much thought was put into its planning?

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TOTAL

COMMENTS: