

January 9, 2024

SYLLABUS
POLI 320B THE POLITICS OF POLICYMAKING IN THE U.S.
2023-2024 Term 2

Meetings: Tues, Thurs: 12:30-1:50
Mathematics Annex 1100

Instructor: Professor Paul J. Quirk

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Office hours:

Tues, Thurs: 2:00-3:00 and by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Robert Straughan

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Office hours and location: TBA

Mr. Straughan will advise regarding writing assignments, not lecture or reading material.

This course examines the processes and performance of public policymaking in the United States. Focusing on the national government, topics include: the functioning of institutions (especially Congress, the presidency, and the bureaucracy); the role of policy analysis and expert advice; the influence of interest groups, public opinion, and social movements; and the effects of electoral politics, ideological trends, and party conflict. We will consider cases and use examples from a variety of policy areas—in particular, economic policy, health care, pensions (Social Security), racial inequality, environment, gay rights, abortion, immigration, and foreign policy. At several points, we will make comparisons between the US and Canada. We will consider, in particular, the causes and consequences of the Trump presidency and the current threats to democratic political processes in the US.

Some of the central questions will be: Can US government make competent, responsive decisions? Do business groups and the wealthy dominate policy? Do policymakers respond to the preferences of the public, and does the public express reasonably informed preferences? Does increasingly severe partisan conflict undermine governmental performance? Have US political institutions met the challenges of the Trump presidency? What reforms would help to ensure effective democratic processes and rule of law in the future?

Goals: The course will enable students: 1) to assess the contribution of policy research to guiding policy decisions; 2) to understand and explain the general biases and influences of policymaking processes, especially in the US; and 3) to evaluate strategies

and prospects for political reform, especially in relation to the recent and current challenges to US political institutions.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Students will be required to comply with University policies regarding vaccination, testing, and masking. You are not required to wear masks in class but are encouraged to do so if you wish.

Course Requirements

Classroom response technology

We will use a classroom response application—Top Hat—to support discussion in class. You have free use of Top Hat as a UBC student. You will need to have a laptop or smartphone with you for this use—preferably, a device on which you can type fluently. We will also use discussion forums on the Canvass website.

Required reading

The required reading will be moderately heavy.

IMPORTANT NOTES ON READINGS:

- *All readings will be made available via the Canvass website by the time you need them and then will remain available for the duration of the course.*
- *There will likely be some changes to the readings during the semester—including additions of some very short current news or opinion articles. There will not be any significant increase in the total amount of reading.*
- *You will not need to find readings at the library, on-line, or by other means.*

Exams. There will be one midterm exam and a final exam. Exams will be mostly or entirely multiple choice, based on both lectures (about 60%) and readings (about 40%). *You will not be able to answer questions on readings successfully by studying the lectures. To succeed in the course, you will need to do the readings and study them diligently.*

Writing assignments. There will one major writing assignment of 8-10 double-spaced pages. The assignment will be highly specified with respect to approach and methods. Students will have some choice of specific topics, and will use only research materials that I provide to write the paper.

However, students who may be interested in submitting a paper for possible publication in the UBC undergraduate journal should consult with me about substituting a longer paper (about 18 pages), with a student-selected topic and original research, for the shorter one.

You are responsible for knowing and understanding the University's rules regarding plagiarism and academic misconduct. These rules will be strictly enforced.

Participation and active learning. In addition, students will receive a mark for participation and active learning. The activities involved may take several forms: responding in class via the classroom response application (e.g. Top Hat); participating in discussions in group forums on the course website; attending to and commenting in writing on pertinent events; and others not yet determined. Because the class is large, oral participation in class itself will have minimal effect on the participation grade.

These participation assignments will be announced in class, by e-mail, or both. They will not require large investments of time, but they will promote engagement with course topics and current events in U.S. politics and public policy, and will provide an opportunity for individual thought and expression.

Written participation assignments will be graded on a three-point scale (Good, Fair, Unsatisfactory). Students who invest the modest amounts of effort called for will have no difficulty achieving “Good” scores on all of their assignments. All students will receive free credit for a small number of missed assignments depending on the total number given—thus permitting a few missed assignments without penalty. Students will receive credit for in-class assignments that they miss due to an excused absence.

Excused absence from exams and missed assignments. Postponement of exams will only be permitted in the case of appropriate justification, such as illness, Covid exposure, or possible Covid symptoms. In addition, I must be notified of the excusing circumstance as early as possible, and normally in advance of the due date or exam. Students who are unable to complete a participation assignment because of such a circumstance will receive credit for it.

Email messages. You are *required* to be able to receive email through your university address, as indicated by the Faculty Service Centre listings; and to check email at least once every day. My method of sending emails (from the Faculty Service Centre) will only reach those addresses. You may have small assignments (usually 10-15 minutes of work) on very short notice (about two days), and longer ones, with more notice. Some announcements of these assignments, and other vital matters, will come via email, as well as the website. *You may miss assignments if you do not check email at least once every day.*

Course website. Lectures, syllabi, handouts, and other materials will be made available via a Canvass website—which you will need to access on a regular basis. You will be

informed via email and in class when the website is up and running. ***All important announcements are made by email; all documents will be posted to Canvass.***

Course notes. Students will receive copies of my lecture notes, via the website. They will be primarily in MS Word, rather than PowerPoint, because they print out more efficiently, and more readily present detailed information. Because I am developing some new lectures, however, the notes sometimes will not be highly detailed. *When my notes are less detailed, you will need to take your own notes in class to be well prepared for exams.*

Generative Artificial Intelligence. The use of generative AI tools, including ChatGPT and other similar tools, to complete or support the completion of any form of assignment or assessment in this course is not allowed and would be considered academic misconduct.

Marking weights

Midterm exam = 25 percent

Writing assignment = 25 percent

Participation and active learning assignments = 10 percent

Final exam = 40 percent

Note: Course grades are curved to result in a typical distribution of final grades on the UBC scale. (Note that because many students achieve perfect or near-perfect scores on the participation assignments, such scores generally will not raise final grades for students whose other grades are already high.)

Dates: Midterm: 2/15. Paper due dates: regular paper—3/7. Optional long paper: 3/21.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

****Note: Some topics and reading assignments may change, possibly included a handful of added short readings (e.g., chapters or articles). There will not be any significant change in workloads or timing of testing or assignments.**

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Week 1 (1/9 - 1/11)

1. Introduction: Objectives and Requirements
2. US Public Policy: Issues and Performance

Quirk, Lammert, “2020 United States Report,” Sustainable Governance Indicators Project, Bertelsmann Stiftung (Foundation), pp. 2-20.

Week 2 (1/16 - 1/18)

3 A Perspective on Public Policy Making

Quirk, “Structures and Performance: An Evaluation,” in Davidson, *The Postreform Congress* (pp. 303-310).

Levitsky and Ziblatt, “The Biggest Threat to Democracy is the GOP”

PART TWO: VALUES, BELIEFS, AND INFORMATION

4. Political Culture, Values, and Ideology

Dalton, “Society and Values” in Quirk, ed., *United States and Canada*, Ch. 2

Ellis and Stimson, *Ideology in America*, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-12).

Week 3 (1/23 - 1/25)

5. Economic Efficiency, Market Failure, and the Role of Government

Smith and Larimer, *Policy Theory Primer*, Ch. 6

Weimer and Vining, “Policy Analysis in a Representative Democracy,” in Gerber and Patashnik, Ch. 2.

6 Policy Research and Analysis

Smith and Larimer, *Policy Theory Primer*, Ch. 7.

PART THREE: INSTITUTIONS

Week 4 (1/30 – 2/1)

7 The U.S. Constitutional System

Quirk, “Introduction,” in Quirk, ed. *The U.S. and Canada*, Ch.1 (pp. 7-15, the “Primer” section only.)

Bessette, *The Mild Voice of Reason* (1994), Ch. 2, “The Creation of Deliberative Democracy in the United States.”

8. Electoral Institutions

Blais, Bowler, and Grofman, "Electoral and Party Systems," In Quirk ed. Ch. 3.

Week 5 (2/6 – 2/8)

9. The Legislative Process, I

Malloy and Quirk, "Executive Leadership and the Legislative Process," In Quirk ed. Ch. 4. pp. 78-87 (or 1-9 of the PDF).

Curry and Lee, "Congress at Work: Legislative Capacity and Entrepreneurship in the Contemporary Congress," in Lee and McCarty, Ch. 8

10. The Legislative Process, II

Binder, "The Dysfunctional Congress" (2015)

Binder, "How to Waste a Congressional Majority" (2018)

Week 6 (2/13 – 2/15)

11. Presidential Policymaking

Howell and Moe, *Relic: How Our Constitution Undermines Effective Government, and Why We Need a More Powerful Presidency* (2015), Ch. 3.

Pfiffner, "Decision Making in the Bush White House"

Pfiffner, "Decision Making in the Obama White House"

12. ***** MIDTERM EXAM, 2/15 *****

PAPER ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

[Week of 2/19 – 2/23 Mid-term Break]

PART FOUR: CONSTITUENCIES AND INFLUENCES

Week 7 (2/27 – 2/29)

13. Interest Groups

Moe, “Teachers Unions and American Education Reform: The Politics of Blocking.” *The Forum* (2012).

Dillon, et al., “The Environmental Protection Agency in the Early Trump Administration: Prelude to Regulatory Capture.” *American Journal of Public Health* (2018).

14. The Public and Media, I: Mass Opinion, Heuristics, and Collective Biases

Kuklinski and Quirk, “Reconsidering the Rational Public,” (2000), excerpt

A. King, *Running Scared*, Ch. 7.

Week 8 (3/5 – 3/7)

15. The Public and Media, II: Polarization and Related Pathologies

Benkler, et al., *Network Propaganda*, 2020, Ch. 3, “The Propaganda Feedback Loop.”

Grossman and Hopkins, “From Fox News to Viral Views: The Influence of Ideological Media in the 2018 Elections.”

16. Party Polarization and the Authoritarian Capture of the Republican Party

Fiorina, *Disconnect*, Ch. 7, “The Disconnect: How Unusual, How Bad?”

Hacker and Pierson, “The Republican Devolution: Partisanship and the Decline of American Governance.”

****** Paper Assignment Due ******

PART FIVE: POLICY AREAS

Week 9 (3/12 – 3/14)

17. Economic Policy: Taxes, Spending, Jobs, and Growth

Keech and Scarth, “Economic Policy in Canada and the US,” in Quirk, ed., Ch. 7.

18. Poverty and Inequality

Hacker and Pierson, "Winner-Take-All Politics." *Political Studies* (2010). [Note: this is a long article.]

Week 10 (3/19 – 3/21)

19. Racial and Ethnic Inequality: Civil Rights and Immigration

Jones, et al., "50 years after the Kerner Commission," Economic Policy Institute (2018).

Chetty, et al., "Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States" Executive Summary.

20. Health Care

Marmor and Maioni, "Health Care," in Quirk ed., Ch. 10.

Reagan and Malecha, "Institutional Settings and Deliberation."

Week 11 (3/26 – 3/28)

21. Morality Issues: Abortion and Gay Rights

Mucciaroni and Scala, "Morality Issues: Abortion and Gay Rights," in Quirk ed. Ch. 9

22. Foreign Policy

Friedman, "Is US Grand Strategy Dead?"

Week 12 (4/2 – 4/4)

23. The Environment and Climate Change

Harrison, "Environmental Policy: Global Warming," in Quirk ed., Ch.8.

24. Topic and Readings to be Determined

Week 13 (4/9 – 4/11)

25. Defending and Reforming American Democracy

Bateman, “Race, Party, and American Voting Rights.”

Fiorina, “How to Cure the Ills of Contemporary American Democracy?”

Howell and Moe, Presidents, Populism, and the Crisis of Democracy, Ch. 4.

26. Review and Conclusions

FINAL EXAM (Date TBD)

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UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE STANDARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

Acknowledgement

UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

General Academic Policies

Regular attendance in lectures and tutorials and participation (in tutorials) is expected. All assignments must be completed and handed in. Students who do not attend regularly or fail to hand in an assignment may be disallowed from writing the final exam.

Read the university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may affect you.

Students who wish to appeal grades assigned to their academic work may do so. The initial appeal should be made to the TA or course instructor. If the student

remains unsatisfied with this process, he/she may proceed to the head of the department or further to a formal committee established in accordance with University policies.

Religious holidays – UBC permits students who are scheduled to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religions to notify their instructor in advance of these days and their wish to observe them by absenting themselves from class or examination. Instructors provide opportunity for students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty. (Policy # 65.)

UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC's policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to University services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and to create a welcoming environment. Students with a disability should first meet with an Access and Diversity advisor to determine what accommodations/services you are eligible for.

University Values and Priorities:

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available [here](https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success) (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>)

Academic Integrity and Responsibility

As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your work on essays, exams, and other projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor and/or Teaching Assistant. If you decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others' work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person's permissible contribution. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor or TA.

Academic communities depend on their members' honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others' work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean's Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean's Office. After an interview in the Dean's Office, your case may be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Academic communities also depend on their members' living up to the commitments they make. By enrolling in this course, you make commitments to an academic community: you are responsible for meeting deadlines, and attending class and engaging in class activities. If you find that you cannot meet a deadline or cannot participate in a course activity, discuss your situation with your instructor or TA before the deadline or before your absence.

Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor's prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

Illness and Absence

If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates. If you are planning to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other commitments, you should discuss your commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

Reach out and ask for help if you need it

University students often encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may

have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer student's support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record.

For more information: <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert>

For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness>

Respectful University Environment

UBC recognizes that “the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued.” The full *UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff* can be found at <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf>. Students should read this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct, at: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0>

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office (<http://equity.ubc.ca>), or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students: <https://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca>

Equity and Harassment

UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All peoples should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC's Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: “unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study

opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents.” Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment, you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC), and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life.

Resources are available at:

Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC)
249M, Student Union Building, UBC
604-827-5180
sasc@ams.ubc.ca
<http://amssasc.ca>

Equity and Inclusion Office
2306 – 1874 East Mall (Brock Hall)
604.822.6353
equity@equity.ubc.ca
<http://equity.ubc.ca>

TurnItIn

In accordance with departmental policy, in this course you will be required to submit your research paper in electronic form to a service called TurnItIn. UBC subscribes to this service that checks written material for originality by searching for matching text. This service is in increasing use in universities as protection for students against the impact of academic fraud on scholarship competitions, graduate and law school admissions, and degree reputation. Students will submit their research papers to the TurnItIn website, where software scans the paper against a database which includes public websites, paper writing services, essays submitted to TurnItIn, and journal articles. The service then produces a report on the paper’s originality. The instructor will review the reports, and where necessary, the papers themselves.

Please note that TurnItIn stores information on servers that reside in the United States. If you do not wish to use your name when creating your TurnItIn account, please use an alias and inform the instructor of your alias. You may also wish to use a non-identifying email account.