

York University
Department of Political Science
POLS 4908 3.00: Public Policy and Administration Capstone
Winter 2010

Professor: Thomas Klassen
Seminar: Friday 11:30-14:20
Location: MC 114

Office location: S636 Ross Building
Office hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00 and Friday 2:30-3:30
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Course Description

This course analyses in depth several high-profile contemporary Canadian policy issues. Students will use what they have learned in their prior studies to research and analyze a current policy issue of interest to them. The course provides a foundational framework to enable students to develop their capacity to analyze and understand public policy.

A critical role of policy analysts is to provide advice to decision-makers on how to respond to long-term trends. However, this is often a problematic because the time frame for politicians typically is limited to several years (until the next election) rather than extending to decades or longer. As such, population aging and demographic trends will be employed as one example during class discussions.

The course is designed to stimulate in-depth critical thinking on politics and policy analysis and to develop the skills and knowledge of required by professionals in the broader public sector. It is anticipated that students will produce high-quality case studies that demonstrate their potential as researchers. The course is also useful preparation for further academic and professional studies.

Required text

Howlett, Michael, M. Ramesh and Anthony Perl. 2009. *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems* (3rd edition). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195428025

Additional required readings

Students will be asked to access these via the York Libraries, or in some cases these may be provided electronically.

Recommended text

Dwyer, J. A. & Klassen, T. R. 2005. *Flourishing in university and beyond*. Toronto: York University Bookstore.

Evaluation

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Worth (%)</i>	<i>due date</i>
Article review	20	Jan 29
Peer review	10	Feb 5
Research essay proposal	10	Feb 12
Research proposal seminar	5	Feb. 26
Seminar leadership	15	One date to be selected
Final research essay	40	April 5

Please note

1. Late assignments will not be accepted. Assignments must be submitted in hard copy during class times.
2. Please keep draft copies (electronic and otherwise) of your work for our course. These may be requested.
3. Plagiarism will result, at the minimum, in a grade of zero.
4. If at any time during the course, you have questions or concerns about any aspect of our course, or are uncertain about how to proceed with an assignment, please speak to me.
5. Feel free to submit drafts of assignments for review and feedback to me prior to the due dates.
6. March 8 is the last date to withdraw from this course without receiving a grade.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

January 8 – Welcome, overview and introductions

January 15 – The characteristics of policy and its analysis

Readings: chapter 1

Simeon, Richard. 1976. "Studying Public Policy" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 9.4: 548-580.

January 22 – Theoretical approaches to the study of public policy: Political Economy Rational Choice and Institutionalism

Readings: chapter 2

January 29 – The policy context

Readings: chapter 3

Verweig, Marco. 2000. "Why is the River Rhine Cleaner than the Great Lakes?" *Law and Society Review*, 34.4: 1007-1054

(article review due)

February 5 – Agenda setting

Readings: chapter 4

Case study #1

(peer review due)

February 12 – Policy formulation: policy instruments and policy design

Readings: chapter 5

Schmidt, Ron. 2007. "Comparing Federal Government Immigrant Settlement Policies in Canada and the United States," *The American Review of Canadian Studies*; 37, 1; 103-122.

Balch, George I. 1980. "The Stick, the Carrot, and Other Strategies: A Theoretical Analysis of Governmental Intervention." *Law and Policy Quarterly*, 2.1: 35-60.

Case study #2

(research proposal outline due)

Note: no class on February 19 due to reading week

February 26 – Public policy decision making

Readings: chapter 6

March 5 – Policy implementation

Readings: chapter 7
Briefing note exercise

March 12 – Policy evaluation

Readings: chapter 8

March 19 – Patterns of policy change

Readings: chapter 9

Klassen, Thomas R. and Daniel Buchanan. 2006. "Ideology, policy and economy: Liberal, New Democratic and Conservative reforms of Ontario's welfare program, 1985-2000," *Journal of Canadian Studies*. 40.3: 186-210.

April 5 (note this is Monday) – Conclusions and reflections

No assigned readings
Final paper is due

ARTICLE REVIEW GUIDELINES

Select an article published between 2002 and the present that is at least 10 pages in length in the journal *Canadian Public Policy*, and write a five-page (double spaced) review. Please include a hardcopy of the article with your review.

The review is not summary of the article, just as a movie review is not a mere summary of a film.

The review should include most the following (in whatever order you think is best):

1. A summary of the content of the article that is being reviewed, which should be no longer than one page.
2. What, in your own words, is the author of trying to demonstrate, achieve or explain in the work?
3. A brief discussion of how the work fits into the larger literature. For example, does the article seek to challenge previous findings or approaches?
4. Possibly a discussion of the research methods of the article: What are these? Do they seem reasonable to you in order to answer the question(s) of the author?
5. A discussion of the flaws of the article: Are the conclusions reasonable? Are you convinced by the conclusions? Why or why not? What would you like to have seen added (or deleted) from the work? What would you have done differently?
6. What was the most interesting part of the article for you, and why?
7. Why did you select this particular article?

Attention should be paid to the manner in which the review is structured especially the order in which material is presented. The review should be coherently organized, and concisely written without grammatical and spelling errors. Try to avoid too many headings.

RESEARCH ESSAY PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The proposal may be conceived as a map that provides direction for the research and writing of the research essay. The more detailed and developed the map, the less difficult it should be to write the essay.

You may select any topic of interest related to policy development and analysis, although logically it might be closely linked to our course and to your previous article review. The textbooks for our course may also provide you with suggestions or ideas, as well as sources. Aim to have a focussed topic, problem, issue, controversy, debate or dilemma that is central to your proposal. Avoid vague and general topics. For your proposal you should also indicate why what you have selected to explore is interesting and important.

The proposal will require library and web-based research and you must include bibliography that includes the works consulted so far. It will not be acceptable to have only on-line documents in your bibliography.

There is no one format that will be most appropriate for the proposal. The length of the proposal should be no less than five pages, in addition to the bibliography.

RESEARCH ESSAY GUIDELINES

The research essay must be professional in all aspects. As such, it must have a cover page, title, table of contents, five or six sections (such as introduction, etc.), bibliography and, if you wish, appendices. You are encouraged to use a few visual aids – graphs, charts, photos, diagrams and tables – that must be clearly labeled and referenced. The essay should be a holistic work that demonstrates considerable research and reflection, as well as strong writing skills.

The essay must be at least 16 pages in length using double-spacing and 12 point font. Grades will be deducted for grammatical errors. You must have the paper read (edited) by others before submitting it. Please attach your proposal to the essay.

At least 50% of your citations must be from academic sources (books and articles) and no more than 75% of your sources can web-available. You will need to obtain material from the Scott Library, and/or other libraries that you may have access to.

Web resources

Considerable information on public policy and administration is available to students from web-based sources. Below is a small sample of hot-linked sites.

[Canada School of Public Service](#): information about the latest news and trends in executive learning, including information about executive education and development programs and services and to documents

[The Innovation Journal](#): independent, peer-reviewed, Internet-based journal devoted to sharing ideas and discussing public sector administration innovation

[Index to Federal Royal Commissions](#): materials associated with the more than 200 federal Royal Commissions that have taken place since Confederation from the National Library of Canada

[Institute of Public Administration of Canada](#): national non-profit organization, concerned with the theory and practice of public management, with 17 regional groups across Canada

[Office of the Auditor General of Canada](#): publications, including searchable full text of the Reports of the Auditor General

[Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire](#): access to the House of Commons, Senate and the Library of Parliament, including debates, committee proceedings, and status of legislation

[Privacy Commissioner of Canada](#): includes annual reports

[Privy Council Office](#): includes annual reports to the Prime Minister

[Public Service Commission of Canada - Research Directorate](#): analysis of external labour market trends and public service demographics and research on ways to manage human resources in the federal Public Service

[Public Service Commission of Canada Library](#): includes research papers on public service reform

[United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance](#): forum for knowledge, experiences and best practices worldwide of sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil services

There are also many web sites primarily related to public policy that might be useful for our course, or more generally for those interested in public management. A small sample is hot-linked below.

[Caledon Institute of Social Policy](#)
[Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#)
[Canada West Foundation](#)
[Canadian Council on Social Development \(CCSD\)](#)
[Canadian Labour Congress](#)
[Canadian Policy Research Networks \(CPRN\)](#)
[CD Howe Institute](#)
[Conference Board of Canada](#)
[Fraser Institute](#)
[International Labour Organization](#)
[Institute for Research on Public Policy \(IRPP\)](#)
[International Reform Monitor](#)
[Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation \(OECD\)](#)
[Policy Research Initiative \(PRI\)](#)