

Kent State University  
Department of Political Science

# FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY

Dr. Mark Cassell  
Office: Bowman 302 (35)  
Office Phone: 330-672-8945  
Office Hours: Tues. 1:30-4:30pm; Thur. 1:30-4:30pm;  
**and by appointment.**  
Web Address: [www.personal.kent.edu/~mcassell](http://www.personal.kent.edu/~mcassell)

POL 10300  
Fall 2001  
T-R 10:45-12 pm  
Class meets in Bowman 204  
E-mail: [mcassell@kent.edu](mailto:mcassell@kent.edu)

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the foundations of American public policy. Specifically, the course focuses on the process of public policy making the United States and the substance of policy in selected issue areas. The course objective is to develop a set of conceptual and practical tools that will help you to understand and appreciate American public policy, think critically and constructively about how policies are adopted, and communicate your ideas and thoughts more effectively in writing.

The approach taken in this course is highly active and interactive as we will develop theories and apply them: we will look and listen, question and discuss, search, read and write. Several small tests and assignments along the way will be used to build toward a final product - a paper in which students demonstrate an understanding of the U.S. policy process by writing about process and substance in an issue area of their choice.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Peters, B. Guy. *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Chatham House, 1999.

Donahue, John D. *Hazardous Crosscurrents: Confronting Inequality in an Era of Devolution*. New York: Century Foundation Press, 1999.

Coursepack, Available from instructor.

**\*\*Please complete assigned reading *before* the class period in which we discuss it. Jot down questions that come up as you do the readings; we'll try to take these up during class meetings.\*\***

## ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Attendance is required. We will be covering material that is not "in the book" and working with each other during class time. Two absences will be ignored; after that, two points will be deducted from the "attendance and participation" component of the grade for each absence. Do

not waste absences on frivolous matters! Save them for serious difficulties: severe weather, personal illness, family emergency.

Some participation in discussion, both full class and small groups, is also required. You don't have to have something to say every time we meet, but do speak up with a considered opinion or good question now and then.

**MINI-TESTS:** These will be brief tests on material covered in class, intended to help students keep up with concept and theory development and integrate material as we go along.

**INTERIM ASSIGNMENTS:** These assignments are building blocks toward the course paper and are detailed in a separate handout.

**COURSE PAPER:** A solid understanding of process and substance in one policy area of your choice, demonstrated in a 10-12 page paper, is the achievement toward which the course builds. The paper is detailed in a separate handout.

**GRADING:** The following scale is used for each of the components of the final grade and for the final grade.

A+	97-100	C+	77-79	F <60
A	93-96	C	73-76	
A-	90-92	C-	70-72	
B+	87-89	D+	67-69	
B	83-86	D	63-66	
B-	80-82	D-	60-62	

The components of the final grade will be weighted as follows.

Attendance & Participation	10%	
3 Mini-tests	30%	(10% each)
Interim assignments:	30%	
Issue network	10%	
Annotated bib	10%	
Roundtable	10%	
Paper	30%	

**DISABILITY POLICY:** In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students with disabilities must verify the eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services in the Michael Schwartz Student Services Center (672-2972).

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Cheating means to misrepresent the source, nature, or other conditions of your academic work (e.g., tests, papers, projects, assignments) so as to get

undeserved credit. The use of the intellectual property of others without giving them appropriate credit is a serious academic offense. It is the University's policy that cheating or plagiarism result in receiving a failing grade for the work or course. Repeat offenses result in dismissal from the University.

**FINAL NOTE:** The syllabus is subject to change.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

<b><u>WEEK</u></b>	<b><u>TOPICS</u></b>
1: Aug 28	Course intro. Paper.
1: Aug 30	Library Session.
2: Sept 4	What is public policy? <i>Amer. Public Policy</i> , Ch 1.
2: Sept 6	Film "Vote for me"
<b>PART I: IDEAS IN THE POLICY PROCESS</b>	
3: Sept 11, 13	Ideas in the policy process Coursepack: entire
4: Sept 18, 20	Ideas in the policy process (continued)/ Mini-test (on ideas) No assigned reading. You should be doing research on topic. <b>Mini-test on Sept. 20.</b>
<b>PART II: INSTITUTIONS IN THE POLICY PROCESS</b>	
5: Sept 25, 27	Issue networks and social security <i>Amer. Public Policy</i> , Ch 2, especially 29-37. <b>Statement of policy area choice due on Sept 27.</b>
6: Oct 2,4	Issue networks and social security (continued) Film "Social Insecurity" No assigned reading. Keep research going.
7: Oct 9, 11	Federalism and income inequality <i>Confronting Inequality</i> , pp. 1-34. <b>Issue network assignment due on October 11.</b>

8: Oct 16, 18

Federalism and income inequality (cont.)/ **Mini-test (on federalism);**

Introduction to steps in the policy process.

*Confronting Inequality*, pp. 35-84.

**Mini-test 2 on October 18.**

**PART III: STEPS IN THE POLICY PROCESS**

- 9: Oct 23, 25      Steps: Agenda Setting, Policy formulation, Legitimation  
*Amer. Public Policy, Ch 3, Ch 4*  
**Annotated bibliography due on October 25.**
- 10: Oct 30, Nov 1      Steps: Implementation / Roundtable Planning  
*Amer. Public Policy, Ch 5*
- 11: Nov 6, 8      Steps: Budgeting  
*Amer. Public Policy, Ch 6*
- 12: Nov 13      Guest speaker
- 12: Nov 15      Steps: Evaluation/ Mini-test (on steps). Roundtable planning.  
*Amer. Public Policy, Ch 7*
- 13: Nov 20      Steps: Evaluation (cont)  
**Mini-test on Nov 20.**
- Nov 22      Thanksgiving – **NO CLASS**
- 14: Nov 27, 29      Roundtables

**PAPER DUE ON NOVEMBER 29**

- 15: Dec. 4, 6      Roundtables

**NO FINAL EXAM**