

College of Professional Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

Politics and Public Policy

LGAF 6201 LH

3 Credits

Basic Information & Resources

Instructor

Stephanie Vance

Stephanie D. Vance, also known as the “Advocacy Guru,” is a thirty-year veteran of the Washington, D.C. political scene. She worked on Capitol Hill for three different members of Congress in a variety of roles including Legislative Assistant, Legislative Director and Chief of Staff. She's also been a lobbyist for National Public Radio and a legislative affairs associate for a prominent DC law firm.

In 2005 Stephanie founded Advocacy Associates, a firm dedicated to helping individuals and organizations be both heard *and* agreed with in the legislative environment. To achieve that goal she provides in-person and online trainings on effective advocacy for thousands of organizations and individuals around the world, including such big names as the Humane Society of the United States, the National Association of Realtors, and the American Medical Association. Stephanie's authored five non-fiction books including *Citizens in Action: A Guide to Influencing Government* and *The Influence Game*.

Stephanie holds a Master in Legislative Affairs degree from George Washington University, a Master in Liberal Studies degree from Georgetown University, and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Western Colorado University. She lives and works in Washington D.C..

Contact Information

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Communication

Email is the best way to contact me. I check my email several times per day and will usually respond within 24 hours. I am available to meet with students after class and by appointment. Please call/text only for immediate concerns (if you may have to miss class due to illness, for example). Text is always better than calling. For longer discussions, please e-mail first to set up a time to talk.

Course Details

Course Description and Overview

What is public policy? What is the role of politics in setting the government's policy agenda? How does the political situation in Washington affect the issues our government acts on, and the policy choices our government makes? This course focuses on these questions. Policy choices are POLITICAL decisions. What that means, and how it affects policy outcomes, is our subject.

Course Learning Objectives

As result of completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Be familiar with public policy theories and how they aid in understanding modern political debates
2. Recognize the key players (both inside and outside of government) who participate in the US national public policy-making system, what roles they play, and how they take part in decision-making
3. Examine their roles/prospective roles in the public policy system and understand how to perform those roles more effectively

Program Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Gain both theoretical and practical knowledge related to the U.S. Congress, general issues in the legislative arena, and how to effectively advance legislation;
2. Hone their oral and written communication skills in both theoretical and technical aspects of legislative affairs;
3. Be able to conduct cutting-edge research and engage in effective problem solving by learning critical thinking skills; and
4. Learn how to work effectively with others, the value of collaborative work, and will understand ethical issues involved in the legislative arena.

Required Text and Learning Materials

- Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, John W. Kingdon (an older edition is fine)
- The President's Agenda (3rd edition), 1998, by Paul Light
- Access to Podcasts (Ben Shapiro and Best of the Left)
- Additional readings will be assigned.

Evaluation and Grading

This course will include the following types of assessment:

- Class discussion
- Take home midterm quiz & final
- Two five to seven-page papers
- Occasional mini-research assignments for discussion in class (in lieu of readings)

Assessments will contribute toward the student’s grade based on the following chart:

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Paper #1	Identifying problems, policies, politics in past policy		20%
Paper #2	Recommendation for moving preferred policy forward		25%
Congressional hearing	Compiling all lessons learned		15%
Class attendance			15%
Participation in online discussions			25%

Total			100%
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**If you need an extension, please let me know at least two days prior to the due date. These will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Tentative Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar. Final dates and details will be found on the Blackboard course site.

Note: Because this course focuses on current events, some weekly topics may shift based on the timing of the State of the Union address and the President's budget submission.

Unit	Asynchronous	Readings	Assignment	In Class
<p>1</p> <p>Date of class: 2/4</p>		<p><i>Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies</i>, Chapters 1-3</p>	<p>Blog Post: Introduce yourself to your colleagues</p> <p>Due 2/4</p>	<p>Introductions & Overview of the course</p> <p>Policy origins, problems in addressing them and communities</p>
<p>Week of February 2/4 to 2/11</p>				
<p>2</p> <p>Date of class: 2/11</p>	<p><u>Videos from professor</u></p> <p>Chapter 4: Kingdon paradigm</p> <p>Chapter 5-Problems</p> <p>Chapter 6-Policies</p> <p>Chapter 7: Politics</p> <p><u>Podcast</u></p> <p>Listen to one episode of this week's <i>Ben Shapiro</i> podcast or <i>Pod Save America</i></p>	<p><i>Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies</i>, Chapters 4-7</p>	<p>Identify elements of the "three Ps" in the podcast host's discussion of the issues of the day</p>	<p>The three "Ps" class discussion in Kingdon and podcast</p> <p>Assign breakouts & brainstorm on creating a podcast</p>
<p>Week of 2/11 to 2/18</p>				
<p>3</p> <p>Date of class 2/18</p>	<p>Watch "Republicans Unveil 2017 Tax Plan" https://youtu.be/sFFDKPEzKAc & review discussion guide. How did the Republicans open a policy</p>	<p><i>Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies</i>, Chapter 8</p>	<p>Work with your breakout group to create a podcast of no more than 5 to 10 minutes. Post by 2/16.</p>	<p>Policy Windows class discussion</p> <p>Breakout discussion of podcasts</p>

Unit	Asynchronous	Readings	Assignment	In Class
	<p>window to achieve this goal? (approx. 40 minutes)</p> <p>Listen to one episode of the "opposite side's" podcast (i.e., if you listened to <i>Ben Shapiro</i> last week, listen to <i>Pod Save America</i> this week)</p>		<p>Listen to classmates' podcasts. Come to class prepared to discuss</p>	<p>Explanation of Slack exercise</p>
<p>Week of 2/18 – 2/25</p> <p>Follow White House Twitter feed starting 2/18 through end of Presidential Agenda section</p>				
<p>4</p> <p>Date of class: 2/25</p>	<p>Watch President Biden's State of the Union & analyze for anticipated agenda items</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Review President Obama's platform and 1st budget. Then watch his First State of the Union Address in 2010</p>	<p><i>The President's Agenda</i>, Introduction + Chapters 1-5</p>	<p>Use Slack to post #presidential Twitter-style commentary</p>	<p>How Presidents Develop Agendas Part #1 discussion</p>
<p>Week of 2/25 – 3/4</p>				
<p>5</p> <p>Date of Class: 3/4</p>	<p>TBD (Based on timing of Biden SoTU)</p>	<p><i>The President's Agenda</i>, Chapters 9 & 11</p>	<p>Keep up the #presidential Slack conversation.</p>	<p>How Presidents Develop Agendas Part #2 discussion</p> <p>Explain "Congressional Influence" Assignment</p>
<p>Week of 3/4-3/11</p>				

Unit	Asynchronous	Readings	Assignment	In Class
Follow House/Senate Leadership Twitter feed through end of Congressional section				
6 Date of Class: 3/11	Professor videos on policy entrepreneurs, specifically advocacy and lobbying strategies	Washington and the Contract with America: <i>The Atlantic</i> Milstead Three-Legged Stool	Blog post on Congressional Influence assignment.	The First 100 Days: How Congressional Agendas are Set discussion The policy influence three-legged stool discussion Exercise on crafting an influential message
WEEK OF 3/15 SPRING BREAK!!				
7 Date of Class: 3/25	Video from the Congressional Management Foundation (TBD)	None	First paper due	Politics, Policy and Process: A Capitol Hill Perspective
Week of 3/25-4/1				
Follow Interest Group Twitter feed through end of section				
8 Date of Class: 4/1	Professor lecture on misuse of statistics.	CRS Report vs. Interest group materials (professor to provide options)	Post to #interest-group channel on Slack.	The role of facts (and alternative facts) in the policy process Breakout to discuss procon.org topic
Week of 4/1-4/8				

Unit	Asynchronous	Readings	Assignment	In Class
<p>9</p> <p>Date of Class: 4/8</p>	<p>Watch a Congressional Hearing (of your choice) with review guide</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Post to #interest-group channel on Slack.</p> <p>Discuss paper #2 with colleagues (it doesn't need to be completed). Professor will assign groups of three.</p> <p>Post video of discussion, including list of paper topics, by 4/8.</p>	<p>How Policies and Politics Come Together in Congressional Hearings</p> <p>Breakout discussions</p>
<p>Week of 4/8-4/15</p> <p>Follow Congressional Committee Twitter feed through end of section</p>				
<p>10</p> <p>Date of Class: 4/15</p>	<p>Prepare your panel for mock Congressional hearing.</p>	<p>House Committee Hearings: Witness Testimony (congress.gov)</p> <p>Senate Committee Hearings: Witness Testimony (congress.gov)</p>	<p>Paper #2 Due</p> <p>Post on #CongressCommittee Slack channel</p>	<p>Mock Congressional Hearing</p>

Expectations and Responsibilities

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site regularly throughout the semester to review weekly course content, view announcements, and submit assignments. Students can access the course site through [GWU Blackboard](#).

Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or the [IT Blackboard web page](#).

Please note that your access to this course on Blackboard will continue for one month after the course ends. If you wish to keep any work or materials, you must download or save them before the course closes.

Technology Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the required technology to fully participate in this course. The minimum technology requirements for learning online at GW are outlined on the [Technical Requirements and Support](#) web page.

If you have any problems with the technology in this course, you can seek technological support from GW in a variety of ways, outlined on the [IT Support](#) website.

GW is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment that is accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities.

The following links provide more information about the accessibility of technologies that may be used in this course:

- [Blackboard accessibility](#)
- [Zoom accessibility](#)

If you have any issues regarding the accessibility of the technology used in this course, please contact your instructor. You may also explore the [Disability Support Services](#) website.

Technology Expectations

Regarding technology skills, you should be able to:

- Create documents and presentation slides
- Use a webcam and microphone
- Use a digital camera or scanner
- Upload files, including recordings and images
- Be open to learning and registering for new technologies
- Be flexible when technological glitches happen (which is a given)
- Seek technological help when necessary by contacting the Division of Information Technology

If you have any problems with the technology expectations in this course, please contact your instructor.

Getting Started

Everything you need to get started in the course is contained within the Blackboard course site. You can use the menu links on the left side panel to view different components. The content for each learning unit is divided into folders—one for each week. More unit folders will unlock as weeks in the course progress.

Participation Policy

All students are expected to learn and contribute by being a positive participant in discussions, activities, presentations, and assignments. If you have an unavoidable conflict or become ill, in a way that will affect your participation in a given week, please notify your instructor immediately.

Grading Scale

Following is the grade scale for all CPS classes:

Grade	Range	Grade Standard
A	94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+	87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B	83-86	Good work, but needs reworking and more effort.
B-	80-82	You've completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+	77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

Netiquette

Please observe the following rules of netiquette for communicating online:

- Remain professional, respectful, and courteous at all times.
- Remember that a real human being wrote each post and will read what you write in response. It is easy to misinterpret discussion posts. Let's give the benefit of the doubt.
- If you have a strong opinion on a topic, it is acceptable to express it as long as it is not phrased as an attack. Please be gracious with differing opinions.
- When upset, wait a day or two prior to posting. Messages posted (or emailed) in anger are often regretted later.
- Proofread and use the spell check tool when you type a post. It makes the post easier to read and helps your readers understand what you are saying.

Your instructor reserves the right to delete any post that is deemed inappropriate for the discussion forum, blog, or wiki without prior notification to the student. This includes any post containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful. Posts that are seriously off-topic or serve no purpose other than to vent frustration will also be removed.

Credit Hour Policy

For this **10-week, 3-credit course** there will be an average of **7-8 hours** of combined direct instruction and independent learning per week. More information about GWU's credit hour policy can be found at [the Office of the Provost's Policies](#) web page (Under: Assignment of Credit Hour Policy).

University Policies & Services

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For details and complete code, see [GW's Code of Academic Integrity](#).

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. For details see the current religious holiday policy on [the Office of the Provost's Policies](#) web page.

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services. They can be contacted by phone at 202-994-8250 or in person at Rome Hall, 801 22nd Street, NW, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information visit the [Disability Support Services](#) website.

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. For additional information call 202-994-5300 or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) website.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is located in Gelman Library at 2130 H St NW in Suite 221 and they can be reached at 202-994-3765 or via email at gwriter@gwu.edu. You can [schedule writing center appointments](#), both in-person or by phone, in advance. Daytime and evening hours are available. Check for this semester's hours at the [writing center contact page](#). The Writing Center does offer Summer hours.

GWU Libraries

Off campus students have full access to all of the research resources, services, and assistance that the Library offers. The GW community has access to 500+ online subscription databases and to millions of items, electronic and print, in the library catalog. Off-campus students even have additional privileges

because the Library will FedEx print materials to your home. For more information visit the [GW Libraries](#) homepage.

Call the Ask Us desk at 202-994-6048 or [contact someone at the library](#) to answer any questions. For questions beyond “Do you have this book/article?” and “How do I login?” use the website mentioned to make a research consultation appointment with a librarian. Librarians are there to guide students through any aspect of the research process, from selecting and narrowing a topic, crafting a research strategy to citation management.

Safety and Security

- **In an emergency:** call GWPD at 202-994-6111 or call 911
- **For situation-specific actions:** review the [Emergency Response Handbook](#)
- **In an active violence situation:** [Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out](#)
- **Stay informed:** review [notification tools for staying informed during emergency and safety related situations](#)

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Please contact [Disability Support Services](#) if you need additional accommodations for accessing electronic course materials.