

# The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs**  
Spring 2022

**Politics and Public Policy**  
LGAF 6201 LH  
3 Credits

Thursday, 6-8pm  
Hall of States

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## BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Instructor

David Skillman  
Managing Director  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP

David Skillman is an attorney and Managing Director at Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, where he represents clients across tax, trade, and infrastructure matters.

He served for more than a decade as Deputy Chief of Staff and Counsel to Congressman Earl Blumenauer, Chairman of the Trade Subcommittee of the Committee on Ways and Means. Mr. Skillman led Chairman Blumenauer's negotiations for the House Democrats' Trade Working Group, as it sought changes necessary for Congressional approval of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. He also authored portions of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 and played a key role in the enactment of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015.

In addition, Mr. Skillman developed and enacted legislation supporting renewable energy incentives, including extensions of the production tax credit, the investment tax credit, and the creation of the investment tax credit for distributed wind energy and led Congressman Blumenauer's negotiations on the Conference Committee of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, a reauthorization of the federal surface transportation programs. Finally, Mr. Skillman supervised the creation and expansion of the Congressional Cannabis Caucus and Cannabis Working Group. Prior to law school, he was a Coro Fellow for Civic Affairs at Carnegie Mellon University.

### Contact Information

David Skillman  
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(541) 968-3473 (cell)

### Communication

Email is the best way to reach me and I'll try to get back to you that day. I'm available to meet with students after class and by appointment. Please call/text only for immediate concerns (if you must miss class due to illness, for example). Texting is generally better than calling. If a longer discussion will be necessary, please e-mail to set up a time to talk.

### **Blackboard Site**

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course, which you'll have access to one week before the course starts.

### **Academic Integrity**

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. 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." Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

### **University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays**

- 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.
- Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
- Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

### **Support for Students with Disabilities**

GW's Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at <http://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

### **In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class**

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we must leave, we will meet at the Dunkin Donuts (on the lower level of Union Station) to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

### **Attendance Policy**

You are expected to attend all of the classes. If you are unable to attend, please let me know prior to class via email ([David.Skillman@arnoldporter.com](mailto:David.Skillman@arnoldporter.com)).

### **Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation**

Over the course of the semester, students will spend at least 2 hours (100 minutes) per week in class. Required reading for the class meetings and written response papers or projects are expected to take up, on average, 7 hours (350 minutes) per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 25 hours in instructional time and 87.5 hours preparing for class.

### **Course Evaluation**

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Casey Burgat  
Director, Legislative Affairs Program  
[cburgat@gwu.edu](mailto:cburgat@gwu.edu) |

Suzanne Farrand  
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM  
[sfarrand@gwu.edu](mailto:sfarrand@gwu.edu) | 202-994-9309

### **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**

The course has three learning objectives; by the end of the course, students will:

- Be familiar with public policy theories and how they aid in understanding modern political debates
- 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
- Examine their roles/prospective roles in the public policy system and understand how to perform those roles more effectively

### **Legislative Affairs Program Objectives**

Upon completion of the Master's degree in Legislative Affairs, 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.

### **Graduate School Expectations**

Students enrolled in a graduate program should take their academic responsibilities seriously and be prepared to meet the following expectations:

1. Use effective time management skills so as to complete and submit their assignments on their required due dates and times.
2. Have attained a mastery of written communication skills including proper sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and word usage.

3. Understand how to properly format in-text citations and references for resources and information integrated into their written assignments.

### Course Requirements

Attend class. Learn!

### Evaluation and Grading

Assignment	Learning Objective(s) Addressed	Due Date	Weight
Paper No. 1	Analysis of past policy	10/18	20%
Presentations	Oral presentations on papers #1 and 2	TBD	10%
Paper No. 2	Policy recommendation	12/6	30%
Mock Senate Hearing	Consideration of policy proposal	TBD	10%
Various Assignments for Class Discussion	Application of readings	Periodic	15%
Attendance & Participation	In-class discussions and preparation	Always	15%
Total			100%

### Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*	Grading 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	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable.
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.

\*Please note that you will be penalized for late submission of assignments.

### 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
- Additional readings will be assigned.

### **Tentative Course Calendar\***

*\*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.*

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#### **Session 1 – January 13**

Topic and Content Covered:

- Introductions
- Overview of the course
- Discussion: Kingdon Problems, Policies, and Politics paradigm
- Podcast assignment

Reading/Class Preparation Due Today:

- *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 1-3
  - Listen to one episode of Ben Shapiro and one episode of Pod Save America. Prepare for discussion.
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#### **Session 2 – January 20**

Topic and Content covered

- Discussion: Deep-dive into the elements of the three streams

Reading/Class Preparation Due Today:

- *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 4-7

Assignment Due:

- Podcasts posted (will be due to be posted before class) and reviewed
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#### **Session 3 – January 27**

Topic and Content Covered:

- Discussion: Policy windows

Reading/Class Preparation Due Today:

- *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 8-9
- Watch "Republicans Unveil 2017 Tax Plan" <https://youtu.be/sFfDKPEzKAc> & review discussion guide. How did the Republicans open a policy window to achieve this goal? (approx. 40 minutes)
- Case Study TBD

Assignment Due:

- Paper #1 Topic

### Session 4 – February 3

Topic and Content Covered:

- The three-legged stool & deep dive into lobbying
- Guest speaker – Stephanie Vance & the power of grassroots
- Explanation: "Choose a Congressperson" assignment & groups for message exercise

Readings/Class Preparation Due Today:

- About the Three-Legged Stool:  
[http://samples.jbpub.com/9781449665098/97768\\_CH03\\_Milstead.pdf](http://samples.jbpub.com/9781449665098/97768_CH03_Milstead.pdf) (note that this is geared toward Nurse advocates, but the principles apply across the board)
  - What influences legislators: [SEE IN BLACKBOARD]
  - Summary of CMF report of your choice
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### Session 5 – February 10

Topic and Content Covered:

- Choose a Congressperson breakouts.
- Exercise on crafting an influential message for a specific legislator.

Readings/Class Preparation Due Today:

- Choose a Congressperson analysis
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### Session 6 – February 17

Topic and Content Covered

- Guest Speaker: Sara Chieffo, VP of League of Conservation Voters
- How Congressional Agendas are set (Contract with America and Dem agenda case study)
- Breakouts: compare and contrast

Readings/Class Preparation Due Today

- Washington and the Contract with America: *The Atlantic*  
(<https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/jfnpr/jfreview.htm>)
- The Democratic platform of 2006, the so-called "6 for '06 New Direction" plan: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/political-rallying-cry/new-direction-for-america.pdf>

### **Session 7 – February 24**

Topic and Content Covered:

- Presidential Agenda Discussion #1:
  - Definition of Agenda, Political Capital, Choosing Issues
- Explanation: Past SoTU analysis assignment
- Explanation: Paper #2 assignment

Readings/Class Preparation Due Today:

- *Light* Chapters 1-4

Assignment Due Today:

- Paper #1
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### **Session 8 – March 3**

Topic and Content Covered:

- Presidential Agenda Discussion #2

Reading/Class Preparation Due Today:

- *Light*, Chapters 5-9
  - State of the Union/Budget Assignment (to post and comment)
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### **Session 9 – March 10**

Topic and Content Covered:

- Courts and agenda setting

Reading/Class Preparation Due Today:

- See under “assignments” on Blackboard
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### **Session 10 – March 24**

Topic and Content Covered

- Guest speaker: Writing in the real world, Tim Silva
- Guest speaker: Misuse of statistics, Stephanie Vance
- The role of facts (and alternative facts) in the policy process
- Choosing the relevant arguments for your policy issues

Reading/Class Preparation Due Today:

- Professor lecture
  - Procon.org topic
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### **Session 11 – March 31**

#### Topic and Content Covered

- Guest speaker: Polling and detecting the “national mood,” Dan Cox
- Paper #2 brainstorming session

#### Reading/Discussion Preparation Due Today:

- Review paper topics posted on Blackboard and consider options for your colleagues

#### Assignment Due Today:

- Analysis of interest group one-pager/white pager (your choice) (to post and comment) (this is the second asynchronous hour assignment)
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### **Session 12 – April 7**

#### Topic and Content Covered

- Consequential hearings & their impact on the process
- Explanation: Mock hearing & choose roles

#### Reading/Discussion Preparation Due Today:

- Hearing viewings TBD
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### **Session 13 – April 14**

#### Topic and Content Covered

- Mock Hearing

#### Reading/Class Preparation Due Today:

- Prepare for hearing
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### **Session 14 – April 21**

#### Topic and Content Covered

- Paper #2 presentations
- Dubliner (as long as desired)

#### Reading/Discussion Preparation Due Today



Assignment Due:

- Paper #2

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*Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.*