

Masters in Legislative Affairs Program
The George Washington University
LGAF 6201 LH: Politics and Public Policy
Fall 2015

James Carter
 Adjunct Professor
 GSPM, Department of Legislative Affairs
 j_edward_carter@yahoo.com
 202-662-8796
 Office hours: by appointment

THE COURSE

Description and Overview:

What is public policy, and 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.

The course has three learning objectives; at 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

How Your Grade Will Be Determined:

Assignment	Notes	Due Date	Weight
One-page section summaries	Section #1 Section #2 Section #3	Sept. 24 Oct. 8 Nov. 5	5% 5% 5%
Mock hearing performance		Oct. 8	15%
Public policy memo		Nov. 12	20%
Final exam		Tuesday, December 8	35%
Attendance and participation	Class participation includes a question that you must prepare prior to every class. This question should be crafted to stimulate a discussion among members of the class and should be based on the readings for that session. I will call on you randomly to read your question, pose questions on the topic, and lead discussion.	Every class!	15%
Total			100%

Readings:

- Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, John W. Kingdon (an older edition is fine)
- The President's Agenda (3rd edition), 1998, by Paul Light
- The Laws that Shaped America, 2009, by Dennis Johnson
- Additional readings may be assigned.

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.

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://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

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 www.gwu.edu/~dss.

Attendance Policy:

You are expected to attend all of the classes. If you are unable to make it, please let me know via email (j_edward_carter@yahoo.com).

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 have to leave here, we will meet in the front lobby at **Union Station** in order 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/>.

Class Schedule:

**** SECTION 1 ****

Class #1 – September 3

Topics: Introductions & class overview
The Fiscal Cliff: A Case Study

Class #2 – September 10

Readings: *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 1-2
Laws, Chapter 7 (The GI Bill of 1944)

Class #3 – September 17

Readings: *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 3-4
Laws, Chapter 8 (The Marshall Plan of 1948)

**** SECTION 2 ****

Class #4 – September 24

Readings: *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 5-6
Laws, Chapter 9 (The Interstate Highway Act of 1956)
Assignment: Section 1 summary due
Note: You will be assigned your mock hearing roles today.

Class #5 – October 1

Readings: *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 7-9
Laws, Chapter 6 (The Social Security Act of 1935)

**** SECTION 3 ****

Class #6 -- October 8

Assignment: Mock hearing
Assignment: Section 2 summary due

Class #7 – October 15

Readings: *The President's Agenda*, Introduction + Chapters 1-5
Laws, Chapter 11 (The Medicare and Medicaid Act of 1965)

Class #8 – October 22

Guest Speaker: Rep. Geoff Davis (R-KY), ret.
"Making Good Policy Requires Good Politics: The Journey from Idea to Reality"

Class #9 – October 29

Readings: *The President's Agenda*, Chapters 6-12

**** SECTION 4 ****

Class #10 – November 5

Field Trip: TBD
Assignment: Section 3 summary due

Class #11 – November 12

Topic: Lobbying
Assignment: Public policy memo due

Class #12 – November 19

Guest Speaker: TBD

Happy Thanksgiving! -- November 26

Class #13 – December 3

Review

Class #14 – TUESDAY, December 8

Final exam

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. Steven Billet
Director, Legislative Affairs Program
sbillet@gwu.edu | 202-994-1149

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

Copyright Statement:

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.