M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs  
Spring 2016  
Class start/end date Jan. 14 – April 21, 2016

Course Name: Politics and Public Policy  
Course Number LGAF 6201  
3 Credits

Class Day/Time Thursdays, 6 – 8 pm  
Class Location Hall of the States

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor
For most of his career, Gene has worked in politics at either the electoral or policy levels. A veteran Hill staffer, he has worked for several members of Congress and developed a working knowledge of the appropriations and budget processes. Currently, he serves as Director of Legislative Affairs for the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES). Previously he worked for the Council of District of Columbia where he was Director of the Committee on Business, Consumer, and Regulatory Affairs. The Committee has jurisdiction over small business development policy; business regulatory and consumer affairs; the regulation, sale and distribution of alcoholic products. Gene earned a BS in history from Campbell University, an MA in political management from The George Washington University, and an MA in national security and strategic studies from the U.S. Naval War College. He serves on the Advisory Counsel for North Carolina State University’s School of Public and International Affairs.

Contact Information
Phone Number: (202) 281-8725  
Email Address: gene.fisher.dc@gmail.com

Communication
Best phone number to reach me is the (202) 281-8725. I am prompt when responding to email correspondence, and I always acknowledge receipt of email communications. If you do not receive a response from me within 4 to 5 hours, please either text or call me. If you desire to meet with me personally, I am generally available after class. I am available to meet with students most evenings after 5 pm and by appointment on weekends.

Blackboard Site
A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Many course materials will be posted and each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester. I regularly email students when new material is posted on the Blackboard site. Students can access the course site at https://blackboard.gwu.edu. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

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.

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.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class
If we experience 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 at [fill in proximate location] 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/.

Attendance Policy
Students’ are not graded on attendance; however, they are reminded that class participation accounts for 20 percent of the course grade. Students who do not contribute to class discussion are graded accordingly.

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. At the course’s end, the professor will ask students to complete an anonymous course 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
THE COURSE

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;
   4. Learn how to work effectively with others, the value of collaborative work, and will understand ethical issues involved in the legislative arena.

Course Description and Overview
The Politics and Public Policy course is about policy processes, making choices and getting things done in our political institutions, principally at the federal level. The course looks at process models and policy choice theories decision makers use to achieve positive political outcomes and solutions to public policy problems.

Course Learning Objectives
Course objectives are to expand the students’ understanding and knowledge of the particular concepts that influence the policy process, including the study of process models and policy choice theories. Specific learning objectives for the course are to:

   1. Increase the ability to perform effectively as a decision maker or staff member in a political institution’s decision-making structure;
   2. Apply critical thinking and analyze policy decisions and implementation involving complex political issues; and
   3. Increase understanding of key concepts and issues that impact on, and are useful in developing policy solutions, making policy choices, and addressing public policy challenges within the political environment.

Course Requirements

Short Essays
Each student will be required to write and submit at least two summary essays of one page in length in memo form (approximately 500 - 750 words), single spaced (or two pages, double-spaced) analyzing topics assigned in class. These essays will be assigned at roughly equal intervals over the course of the semester. Essays will focus on analyzing key concepts, principles and, where appropriate, historical phenomena or case studies covered in course readings and other relevant material. Although some of the readings deal with historical case studies, students should avoid straying into factual or historical narration such as dates, proper names and detailed descriptions of events. The emphasis is to focus on key concepts and principles of public policy analysis.

Course Paper
Students are required to write a 15-page paper on a specific topic in either the internal or domestic policy environments. The paper is a vehicle by which the student will demonstrate an understanding of the structural contexts and environmental factors influencing the decision making, planning, and policy making processes that make government policy. More information will be presented at the course orientation.

**Evaluation and Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay No. 1</td>
<td>Application of public policy concepts and principles</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay No. 2</td>
<td>Application of public policy concepts and principles</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Policy Analysis Presentation</td>
<td>Student Groups will be assigned to perform a policy analysis for presentation to a chief executive and the administration’s team. Teams will present an analysis on a specific, highly visible issue being debated in our public institutions. Teams will provide an analysis of the key policy issues connected with the subject matter, an itemizations of major decision points, recommendations for policy alternatives and answers to other questions the executive branch will want to each team to address.</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Paper</td>
<td>An examination of a case study that can be used to evaluate and demonstrate an understanding of the factors in the international OR domestic political systems within which public policy is made. It is a vehicle for students to apply policy models and course concepts to real world situations.</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>Demonstrate a comprehension of the material covered in the course</td>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

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

**Required Text and Learning Materials**

**Politics and Public Policy**

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy* (2nd ed.)

Deborah A. Stone, *Policy Paradox* (1st or 2nd ed.)

John B. Judis, *The Paradox of American Democracy*

Van Horn, et al, *Politics and Public Policy*

Paul Light, *The President’s Agenda*

**Optional Supplemental Text and Learning Materials**

Additional readings may be assigned and will be posted on Blackboard.

**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.

**Week 1: January 14**

Orientation

Course Introduction to the Policy Making Process and Elements of Policy Making System

Readings for Next Week: Start Reading *Politics and Public Policy* (Van Horn, et. al.) and *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy* (Kingdon)

**Week 2: January 21**

Structural Environment of the Policy Making System
Overview of Official Actors in the System
Readings for Next Week: Finish *Politics and Public Policy* and continue with Kingdon

**Week 3, January 28**
Unofficial Actors in the System
Policy Making in Different Policy Domains
Readings for Next Week: Finish *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy* (Kingdon), start reading the *President’s Agenda* (Light)

**Week 4, February 4**
Setting the Policy Agenda
Interest Groups, Focusing Events, and Power
Readings: Finish the *President’s Agenda* (Light)
Chaps. 1-6; begin *Policy Paradox* (Stone)
Agenda Setting (cont.)
**Assignment Due Next Week:** 1st One Pager

**Week 5, February 11**
The President’s most important power
Readings for next week: Finish *Policy Paradox* (Stone)
**Assignment Due: One-Pager**

**Week 6, February 18**
The importance of defining goals and the determination of policy effectiveness
Readings for Next Week: John Judis: *The Paradox of American Democracy*

**Week 7, February 25**
The Influence of Unofficial Actors in the System
Readings for Next Week: TBD
**Assignment Due Next Week:** 2nd One Pager

**Week 8, March 3**
Policy Types
**Assignment Due: 2nd One Pager**
**Assignment for Next Week:** Group Presentations

**Week 9, March 10**
Group Presentations on an Assigned Policy Analysis
Readings for Next Class: TBD

**March 17**  Spring Break

**Week 10, March 24**
Policy Types and Designs
Readings for Next Week: *Government’s Greatest Achievements* (Light)
Assignment Due Next Week: Course Paper

**Week 11, March 31**
What government does right
Assignment Due: Course Paper (Hard Copies)

Week 12, April 7
Policy Implementation and learning from successes and failures

Week 13, April 14 (Class will Meet Off-Campus)
Wrap Up
Return Course Papers to Students
Assignment: Take Home Exam

Week 14, April 21
Students Turn In Exams (Hard Copies)

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.

Key Dates

February 11 – 1st One Pager (Hard Copy)

February 25 – 2nd One Pager (Hard Copy)

March 3 – Policy Analysis Group Presentations

March 17 – Spring Break

March 31 – Turn in Course Paper (Hard Copy)

April 23 – Hand in Exam (Hard copy)