Course Objectives

This course serves as one of two core course for PhD students who are specializing in Public Policy as one of their fields and who plan to write the major field exam (MFE) in public policy. It builds on the theories and approaches explored in the fall semester course, Pol 2318H to apply them to empirical cases in public policy. Students will read widely in the public policy literature and be expected to apply what they learn in class discussions and written essays.

The course is organized around some extended treatments of models and methods in comparative public policy research. The first part of the course focuses on examining the strength of comparative political economy and historical institutional accounts of economic and social policy making, mainly in the North American and European contexts, although we also examine the transportability of these approaches to countries in the Global South. We then switch our lens to examine empirical applications of policy feedback theories, including the feedback effects of various policy designs and choice of instruments, and implications for various political communities. Our final extended treatment focuses on applications of models of policy learning, policy convergence and divergence, and the interaction between international and domestic factors in policy making. Throughout the course we will pay particular attention to both models of policymaking and methods of policy analysis.

The course is also open to MA students. They must consult the instructor to ensure they have the background for the demands of the course. Students are expected to have sufficient background in research design and methods to address, in seminar discussions and assignments, the merits of the methods employed in the course readings (which may include large-n quantitative studies, small-n case studies, formal theory, process tracing, and experiments).

Required Readings

Most of the required readings (listed by year of publication) are journal articles and have been posted on Quercus. If there are any difficulties accessing, then note that they are available for down-loading on the University of Toronto’s E-library system. They can also usually be accessed through a simple Google search of the article title. Required readings that are not available online (i.e. are book chapters or unpublished papers) have also been made available on Quercus.
Course Requirements

Grades for this course will be based on the following requirements:

1. Seminar Participation: Cumulative throughout term: 20%
2. Critical reading responses and presentations: (2 x 15% each = 30% total)
3. Book review (20%)
4. Literature review (30%)

1. Seminar Participation: 20%

Weekly attendance is mandatory. If it is impossible for you to attend a class, please email the instructor as much in advance as possible to explain why. All students are expected to have done the required readings before class and attend class prepared to discuss them. To facilitate seminar discussion, all students are expected to post 3 questions for discussion and/or points for further clarification on the readings by 10 pm Wednesday on the course Quercus website. Questions are expected to address the theoretical or methodological features of the readings. Students should consult one another’s posting prior to the Thursday class and be prepared to discuss them as well as the readings. The seminar participation grade will be determined on the basis of the quality and frequency of participation. Frequency of participation will be determined by the regularity of intervention in class discussions. Quality of participation will be determined by demonstrated grasp of course readings, attentiveness to class discussion, and thoughtful comments and questions.

To assist you in preparing readings for seminar, the following steps are recommended:

**Step One:** Do you understand the basic terms and concepts used by the author?
- list the concepts with which you had difficulty
- try to write an explanation or definition for a few of these

**Step Two:** What is the central point or argument that the author is trying to make?
- what is most important about what the author has said?
- what are the interesting questions or hypotheses being addressed?
- try to write out in two sentences at most what you think are the main points/most important points/most interesting questions or hypotheses of the reading

**Step Three:** How has the author organized their argument? What are the steps or major themes?
- write down what you see to be the steps in the argument
- ask yourself what would be the logical way to discuss the various sub-topics

**Step Four:** What evidence and methodology has the author used to support the argument?

**Step Five:** How does the reading relate to other material examined in the course?
- play the devil’s advocate and query whether the reading provides anything new
- ask or state how the new material substantiates or contradicts point(s) raised in earlier readings or seminars

**Step Six:** How do you evaluate the presentation by the author?
- now is the time for you to say what you think: is the author credible? What parts of the argument are persuasive and what parts are less so? Prepare to justify your conclusions.
This sequence of steps is designed to ensure you understand the author's concepts and his or her argument before you evaluate the author's claims. Keeping written notes as you proceed through the sequence of steps gives you the basis for active participation in the seminar.

2. Critical Reading Responses/Presentations: Two (15% each – 30% total)

Students will prepare two analytical papers of not more than eight double spaced pages (12 point font) on the readings for two separate weeks. Papers should develop an argument that appraises the major themes, concepts and methods of the readings, and situate the readings in the broader public policy sub-field. Papers should draw comparisons across the readings assigned for the week, highlighting their shared/different epistemological and ontological claims, and conclude with two or three questions for class discussion. Students may, but do not have to, include readings from Further Readings in their analytical paper.

Please plan on presenting your response paper in 10-15 minutes, and on leading the class discussion the day you present. Students should email a copy of their paper to the instructor by 10:00 pm the evening before class.

3. Book Review: Worth 20%

Students must complete ONE book review of approximately 8 pages (double spaced 12-point font) from among the two books listed below. The review is due on the date scheduled on the course outline and should address the following questions:

1. What is the central thesis or argument(s) of the book?
2. What concepts/perspectives on comparative public policy inform the analysis of the book? Do the author(s)/editor(s)/contributor(s) do a good job of applying that perspective? Is it clear in its exposition and documentation of how concepts or mechanisms are linked to one another to provide an account?
3. Could another perspective or any concepts not considered also explain the outcomes the book investigates just as well or better than those utilized by the author(s)?
4. Is the argument of the book a useful advancement, addition, or critique of the literature we have studied?
5. Does the book use evidence well to back up the argument(s)? Could the same evidence be used to support an argument that is different than the one the author makes?
6. How significant a contribution do you think the author(s)’ arguments make?

The options for the book review are:


4. Literature Review Essay: Worth 30%

Students are to prepare a 15-20 page essay that reviews the literature relevant to their proposed public policy dissertation. This review essay should introduce your dissertation question/puzzle and then survey the literature relevant to solving it.

Course Policies:

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the days assigned. The only exception is an adequately documented emergency and/or medical illness. Please contact the instructor as soon as the problem arises to inform them of the problem and present your written documentation when you return. Please keep copies of rough and draft work, as well as of the written work you submit until the marked assignments have been returned. All graded assignments are to be kept by students until the grades have been posted on ACORN.

Academic Integrity

Please be aware of the importance of academic integrity and the seriousness of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism. The more obvious instances of plagiarism include copying material from another source (book, journal, website, another student, and so on) without acknowledging the source, presenting an argument as your own – whether or not it is a direct quotation – rather than fully acknowledging the true originator of the idea, having another person help you to write your essay, and buying an essay. All of these are instances of academic dishonesty, which the university takes very seriously and they will result in academic penalty. Those penalties can range from failing the assignment, failing the course, having a notation on your academic transcript, and/or suspension from the university.


Office Hours and Email Policy

Students are invited to meet with the instructor remotely by appointment about any matter relating to the course. The instructor is also available by email – but please reserve email communication for scheduling appointments, rather than for discussing the substance of your course assignments.

Assistance and Accommodation

The University of Toronto is committed to supporting student accessibility and overall student
well-being. Many resources exist to help students who are in need of assistance for a number of reasons. Those resources include but are not limited to: accessibility services, health and counseling services, writing centres, and peer mentoring systems. The University also is committed to providing allowances for religious observances.

If you have a accessibility consideration that may require accommodation, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services office is located at 455 Spadina Ave, 4th Floor, Suite 400 (next to the campus bookstore). Accessibility Services staff can be contacted via email at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca and phone at (416) 978-8060.

A few (i.e. not exhaustive) links to additional resources include:
- http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/
- http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science
- http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation

Notice of Video Recording and Sharing

This course, including your participation, will be recorded on video and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright, including the Copyright Act, RSC 1985, c C-42. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact your instructor.

Course Modification Statement

The instructor reserves the right to modify assigned readings during the term--with reasonable notice and with an explanation.

Schedule of Seminar Topics and Readings

Week 1 – January 14 – Theories of Welfare State Development in Europe and North America


Further Reading:


**Week 2: January 21 – Theories of Welfare State Change**


Further Reading:


**Week 3: January 28 – New Political Coalitions or More of the Same? Social Investment versus Compensation Strategies in Economic and Social Policy Making**


Further Reading:


Week 4: February 4 - Application: Evaluating Alternative Methods


Week 5: February 11 - Comparing Beyond Europe and North America


Further Reading:


Further Reading:


Week 7: March 4 - Policy Design and Policy Feedback Effects of Public Policies II: The Effects of Instrument Choice


Melani Cammett et al. 2015. “The Influence of Private Health Care Financing on Citizen Trust in
Government.” *Perspectives on Politics* 13, 4: 938-957.


Further Reading:


**Week 8: March 11 - Policy Design and Policy Feedback Effects of Public Policies III: Race, Neighbourhood/Region**


Further Reading (includes research on class as well):


**Week 9: March 18 – Application: Policy Design, Instrument Choice, and Policy Feedback**

**Book Review:**

Students who are not writing a book review read: introduction and chapter 2, a couple of empirical chapters and the conclusion.

**Week 10: March 25- Theory: How and When Do Ideas Matter – Learning and Diffusion of Policy Change**


**Further Reading:**


**Week 11: April 1- Application: Convergence and Divergence of Policy Ideas**

**Book Review:**


Students who are not writing a book review read: introduction and chapter 2, a couple of empirical chapters and the conclusion.
Week 12: April 8 - Policy Making in a Global Era: The Relationship Between International and Transnational Actors and Ideas and Domestic Policy Making


Further Reading:

