

Winter 2022

POL 379H1S Digital Era Government and Policy Design

Location: online via Zoom (see Quercus for link) **or**
in person (as permitted) Sidney Smith Room 1073

Time: Tuesdays 10am - 12pm

Instructor: Jonathan Craft

Office Hour: Tuesdays: 12pm-1pm (via Quercus Zoom link **or** in person in my Sidney Smith office - Room 3048 - if classes are in person)

Email: jonathan.craft@utoronto.ca

Course Description:

Digital government is now a worldwide phenomenon and raises important questions about how government works and how policy gets made in an increasingly digital world. This course will look at digital government experiences and movements within the context of Ontario, Canada, North America, and globally. It begins by exploring foundational concepts linked to digital government transformation and practice, with a focus on critically assessing how governments are attempting to organize and operate in digital ways. The second half of the course focuses on applied policymaking in the digital era. Students will explore how policy is designed and delivered using digital ways of working. Students will engage with case studies and applied exercises to develop new skills and familiarity with digital government practices including user centered design and agile methods.

**** I reserve the right to modify the syllabus to reflect the pace of the course****

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To familiarize students with digital government approaches, principles, and develop applied policy skills.

COURSE FORMAT

All classes will be held Tuesdays between 10am and 12 pm EST via Zoom (link provided in Quercus) or in person as per university and public health guidelines. Each week will begin with a lecture by the instructor and many sessions will involve class exercises. **You will often be asked to participate, engage, and work during the class time.**

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

All course materials are available through [Quercus](#) or the library. This course requires you to have an internet enabled device. I strongly recommend it be a laptop for functionality to use

google docs, slides, and other tools as required. Students will also be required to use [Mural](#), a software design to facilitate online group work. Details on your free access to it and how to use it will be reviewed in class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Detailed instructions for all written assignments, including complete submission instructions, will be distributed as the course progresses.

Assignment	Weight	Due Dates & Submission
Pre-class engagements	15%	Weekly starting Wk2, due online
Group policy brief outline	15%	Due February 11th , online via Quercus by 1159pm.
Individual analytical paper	30%	Due March 8 online via Quercus by 1159pm.
Group personas & user journey(s)	15%	Due April 5th, online via Quercus by 1159pm.
Group final briefing note	25%	

Pre-class engagements (15%):

Beginning Week 2 you will answer a brief set of questions or complete an activity related to the assigned course materials *prior to* (due midnight before) class. Your responses will be graded based on demonstrated effort and quality of the responses on a credit/no credit basis.

Individual Analytical Paper (30%)

The scope of digital government is massive. Students will write a 2500 word paper that explores a specific topic relevant to digital government (e.g. privacy, access to information, algorithmic decision making). The essay is analytical and must include a clear central argument supported by research. *It will meaningfully use research from at least 6 academic/practitioner sources from outside the course in addition to integrating pertinent course materials.* The topics, detailed instructions, and essay prompt will be distributed Week 3.

Group Policy Outline (15%)

In Groups of five or so, students will prepare a two page, **single spaced**, policy backgrounder outline. It will: i) clearly articulate a *realistic* policy problem the students wants to address (must be instructor approved); ii) provide general and concise background/summary information on the policy issue, 3) identify any relevant policy positions or recommendations, and feature high level

key research sources (at least ten sources from academic **and** applied practitioner gray literature e.g. government reports on your topic etc).

Group Persona(s) and User Journey(s) (15%). Groups will also submit policy ‘products’ including proto-personas and user journey(s) maps as applicable to their group policy challenge. Detailed instructions will be provided.

Group Policy Briefing Note (25%): A 5 page (and 1 page annex), single spaced, briefing note on your policy challenge. Details on the format, requirements, and expectations will be provided in class.

COURSE POLICIES

Video Sessions and Recording

Students are encouraged to participate in lectures as they would any in-person class. Although we will not force students to turn on cameras/microphones, we strongly encourage you to do so, in order to maximize your learning experience and that of your peers. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the instructor.

To ensure accessibility throughout the term, lectures *may* be recorded and made available for students after each session. You are free to view/download these videos for your own academic use, but you should not share or use them for any other purpose (e.g., posting to Youtube, etc.) without the instructor’s permission. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the instructors.

Email

Please put the course code in the subject line! I normally respond to email within 48 hours. Please note that email received during weekends and after business hours may take longer to answer, so do not leave your requests or queries until the last minute. Also, please do *not* submit course assignments via email.

Accessibility & Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let them and me know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course see www.accessibility.utoronto.ca

Extensions and Late Penalties

Work is due on its due date. Extensions will rarely be granted and only under exceptional circumstances. The expectation is that you will plan adequately to turn in work on time. If you are having issues, please be in touch with the instructor as soon as possible. In rare cases where work is accepted after a due date, a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) will be applied.

Group Work

Group assignments are generally assessed on a collective basis, meaning you receive the same grade as the rest of your group. However, if circumstances dictate – for example, if you or a teammate do not make collegial contributions to the group – I may choose to assess the assignment on an individual basis, meaning you may receive a different grade than the rest of your group. Any issues in your group's work should be brought to the instructor's attention as soon as possible.

Copyright

Course materials, including recorded lectures and slides, are the instructor's intellectual property covered by the Copyright Act, RSC 1985, c C-42. Course materials posted on Quercus are for registered students only and may not be posted to other websites or media without the express permission of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction, copying, or use of online recordings will constitute copyright infringement.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

It is the responsibility of each student to be able to demonstrate the originality of his or her work. This applies to individual and group deliverables. Failure to properly reference figures, concepts, and quotations that are not your own will result in academic penalties, as required by the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism. At a minimum, for every assignment, the sources of all data and ideas must be properly referenced using a standard academic referencing style, such as Chicago. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or how to reference sources, please visit: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Health and Wellness

I encourage you to consult the Student Wellness Portal to learn about mental health services, resources, and academic supports available on campus see the [wellness center services](#). If at any time you feel unprepared for, or overwhelmed by, the workload in this course/program:

- Speak with me directly, either during office hours or by appointment
- Consult with department program staff
- Get in touch with your UofT [Writing Centre](#)
- Contact the [Academic Success Centre](#) to learn about available resources and services, such as writing groups, or to consult with a learning strategist

If you (or a friend or colleague) feel sick, anxious, or depressed, to the point that it is affecting your (or their) abilities or relationships:

- Visit the [Health and Wellness Centre](#), 214 College St (at St. George St.), which offers general health and nutrition services, as well as mental health services and support programs
- Call Good2Talk 1-866-925-5454 – a free, confidential helpline for university students, available 24/7/365, with professional counselling, information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being
- In case of *emergency*, call 911, then Campus Community Police 416-978-2222, who will direct your call to the right service

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

Part I – Context and Core Concepts

Week 1 (January 11): Introduction: Course overview and logistics

Goal: Get to know each other, gain clarity on the how the course is going to work

Watch before 1st lecture: Scott Brison, [Democratic Government is there an App for that?](#)

Read: Loosemore, T. [Definition of Digital](#) (it's a single tweet).

Week 2 (January 18): What is digital government, how did we get here, why does it matter?

Goal: Situate digital government within the broader digital governance context

Read:

- Aitken, K. (2020). [Government in the Connected Era](#). in Dubois, E. and Martin-Bariteau, F. (eds.), *Citizenship in a Connected Canada: A Research and Policy Agenda*, Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press, 2020.
- Greenway, A. Terrett, B. Bracken, M. Loosemore, T. (2018). Chapter 1: Why Change., p.1-11 in *Digital Transformation at Scale: why the strategy is delivery*. * Available via course reserves link on course Quercus page.

Week 3 (January 25) Digital Meets Bureaucracy

Goal: Understanding the structures and aims of digital government

- Clarke, A. (2020). “Digital government units: what are they, and what do they mean for digital era public management renewal?” *International Public Management Journal*, 23(3): p.358-379.
- Mergel, I., Edelmann, N., Haug, N. (2019). “Digital Transformation in the Public Sector: Results from Expert Interviews”. *Government Information Quarterly*, 36(4).

- Hartley, H. (2019). [Towards Simpler, Faster, Better](#) and [Simpler, Faster, Better Services Act](#), 2019, S.O. 2019, c. 7, Sched. 56.

Week 4 (February 1): Making Policy: A Primer on Policy Design

Goal: Get the basics on what policy design is, and how it works

Read:

- Howlett, M (2019). “Basic concepts and vocabulary”, chapter 1 of [The Policy Design Primer Choosing the Right Tools for the Job](#). New York: Routledge *available via UofT libraries
- Peters, B.G. Chapter 1: [The logic of policy design, in Policy Problems and Policy Design](#). London: Edward Elgar.

Week 5 (February 8) Digital’s Critique and Approach to Policy Design

Goal: To think critically about the challenges of traditional policy design and the value added of digital ways of working to address policy issues.

Watch before Week 5 Lecture: Tom Hulme, [What can we learn from shortcuts?](#)

Read:

- Clarke, A. Craft, J (2019). [The Twin Faces of Public Sector Design](#). Governance: an international journal of policy, administration, and institutions, 32(1):5-21.
- Code for America. (2019). [Delivery-Driven Policy Policy designed for the digital age](#).
- Andrews, P. [Transforming public policy for the 21st century](#).
- Maltby, P. (2017). [One Team Government: What digital and policy can learn from each other](#).

Part II Applying Digital Ways of Working

Week 6 (February 15): Human Centered Design and Iterative Approaches

Goal: Expose you to human centered and iterative methods at the heart of digital government

Read:

- McGuinness, T. Slaughter, A. (2019). The New Practice of Public Problem Solving. Stanford Social Innovation Review, 17(2): 26-33.
- Brest, P. Roumani, N., Bade, J. [Problem Solving, Human-Centered Design, and Strategic Processes](#). Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society.
- Government of New Zealand, [Smart Start Program Lessons Learned](#)

Week 7 (February 22) * no classes, reading week *****

Week 8 (March 1): Human Centered Policy Making in Practice

Goal: Develop a familiarization with user research and user centered design in practice. Develop proficiency with journey mapping and personas

Read:

- Treviranus, J. (2018). “[If you want the best design, ask strangers to help](#)”
- Code for America. (2018) [Designing user-centered policy Using agile methods to address affordable housing in San Francisco](#) (*please also watch the embedded video at the end of the post)
- Three part series on the USDA Farm Loan program including
 - [What Is a Customer Journey Map?](#)
 - [How Do You Read a Journey Map?](#)
 - [How Do You Use a Journey Map?](#)
- **Skim**, don't read in full: [USDA Farm loans Customer Journey Mapping final report](#)

Week 9 (March 8): Revisiting problem definition

Goal: How can a focus on human centered and iterative approaches help us to rethink how we define and frame policy problems?

Read:

- Hoppe, R. (2018). “[Rules-of-thumb for problem-structuring policy design](#)”.
- Ling, J., Clarke, A. Craft, J. (2020). [Digital @ Work: Transforming Ontario's Student Assistance Program](#). Toronto: Policy Ready/IPAC
- Brown, D. (2016). [How to build a problem statement](#)

Watch before Week 9 Lecture: Dive Student Aid: Episode 2 “[Setting the Scene](#)”, “[Getting the message right](#)” and Episode 9 “[Turning Policy into Action](#)”

Week 10 (March 15): Ideation and Prototyping for Policy

Goal: Orientation to prototyping for policy and understanding the link between policy and product.

Read:

- Kimbelle, L., Bailey, J. (2017). [Prototyping and the new spirit of policy-making](#). International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts. 13(3): 214-226.
- Classadonte, C., Wilder, M., Craft, J. (2020). [Applying Digital Ways of Working: Redesigning Ontario's Environmental Registry](#). Toronto: Policy Ready/IPAC
- Friss D., Yu Siang, T. (2020). [Prototyping: Learning Eight Common Methods and Best Practices](#).

Week 11 (March 22): Performance Management and Digital Government

Goal: Orientation to the challenges and approaches governments are using to evaluate and manage performance in digital government.

Read:

- Greenway, A. Terrett, B. Bracken, M. Loosemore, T. (2018). “Setting the Standards”, Chapter 11, in *Digital Transformation at Scale: why the strategy is delivery*. * Available via course reserves link on course Quercus page.

- Eaves, D. (2018). [Part 2: Proposing A Maturity Model for Digital Services](#).
- Craft, J. Classadonte, C, Wilder, M. (2021). “Moving the Digital Dial: Governance & Digital Government Performance Management”. Toronto: Policy Ready/IPAC.
- Nelson-Hamilton, L. (2020). “[Digital evaluation and analytics, the iterative way](#)”.

Week 12 (March 29): Enabling and Implementing Digital for Policy

Goal: Appreciate the enabling conditions, key barriers, and limitations of digital government. Develop some practical strategies on how to apply these practices to your policy work.

Read:

- Dacanay, H. [Enabling Conditions, Not Just Heroics](#).
- Harrell, C. (2020). “Making Long Term Change”, pp. 107-118 in A Civic Technologists Practice Guide. San Francisco: Five Seven Five Books.
- Schwartz, M. 2020. The Playbook: How to Bust Bureaucracy including: The Way of The Monkey, The Way of The Razor, The Way of The Sumo Wrestler, in *The Delicate Art of Bureaucracy*. Available via course reserves through the course Quercus page.

Week 13 (April 5): Informal Policy Project Debrief and Class Wrap Up Exercises.

No readings!