The Politics of Public Policy
Fall 2018

Class Time: MWF 10:00 – 10:50 am
Class Location: Warren Lecture Hall 2113

Instructor: Professor Dan Butler
Email: dmbutler@ucsd.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4pm, SSB 369

TA: Matthew Draper
Email: mdraper@ucsd.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 11-12, SSB 329

Purpose
Students will learn how politics determines policy. The course will first briefly introduce students to cost-benefit analysis and then will discuss how political ideas, interests, and institutions often move policy outcomes away from those based on cost-benefit analysis. I assume you have are familiar with the material covered in a standard course on American politics and government. If you have any questions about your preparation for the course, feel free to contact me.

Class Meetings
Classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Mondays and Wednesdays are traditional lectures. Fridays will be focused on discussion sections. You are only required to attend four of the Friday meetings. I will take attendance.

Course Readings
The readings are listed on the session schedule given below. These can be found online for free (either Tritoned or the journal websites).

Course Requirements
(1) Attendance of Friday Sections – 10% of grade. You are required to attend and participate in a total of four meetings over the quarter. Each of the four meetings counts as 2.5% of your grade. You do not get any extra points for attending more than 4 Friday meetings.
(2) Homework Assignments – 10% total (5 percent each)
(3) Mid-term exam (Oct 29) – 25% of grade. The exam will be in class and will consist of math based, short-answer, and a few multiple choice style questions.
(4) Group Project – 25% of grade. Students in groups of 5 will use the framework developed in class to analyze a public policy. Grade: 15% will come from the written part, and 10% will come from the presentation of the material in class.
(5) Final exam (December 14, 8 am) – 30% of grade. The exam will consist of essay, math based, short-answer, and a few multiple choice style questions.
**Grades** will be based on the following scale:

- 100-94 = A
- 90-94 = A-
- 87-90 = B+
- 84-87 = B
- 80-84 = B-
- 77-80 = C+
- 74-77 = C
- 70-74 = C-
- 67-70 = D+
- 64-67 = D
- 60-64 = D-
- 0-60 = F

For those taking the course pass/fail – you need to earn at least a C-

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with University rules and regulations. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with University regulations regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Students are expected to do the homeworks on their own.

**Grade Changes and Extensions:** All requests for grade changes must be made formally to your TA, within one week of getting back your assignment or test. Requests must be typed and double spaced, and review of a grade may result in either a higher or lower grade. Extensions on assignments and make-up exams will only be granted in cases of documented illness or family medical emergencies. I will require documentation for everyone. Please contact your teaching assistant as soon as possible if you need to request one. We will return your assignments in a timely fashion in section, and you are responsible for picking them up in section to confirm that we did in fact receive and grade them. Due to university policy, no grade changes may be requested on the final except in cases of our clerical error. (Note: We will not grant any extensions because stolen or damaged computers. This does happen, so you should be in the habit of using the Dropbox or another free cloud service to back up all of your work automatically whenever you save it so that you never lose it).

**Late Assignments:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated. If you turn it in on the due date (i.e., before midnight), but after class, you will be penalized with minus 10 percent. If you turn it the day after the assignment it will minus 20 percent. Nothing will be accepted after that. Again, each student must do his or her own exercises alone, subject to university regulations prohibiting plagiarism and cheating.

**Extra Credit:** You may earn 1 point towards your course grade by participating in the Omnibus Political Science Survey (OPSS). You will be contacted by email during the term with information regarding the survey and how you can complete it. As an alternative to participating in the survey, you can read and write a 1-2 page response to an article of the instructor’s choosing.

**Announcements.** I do not allow students to make announcements in class. I also do not allow groups outside of the department to make announcements.
Schedule

Sept 28 – Course Introduction

Week 1 (Oct 1-5)

Cost-Benefit Analysis: Calculating Expected Values
  • Analyzing Policy Ch. 9
  • DC Stadium CBA (Read the executive summary, the table of contents, and then skim the rest to see what goes into the CBA report)

Cost-Benefit Analysis: Calculating Net Present Value
  • Analyzing Policy Ch. 10 (pages 322-336)

Week 2 (Oct 8-12)

Wednesday, October 10. NO CLASS MEETING

A Framework for Public Policy Analysis
  • Phil Diehl. 2017. “No ‘retreat’ from rising sea levels for home in Del Mar” San Diego Union Tribune. December 4, 2017

Week 3 (Oct 15-19)

Oct 15: HW #1 due @ beginning of class

Problem Definition and Agenda Setting

Case Study on Problem Definition: Estate (or Death) Tax Repeal
Week 4 (Oct 22-26)

Venue Shopping

Members of Congress and the Public
• Steven S. Smith, Jason M. Roberts, and Ryan J. Vender Wielen. The American Congress, 8th Edition. Cambridge University Press. [Chapter 4]

Oct 26: EXAM PREP

Week 5 (Oct 29-Nov 2)

Oct 29: MIDTERM EXAM

Pivotal Politics I

Week 6 (Nov 5-9)

Pivotal Politics II & III

Week 7 (Nov 12-16)

Monday, November 12. NO CLASS (Veterans Day)

Nov 14: HW #2 (Pivotal Politics) due @ beginning of class

Parties in Congress
Week 8 (Nov 19-23)

Committees in Congress

Wednesday, November 21. NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

Week 9 (Nov 26-30)

Can Interest Groups Effectively Represent Voters' Interest?
- Federalist 10 and Federalist 51, online at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm
- EE Schattschneider. 1960. The Semi-Sovereign People. Fort Worth, TX: HBJ. [chapter 2]

Lobbying Congress
- Daniel Butler and David Miller. “Lobbying Influences What Laws are Enacted.”

Nov 30: Student Presentations if needed (Attendance Required)

Week 10 Student Presentations (Dec 3-7)

NOTE: Attendance required for all three days of presentations

December 14, 8-11 am Final Exam