University of Essex

Department of Government

GV924-7-SP
The Politics of Public Policy
2024-2025

Lecturer and Module Supervisor

Dr. Nicole Rae Baerg

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Module Administrator

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Academic Support Hours

Date/Time: Tuesday 11:00-1:00pm
Room: 5.425

Module available for Study Abroad students: Yes ☒ No ☐

ASSESSMENT: This module is assessed by 100% coursework.

LISTEN AGAIN: ☐ **Listen again is not available for this course.**

INSTANT DEADLINE CHECKER – COURSEWORK

SP variant

Assignment Title	Due Date	Coursework Weighting	Feedback Due
Critical Writing Reaction Paper 1	Week 19 (Feb 7, 2025)	25%	Week 21 (Feb 21, 2025)
Critical Writing Reaction Paper 2	Week 22 (Feb 28, 2025)	25%	Week 24 (March 14)
Pre Analysis Plan Peer Assessment	Week 24 (March 14, 2025)	10%	Week 25 (March 21, 2025)
Pre Analysis Plan Paper	Week 25 (March 21, 2025)	40%	Week 27 (April 11, 2025)

STUDY ABROAD ASSESSMENT – *ZU variant*

Assignment Title	Due Date	Coursework Weighting	Feedback Due
Critical Writing Reaction Paper 1	Week 19 (Feb 7, 2025)	25%	Week 21 (Feb 21, 2025)
Critical Writing Reaction Paper 2	Week 22 (Feb 28, 2025)	25%	Week 24 (March 14)
Pre Analysis Plan Peer Assessment	Week 24 (March 14, 2025)	10%	Week 25 (March 21, 2025)
Pre Analysis Plan Paper	Week 25 (March 21, 2025)	40%	Week 27 (April 11, 2025)

ASSESSMENT

This module is assessed by 100% coursework.

Coursework will consist of 2 critical writing assignment (25% each), a peer assessment on a student's Pre Analysis Plan (10%), and a final Pre Analysis Plan Paper (40%).

The 2 critical writing assignments should be handed in at the start of class on the week that we will discuss them. You are required to do 2 assessments in total.

Near the end of the Spring semester (week 23) you are required to hand in a complete draft of your Pre Analysis plan for peer review. You are also required to review one of your peer's papers, which will be handed to them one week later (week 24)

During the final week, you are required to hand in a completed draft of your paper (week 25).

This instructor opts out of listen again but recordings of lectures can be granted under special conditions (i.e. the student has a learning disability) and course notes may be requested if the student is absent and cannot get sufficient notes from a classmate.

TOP READS

All readings per week are compulsory and * readings are recommended**

MODULE DESCRIPTION

This module introduces the main political arenas and actors that shape public policy in democratic states and beyond with a particular attention to the role of artificial intelligence (AI). Students will analyse and debate political conflicts around policymaking in the core arenas of democratic government including governments, the bureaucracy, and the judicial system. Students will examine contemporary topics in public policy including the public policy of climate change, health, and economic development.

Objectives and transferable skills

The aims of this module are:

- To introduce political actors and institutions involved in policy making and to scrutinise their interplay.
- To debate theoretical and analytical perspectives on political conflicts around public policy.
- To examine the drivers and mechanisms of policy making beyond and outside of formal governmental arenas and the relations between the state and private interests and among public institutions.
- To acquire and practice the application of analytical skills to analyse specific policy processes.

By the end of this module, students will be expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive awareness of a wide range of political arenas, actors, and institutions that shape public policy.
2. Demonstrate fluency in theoretical building blocks of how policies are made.
3. Demonstrate analytical skills to examine specific policy processes and conflicts theoretically and empirically.
4. Demonstrate the ability to research, analyse, and present policy case studies independently.

MODULE STRUCTURE AND TEACHING

This module will be taught in a weekly 2-hour seminar.

What we expect of you during lecture and classes:

- To attend all lectures and classes after having done the required reading
- To pay attention and take notes as necessary.
- To think about the readings and lectures notes before the class and be ready to discuss them: try to identify the key assumptions in the texts; map the structure of the argument; underline the conclusions. Highlight to yourself points you don't understand. (If you don't understand it, there's great

likelihood others have not understood it either, so don't be shy to ask.) Ask yourself whether you agree with the text, whether you can identify weaknesses or gaps in the argument, and what could someone who disagrees with it argue against it.

- To offer your participation as required (answering questions, asking questions etc.). Learning about and discussing these texts is a communal endeavour and it is a matter of good citizenship to contribute. Further, part of what we want you to achieve, and what we mark you for, is clear and confident oral presentation. You are expected to answer questions, raise new points, and contribute to the progression of discussion in class.

How to submit your essay using FASER

You will be able to access the online submission system via your myEssex portal or via https://FASER.essex.ac.uk. FASER allows you to store your work-in-progress. This facility provides you with an ideal place to keep partially completed copies of your work and ensures that no work, even drafts, is lost. If you have problems uploading your coursework, you should contact *ltt@essex.ac.uk*. You may find it helpful to look at the FASER guide https://faser.essex.ac.uk/Student/Help. If you have any questions about FASER, please contact your administrator or refer to the handbook.

Under NO circumstances is your coursework to be emailed to the administrators or the lecturer. This will NOT be counted as a submission.
Coursework deadline policy for undergraduates

There is a single policy at the University of Essex for the late submission of coursework in undergraduate courses. Essays must be uploaded before 09.45 on the day of the deadline.

All coursework submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of zero. The mark of zero shall stand unless the student submits satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that indicate that the student was unable to submit the work prior to the deadline. For further information on late submission of coursework and extenuating circumstances procedures please refer to http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx.

Essay feedback will be given via FASER.
ALL submissions should be provided with a coversheet (Available from Moodle).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offence and whether done wittingly or unwittingly it is your responsibility. **Ignorance is no excuse!** The result of plagiarism could mean receiving a mark of zero for the piece of coursework. In some cases, the rules of assessment are such that a mark of zero for a single piece of coursework could mean that you will fail your degree. If it is a very serious case, you could be required to withdraw from the University. It is important that you understand

right from the start of your studies what good academic practice is and adhere to it throughout your studies.

All work submitted to the Department will be run through plagiarism detection software and lecturers are very good at spotting work that is not your own. **Plagiarism gets you nowhere; DON'T DO IT!**

Following the guidance on referencing correctly will help you avoid plagiarism.

Please familiarise yourself with the University's policy on academic offences: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/exams-and-coursework/about-academic-offences

Extenuating circumstances for late submission of coursework

The university has guidelines on what is acceptable as extenuating circumstances for later submission of coursework. If you need to make a claim, you should upload your coursework to FASER and submit a late submission of coursework form which can be found here: http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/late-submission.aspx. This must be done within seven days of the deadline. FASER closes for all deadlines after seven days. The Late Submissions committee will decide whether your work should be marked, and you will be notified of the outcome.

If you experience significant longer-term extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your work either by the deadline or within seven days of the deadline, you should submit an Extenuating Circumstances Form for the Board of Examiners to consider at the end of the year http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 16 (1): Contemporary Public Policy

Benoit, Kenneth. "AI and Data Science for Public Policy." LSE Public Policy Review 3, no. 3 (2024).

Kearns, Michael, and Aaron Roth. The ethical algorithm: The science of socially aware algorithm design. *Oxford University Press*, 2019. [skim pp. 1-94]

Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu, Lauren Kirchner and Julia Angwin "How We Analyzed the COMPAS Recidivism Algorithm"

***Kleinberg, Jon., Ludwig, Jens., Mullainathan, Sendhil. and Obermeyer, Ziad., 2015. Prediction policy problems. *American Economic Review*, 105(5), pp.491-95.

***Stone, Deborah. *Policy paradox: The art of political decision making*. WW Norton & company, 2022.

Week 17 (2): Public Policy and Place Based Politics

Bittle, Jake. *The great displacement: climate change and the next American migration*. Simon and Schuster, 2023. [read introduction and skim rest]

Jacobs, Nicholas, and B. Kal Munis. "Place-based resentment in contemporary US elections: The individual sources of America's urban-rural divide." *Political Research Quarterly* 76.3 (2023): 1102-1118.

Walsh, Katherine Cramer. "Putting inequality in its place: Rural consciousness and the power of perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106.3 (2012): 517-532.

***Cramer, Katherine J. The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker. *University of Chicago Press*, 2016. [see article version]

Week 18 (3): Public Policy and Water

Andersen, Jørgen Juel, and Rune Jørgen Sørensen. "The zero-rent society: Evidence from hydropower and petroleum windfalls in Norwegian local governments." *Journal of Public Economics* 209 (2022): 104650.

Lebel, Louis, Phimphakan Lebel, Chanagun Chitmanat, and Patcharawalai Sriyasak. "Benefit sharing from hydropower watersheds: Rationales, practices, and potential." *Water resources and rural development* 4 (2014): 12-28.

Li, Pengfei, et al. "Making ai less" thirsty": Uncovering and addressing the secret water footprint of ai models." *arXiv preprint arXiv:2304.03271* (2023).

***Farrar, Margaret E. "Amnesia, nostalgia, and the politics of place memory." *Political Research Quarterly* 64.4 (2011): 723-735.

Week 19 (4): Public Policy and Economic Development

Why Are There Still So Many Jobs? The History and Future of Workplace Automation, David H. Autor, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 29(3), Summer 2015, 3-30.File

Jean, N., M. Burke, M. Xie, et al. "Combining Satellite Imagery and Machine Learning To Predict Poverty". In: *Science* 353.6301 (2016), pp. 790-794.

Lubell, Mark, Richard C. Feiock, and Edgar E. Ramirez De La Cruz. "Local institutions and the politics of urban growth." *American Journal of Political Science* 53.3 (2009): 649-665.

***Stack, K. “The Office of Management and Budget: The Quarterback of Evidence-Based Policy in the Federal Government”. In: The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 678.1 (2018), pp. 112-123.

Week 20 (5): Public Policy and Immigration

McCarroll, Estefania. "Weapons of mass deportation: Big data and automated decision-making systems in immigration law." *Geo. Immigr. LJ* 34 (2019): 705.

Bircan, Tuba, and Emre Eren Korkmaz. "Big data for whose sake? Governing migration through artificial intelligence." *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8.1 (2021): 1-5.

Beduschi, Ana. "International migration management in the age of artificial intelligence." *Migration Studies* 9.3 (2021): 576-596.

Week 21 (6): Public Policy, Natural Disasters and Health

Nikolova, Elena, and Nikolay Marinov. (2017). "Do public fund windfalls increase corruption? Evidence from a natural disaster." *Comparative Political Studies* 50.11: 1455-1488.

Dunn, Adam G., Kenneth D. Mandl, and Enrico Coiera. "Social media interventions for precision public health: promises and risks." *NPJ digital medicine* 1.1 (2018): 47.

“How AI-powered maps help improve vaccination campaigns and rural electrification” Facebook AI.

Week 22 (7): Public Policy - Analysing Public Policy as Social Scientists

Baron, Jon. "A brief history of evidence-based policy." The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 678.1 (2018): 40-50.

Bowers, Jake, and Paul F. Testa. "Better government, better science: the promise of and challenges facing the evidence-informed policy movement." Annual Review of Political Science 22.1 (2019): 521-542.

Haspel, Moshe, and H. Gibbs Knotts. "Location, location, location: Precinct placement and the costs of voting." *The Journal of Politics* 67.2 (2005): 560-573.

***Bogenschneider, Karen, and Thomas Corbett. *Evidence-based policymaking: Insights from policy-minded researchers and research-minded policymakers*. Routledge, 2011. [skim]

Week 23 (8): Big data

Esty, Daniel, and Reece Rushing. "The promise of data-driven policymaking." *Issues in science and technology* 23.4 (2007): 67-72.

Chetty, Raj, John N. Friedman, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie R. Jones, and Sonya R. Porter. The opportunity atlas: Mapping the childhood roots of social mobility. No. w25147. *National Bureau of Economic Research*, 2018.

Tirole, Jean. "Digital dystopia." *American Economic Review* 111, no. 6 (2021): 2007-2048.

Seltzer, William, and Margo Anderson. "Using population data systems to target vulnerable population subgroups and individuals: Issues and incidents." *Statistical methods for human rights* (2008): 273-328.

***Salganik, Matthew J. *Bit by bit: Social research in the digital age*. Princeton University Press, 2019. [skim]

Week 25 (9): Public Policy - The Impact of Research on Policy

Lindblom, Charles. "The science of “muddling through”." In Classic readings in urban planning, pp. 31-40. Routledge, 2018.

Dorsch, Michael, Cristina Corduneanu Huci, and Paul Maarek. "The Politics of Experimentation: Political Competition and Randomized Controlled Trials." *Available at SSRN 3648321* (2020).

Das, Sabyasachi. "(Don’t) leave politics out of it: Reflections on public policies, experiments, and interventions." *World Development* 127 (2020): 104792.

Week 26 (10): Public Policy - The Impact of Expertise on Public Policy

Drèze, Jean. "Policy beyond evidence." World Development 127 (2020): 104797.

Lee, Nathan. "Do policy makers listen to experts? Evidence from a national survey of local and state policy makers." *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 2 (2022): 677-688.

Banuri, Sheheryar, Stefan Dercon, and Varun Gauri. "Biased policy professionals." *The World Bank Economic Review* 33, no. 2 (2019): 310-327.

Hjort, Jonas., Diana. Moreira, Gautam Rao, and Juan Francisco Santini. “How Research Affects Policy: Experimental Evidence from 2,150 Brazilian Municipalities”. In: American Economic Review 111.5 (2021).