

Seminar: State and Local Policy
PSC 400-02

Spring 2009
Thursday 2:00-4:30
LARTS 118

Dr. Shannon Jenkins

Office: Group 1 - 318
Office Hours: M 9:30-11:30, TR 10:00-11:00 and by appointment
Phone: 508.999.8036
Course website: dartmouth.umassonline.net

Overview:

This course is a study the role of state and local governments in making public policy. Students will learn about the structure of state and local governments, the policymaking process and the nature of public policy in a number of substantive policy areas. In addition, students should be able to analyze and evaluate the policy outputs produced by these two levels of government. The course is organized around the idea of sustainability; students will seek to understand what it is, how to promote sustainability in state and local governments and what the obstacles to attaining it are. As part of the course requirements, students will complete an applied policy analysis for the town of Dartmouth, focusing on either producing more sustainable public policies or producing a more open and transparent government. At the end of the semester, students should understand how to analyze public policies and the actions of governments and how to work to produce policy change.

Required Texts:

Bardach, Eugene. 2008. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 3rd edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press (ISBN: 978-0-87289-952-0)

Electronic and Internet readings, listed in syllabus or assigned in class.

The Standard Times: either on-line (www.southcoasttoday.com) or in print.

Course Requirements:

The final course grade will be based on 1000 points, allocated as follows:

Examinations (3 exams at 150 points each = 450 points total)

There will be three take-home examinations, roughly corresponding to each section of the class. Each exam will cover approximately four weeks of class. One week before the specified date, I will hand out the exam. Responses to exam questions must be submitted via MyCourses and will be due one week after they are handed out.

Community Research Project (250 points total)

A major portion of this class will be the completion of an applied research project for the town of Dartmouth. Students will be divided in to two teams; teams will focus on making recommendations to either make town operations more green or more open and transparent. There are a total of 250 points associated with this project. More information about these projects will be given out at a later date.

Chapter Summaries (25 points each, 75 total)

In order to get everyone up to speed, at the beginning of the semester, we will be reviewing readings about state government, local government, and the public policy process. For these classes, you will be assigned a specific chapter to read and present. You will be required to write a one-two page summary of your assigned chapter and present this to the class. You should also bring copies of your summary to hand out to your classmates. Both the quality of your oral presentation and the quality of your written summary will be taken into consideration in determining your grade for these summaries.

Outlines (25 points each, 75 total)

In the second part of the semester, we will be focusing on developing practical skills and knowledge that can be used to analyze public policies, both generally and for your research projects. There are three main sections to the book we will be using in this part of the semester. For each of these sections, you will be required to turn in a brief outline of the major points in each section. These outlines will be worth 25 points each.

Article Presentations (25 points each, 50 total)

In the final third of the semester, we will be examining several policies areas that are primarily the responsibility of state and local governments. You will be required to identify an article that demonstrates a new or innovative policy solution being pursued by a state or local government in the U.S for two of these policy areas. In class, you will be asked to present a brief summary of this article and then discuss why you selected this article to present to the class. Sign-up sheets for your article assignment presentations will be posted on MyCourses.

Participation (100 points)

Finally, a portion of your grade will be based on attendance and participation. Participation and attendance is absolutely CRITICAL to the success of this seminar.

There are a number of factors that will be considered in calculating this portion of your grade. Everyone will start with a base line participation grade of around 70 points. You may improve your participation by talking in class, e-mailing me any questions you would like answered or discussed in class and/or posting to discussion boards on MyCourses. You will lose points for excessive absences, not participating in class discussions and/or not posting to the course discussion boards. Additionally, because the group project are joint projects, each person in the class will be expected to contribute to the group effort. Thus, in computing your participation grade, I will be checking MyCourses to make sure that you have posted articles, comments and critiques to the group discussion boards. Failure to do so will result in a significant reduction in your participation grade. Finally, at the end of the semester, each student will complete a peer evaluation for other members of their project group. These evaluations will be taken into consideration when calculating participation grades. In addition, if a student is seriously deficient in their contribution to the group project, this may also lead to a reduction in said student's community research project grade.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Letter Grade	Final Point Total	Percent	Letter Grade	Final Point Total	Percent
A	925-1000	93-100	C	725-764	73-76
A-	895-924	90-92	C-	695-724	70-72
B+	865-894	87-89	D+	665-694	67-69
B	825-864	83-86	D	625-664	63-66
B-	795-824	80-82	D-	595-624	60-62
C+	765-794	77-79	E	<595	<60

Ground Rules:

Make-up exams will only be given in the event of a serious emergency. *Documentation will be required* in order to make arrangements for a make-up. You must contact me in advance of the missed exam; failure to do so will result in a 50-point penalty on your exam score. Late chapter summaries, outlines and article assignments will be penalized 10 points; if you are not prepared to do your oral presentation for your chapter summary or article assignment, you will receive an additional 5 point penalty. Late group project assignments will lose 10% of their value. No late assignments will be accepted after the last day of class (5/12). You do not need to contact me if you are missing a regular class period (i.e no exam is scheduled); it will be your responsibility to determine what was covered during the missed class period from other students in the class. Incompletes will only be given in exceptional circumstances; you must consult with me prior to the last day of class (5/12) to discuss an incomplete.

Students are expected to be prepared to participate; this means doing the readings class and thinking through the material so that you can contribute to the discussions. Regular attendance is strongly encouraged as the exams will cover both the readings and additional topics introduced during the lectures. Students are also expected to treat each other civilly and to respect others' opinions and learning experience. Disruptive

behavior will not be tolerated. Please turn off all cell phones during class. Finally, I reserve the right to make changes in the course schedule as necessary.

Plagiarism Policy:

All UMass Dartmouth students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity and scholarly practice. The University does not tolerate academic dishonesty of any variety, whether as a result of a failure to understand proper academic and scholarly procedure or as an act of intentional dishonesty. See <http://www.umassd.edu/studenthandbook/academicregs/ethicalstandards.cfm> for more information about ethical standards at UMass Dartmouth.

A student found guilty of academic dishonesty is subject to severe disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the University. Please refer to the **Student Handbook** (<http://www.umassd.edu/studenthandbook/>) and **Student Judicial Code** (<http://www.umassd.edu/studenthandbook/studentjud/>) for due process.

Any student caught cheating in this course will *fail the course for the semester* and will be referred to the Political Science department chair and the Student Judicial Affairs Coordinator. Please see me in advance of any assignment if you have questions about citing your references. Remember that ignorance of the rules is not a defense against plagiarism.

Students should be aware that suspect assignments (e.g., those without works cited pages or with large departures in style) will be submitted to Turnitin by the instructor for the purpose of detecting possible plagiarism. Submitted assignments will be included in the UMass Dartmouth dedicated databases of assignments. These databases of assignments will be used solely for the purpose of detecting possible plagiarism during the grading process during this term and in the future. Students must provide an electronic copy of their assignment to the instructor for submission to the service when plagiarism is suspected, in order to receive a grade on the assignment and to avoid possible sanctions.

Unless otherwise specified, you may NOT collaborate with your fellow students on work outside the classroom. Collaboration will be treated as academic misconduct on the part of ALL students involved and will result in a failing grade for the course and referral of the case to the University for possible judicial action.

Students with Disabilities:

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please meet with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and provide the appropriate paperwork from the Center for Access and Success (CAS). The necessary paperwork is obtained when you bring proper documentation to the CAS, which is located in Group I, Room 016, phone: 508-999-8711.

Chapter 7: "Using Best Practices Research and Experience with Local Governments to Increase Political Engagement" by Shannon Jenkins

Course Schedule:

The assigned readings should be completed *prior to* the date indicated. Students should be prepared to discuss the readings on that date.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
1/29	Introduction		
2/5	State Government and Sustainability	Hallsmith Intro, 1-3 (MyCourses) To be assigned	Summary
2/12	Local Government and Transparency	Creating A Transparent Budget (MyCourses) To be assigned	Summary
2/19	Policy Process	To be assigned	Summary
2/26	Policy Analysis	Bardach Part 1, Appendix A and B	Outline Exam 1 Due
3/5	Policy Analysis	Bardach Part 2, Appendix C and D	Outline
3/12	Policy Analysis	Bardach Part 3	Outline
3/19	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>		
3/26	Economic Development Policy	CQ Researcher: Big Box Stores	
4/2	Social Welfare Policy	CQ Researcher: Domestic Poverty	Exam 2 Due
4/9	Environmental Policy	CQ Researcher: Confronting Warming	
4/16	Education Policy	CQ Researcher: Fixing Urban Schools	
4/23	Crime and Criminal Justice Policy	CQ Researcher: Fighting Crime	
4/30	Changing Public Policy	Power and Governance in American Cities (MyCourses) To be assigned	Group Projects Due
5/7	Conclusion	Group Presentations	
5/15	Final Exam	Due no later than 6:00 PM	Final Exam Due