

Western University
Department of Political Science
The Policy Process in Local Government
Public Administration 9902
Spring 2021

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Dates: May 17 – 21 (on-line). Meeting times vary, as per schedule below.

Course Description: Building on PA9901, this course introduces students to selected aspects of the academic literature on public policy processes and applies these in the Canadian municipal context, with particular emphasis on Ontario applications and examples. Topics include: How the distinct features of local government shape municipal policymaking; how policy problems are framed and how they emerge on municipal agendas; policy innovation and diffusion; policy leadership and the role of public engagement; and policy instruments and implementation.

Format: I will pre-record a brief lecture (c. 20-30 minutes) for each course segment and post it on the OWL site. Please watch each lecture before the corresponding Zoom meeting time for each course segment. Zoom sessions will consist of a combination of: 1. Discussion of questions posed by the instructor in the lecture video; 2. Discussion of student questions about reading material; and 3. Small-group breakout work on case study assignments.

Course Website: The course OWL site will be the central venue for delivery. The syllabus, assignments, and non-textbook readings (see below) will be posted on OWL. Pre-recorded lectures for each section of the course will be posted on OWL. Written assignments will be accepted by OWL only. Announcements will be made using the OWL system, which links to students' UWO e-mail addresses, so please make sure to check your UWO e-mail regularly.

Reading Materials: There are two required textbooks for the course:

B. Guy Peters. 2015. *Advanced Introduction to Public Policy*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. This textbook is available in e-format through various sellers; the cheapest option I have found is Google Play books. **NOTE:** There is a second edition just published last month, but we will be using the first edition.

Zachary Spicer, Joseph Lyons, and Kate Graham. 2019. *Local Government in Practice*. Toronto: Emond. Available in e-format for Adobe software (either one-year or lifetime access; I recommend the former), directly from Emond: <https://emond.ca/local-government-in-practice-cases-in-governance-planning-and-policy.html>

NOTE: The Spicer et al. text will be used for in-class group exercises in the Zoom sessions. You must read the relevant cases (fictional and real) in advance of each Zoom session, but *you do not*

need to read the case exercises and discussion questions that go with them in advance, since we will not necessarily use all of these in class.

All other readings will be posted in the “Resources” section of the OWL website.

Advance Preparation: All readings should be completed in advance of the relevant Zoom session. The week is intensive, so *I recommend getting a start on readings beforehand. However, I do NOT recommend completing all the reading in advance, since it will be difficult to absorb all the concepts and ideas without the benefit of class discussion.*

In addition, please watch the pre-recorded lecture before the relevant Zoom session. Pre-recorded lectures will be posted under the “Lectures” tab on the course OWL site. I will post MS Word versions of the PowerPoint slides along with each lecture, so you can download those and use them to take notes on the lecture if you like.

I will post discussion questions for material in each section immediately below the pre-recorded lecture for that section under the “Lectures” tab. Please reflect on the discussion questions before our Zoom session. In addition, please come to our Zoom session with your own questions.

Course Evaluation:

Participation – 20%

This course demands active, thoughtful participation by students in class discussion and in-class work. You will be assessed on your engagement in both large-group discussion and small-group case exercises in our Zoom sessions.

Quizzes – 20%

You will take a short (approx. 15 minute) multiple-choice quiz at the end of each day of the course. These will be posted under “Quizzes” on OWL and will test basic understanding of the material covered that day. Each quiz will be worth 4% of your course grade. All quizzes must be complete no later than the end of the day on Friday, May 21st.

Strategic Framing Assignment – 15% *Due on OWL May 28th*

You will select a case of a contested municipal policy problem / issue and develop a brief (about 1,000 words maximum) analysis of alternative definitions / framings of the problem advanced by various actors in the case in their effort to secure support for their position on the issue. Detailed guidelines will be posted on the OWL site by Friday, May 21st.

Policy Analysis Assignment – 45% *Due on OWL June 11th*

You will choose a real-world case of either a municipal policy process, or an intergovernmental policy process involving municipalities. You will write a paper of about 3,000 words that analyzes key aspects of this policy process using concepts and theories discussed in the course. Detailed guidelines will be posted on the OWL site by Friday, May 21st.

I will be available for one-on-one consultation sessions with students during the week of May 24th to discuss their plans for the project.

Session 8 Engaging the Public Zoom 1pm

Readings: Fung, Archon. 2006. “Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance.” *Public Administration Review* 66(1): 66–75.

Baker, William H., H. Lon Addams, and Brian Davis. 2005. “Critical Factors for Enhancing Municipal Public Hearings.” *Public Administration Review* 65(4), pp. 490–99.

Case Study: Spicer et al., Ch. 12, “Redeveloping an Old Industrial Area”

Friday, May 21

Session 9 Policy Instruments and Implementation Zoom 10am

Readings: Peters, Chs. 5 and 6

Pal, Leslie A. 2014. Figure 4.1. In *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times (5th ed.)*. Toronto: Nelson Education, p. 135.

Case Study: Spicer et al., Ch. 10, “Debating Privatization”

Session 10 What Is a Successful Policy? Zoom 1pm

Readings: Peters, Ch. 7

Horak, Martin and Aaron A. Moore. 2015. “Policy Shift without Institutional Change: The Precarious Place of Neighborhood Revitalization in Toronto”. In: Clarence Stone, Robert Stoker et al. *Urban Neighborhoods in a New Era: Revitalization Politics in the Postindustrial City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 182-208.