



Western University
Department of Political Science

The Policy Process in Local Government

Winter 2022

Instructor: Jesse Helmer, PhD Candidate
Email: jhelmer@uwo.ca
Office hours: [Book a time to meet](#) on Zoom.
When/where: Wednesdays, 4:30 to 6:30 pm, SSC 4255 (*after* 31 Jan)
Zoom: <https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/my/jhelmer> (*before* 31 Jan)

Course Description

This course introduces students to selected aspects of the academic literature on the making of public policy. Students will learn how to apply theories and concepts from the public policy literature to Canadian local governments. Using case studies, students will learn how to determine the main factors that cause different kinds of local public policy outcomes in different circumstances.

Topics

The external and institutional contexts of municipal policymaking; the stages of the policy cycle, with an emphasis on the "multiple streams" approach to understanding the policy process, including problem definition, agenda-setting, policy diffusion, public engagement, instrument choice, implementation, and evaluation.

Evaluation

Evaluation	Due Date	Value
Frame analysis	2 Mar	20%
Policy analysis assignment		
Outline	9 Feb	10%
Final paper	6 Apr	50%
Quizzes		20% (10 quizzes x 2% each)

Frame analysis (20%): You will select a case of a contested municipal policy problem or issue and develop a brief (~1,500 words) analysis of alternative definitions or framings advanced by various actors in the case. The frame analysis is due on 2 Mar via the course OWL website.

Policy Analysis Assignment (60%): You will prepare a 15-page (~3,500 word) paper on either a *municipal* or *intergovernmental* policy process. To get you started, a two-page outline is due on 9 Feb. The final paper is due April 6. Both components of the assignment should be submitted via the course OWL website.

- **Option 1: Municipal policy case study**

Analyze a specific municipal policymaking process using theoretical perspectives on policymaking discussed in class. Working professionals are encouraged to draw on their own experience and access to information and data. For example, you could apply the multiple-streams model to the City of Toronto's adoption of the plastic bag fee, or to the construction of border infrastructure in Windsor.

- **Option 2: Intergovernmental policy case study**

Analyze and evaluate the implementation or impact of a specific federal-municipal or provincial-municipal policy within a municipality of your choice. For example, you could examine how a municipality has made choices in the context of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, the Canada Community-Building Fund, or in the context of provincial mandates and regulations.

More guidance on the frame analysis and policy analysis assignments will be provided in Class 4.

Quiz (20%): You will complete 10 online quizzes on core concepts found in the readings and lecture. Most questions are multiple-choice, but some are paragraph-length short-answer-style questions. You may complete the quizzes without penalty at any time before midnight on the Sunday following each class, but it is recommended that you do them the same day. The quizzes will not cover the case study materials.

Readings

The principal textbooks for the course are:

Peters, B. Guy. *Advanced Introduction to Public Policy*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. [Ebook Available [Here](#)]

Spicer, Zachary, Joseph Lyons and Kate Graham. *Local Government in Practice: Cases in Governance, Planning and Policy*. Toronto, ON: Emond [Ebook Available [Here](#)]

The paperback version of the former text is fairly affordable; the latter text is also used in PAD9901, so students should already have it. PDF versions of readings, outside of these two texts, will be provided on the course OWL site, available at <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>.

Schedule of Classes, Topics and Cases

Note: keeping with the announcement by Western on 17 Dec, the first class will be on 12 Jan and not 5 Jan. Classes will be [held virtually on Zoom](#) until at least the end of January.

Class	Date	Topic	Cases (from Spicer et al)
1	12 Jan	Intro to studying public policy: a design perspective	Chapter 7 - Police Salaries
2	19 Jan	The structural context: economic forces and ideas	Chapter 11 - New Condo Development

3	26 Jan	The institutional context	Chapter 16 - Meeting the Premier
4	2 Feb	Defining policy problems <i>Assignments introduced</i>	Chapter 20 - Supervised Consumption Site
5	9 Feb	Interpreting the policy process	Chapter 21 - New Noise Bylaw
6	16 Feb	Framing problems and solutions <i>Outline due</i>	Chapter 22 - Water Fluoridation
Reading Week, 19 to 27 Feb			
7	2 Mar	Policy innovation and diffusion	Chapter 25 - Private Transportation Companies
8	9 Mar	Engaging the public <i>Frame analysis due</i>	Chapter 13 - Complete Street Chapter 12 - Industrial Redevelopment
March Break, 14 to 18 Mar			
9	23 Mar	Instruments and implementation	Chapter 23 - Plastic Bags
10	30 Mar	Evaluating public policies Concluding discussion: is policy design possible?	
	6 Apr	<i>Policy analysis assignment due</i>	

There will be **no class** during the week of March Break, which for the school boards in London is scheduled from 14 to 18 March.

Email

Please use your uwo.ca email address when corresponding with the instructor and include PAD9902 in the subject line of your email. The instructor will reply to your emails as soon as possible. Do not submit assignments via email. Announcements on the course OWL website will be sent to students' uwo.ca email addresses.

Electronic Devices

Smartphones and laptops can help us be more productive. They can also distract us with alerts, notifications and other content unrelated to the course. During class time, students are expected to be focused on learning the course material and engaging in discussion with each other.

Submission of Assignments

Students should submit all assignments via the course OWL website. Written assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included

as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). Note that you will be able to view your Turnitin Originality Report after submitting an assignment. You may resubmit an assignment at any time *before* the deadline.

Academic Integrity

It is important for your own learning that the work you submit for evaluation is your own work and that you properly credit others for their ideas. Scholastic offences are taken very seriously. Students are directed to read the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Enrollment Restrictions

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Local Government Program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

Health/Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Late Penalties

It is important to submit assignments on time. If you have a reason that you cannot meet a deadline, please advise the instructor at least two days prior to the due date. Assignments submitted after the stated due date, without approval at least two days prior to the due date, will be deducted 3% per day for up to 10 days, at which time the assignment will receive a grade of zero.

Schedule of Readings

CLASS #1	Readings
12 Jan	Wolman, Harold, assisted by Robert McManmon. 2012. Ch. 21, "What

4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Cities Do: How Much Does Urban Policy Matter?" In Karen Mossberger, Susan E. Clarke, and Peter John, eds., <i>The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics</i>. Toronto: Oxford UP. pp. 415–441.</p> <p>Chapter 1, "Public Policy: A Design Perspective."</p> <p>Howlett, Michael and Ishani Mukherjee. 2014. "Policy Design and Non-Design: Towards a Spectrum of Policy Formulation Types." <i>Politics and Governance</i> 2(2): 57–71.</p>
CLASS #2 19 Jan 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Peterson, Paul E. 2007 [1981]. "The Interests of the Limited City." In Elizabeth A. Strøm and John H. Mollenkopf, eds., <i>Urban Politics Reader</i>. New York: Routledge. pp. 120–129.</p> <p>Fischel, William A. 2001. "Homevoters, Municipal Corporate Governance, and the Benefit View of the Property Tax." <i>National Tax Journal</i> 54(1): 157–173.</p> <p>Dalton, Russell. 2005. "The Social Transformation of Trust in Government." <i>International Review of Sociology</i> 15(1): 133–154. Read pp. 133–140 and pp. 148–150 (skip over the statistical section in the middle.)</p>
CLASS #3 26 Jan 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Taylor, Zack and Neil Bradford. Forthcoming in 2020, "Governing Canadian Cities." In Markus Moos et al., eds., <i>Canadian Cities in Transition</i>, 6th ed. Toronto: Oxford UP.</p> <p>Siegel, David. 2010. "The leadership role of the municipal chief administrative officer." <i>Canadian Public Administration</i> 53(2): 139–61.</p> <p>Miller, Gary J. 2005. "The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models." <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 8: 203–225.</p>
CLASS #4 2 Feb 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Chapter 2, "Policy Problems."</p>
CLASS #5 9 Feb 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Chapter 3, "Models of Policymaking" (all)</p> <p>Chapter 4, "Agendas, Agenda-setting, and Framing," pp. 66–78.</p>
CLASS #6 16 Feb 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Chapter 4, "Agendas, Agenda-setting, and Framing." Read pp. 76–78.</p> <p>Schneider, Anne and Helen Ingram. 1993. "The Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 87(2): 334–47.</p>

CLASS #7 2 Mar 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>De Vries, Hanna, Victor Mekkers, and Lars Tummers. 2015. "Innovation in the Public Sector: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda." <i>Public Administration</i> 94(1): 146–166. ** Skip "Methodology" section (pp. 148–151). **</p> <p>Potts, Jason. 2009. "The Innovation Deficit in Public Services: The Curious Problem of Too Much Efficiency and Not Enough Waste and Failure." <i>Innovation: Management, Policy, & Practice</i> 11(1): 34–43.</p> <p>Shipan, Charles R. and Craig Volden. 2012. "Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners." <i>Public Administration Review</i> 72(6): 788–796.</p>
CLASS #8 9 Mar 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Fung, Archon. 2006. "Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance." <i>Public Administration Review</i> 66(S): 66–75.</p> <p>Baker, William H., H. Lon Addams, and Brian Davis. 2005. "Critical Factors for Enhancing Municipal Public Hearings. <i>Public Administration Review</i> 65(4): 490–99.</p> <p>Shipley, Robert. 2002. "Visioning in planning: Is the practice based on sound theory?" <i>Environment and Planning A</i> 34(1): 7–22.</p>
CLASS #9 23 Mar 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Chapter 5, "Designing Intervention and Implementation." Chapter 6, "Policy Instruments."</p> <p>Béland, Daniel and Michael Howlett. 2016. "How Solutions Chase Problems: Instrument Constituencies in the Policy Process." <i>Governance</i> 29(3): 393–409.</p>
CLASS #10 30 Mar 4:30 to 6:30pm	<p>Readings</p> <p>Chapter 7, "Evaluating Public Policy: An Introduction." Chapter 8, "Evaluating Public Policy: The Utilitarian Dimension." Chapter 9, "Normative and Ethical Analysis of Public Policy." Chapter 10, "Conclusion: Policy Success and Failure."</p>