

**POLC 6320 – SPRING 2022**  
**POLICY ANALYSIS II: POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

<b>DAY, TIME:</b>	Tuesday, 1:00–4:00pm
<b>LOCATION:</b>	103 Science Bldg.
<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	Pablo M. Pinto, ppinto@central.uh.edu
<b>OFFICE:</b>	242 Science Bldg.
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	Tuesdays, 10:00–11:00am or by appointment
<b>TEACHING ASSISTANT:</b>	TBA

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This is the second course in the Fundamental of Policy Analysis sequence. The course offers an introductory survey to methods and models of political analysis. Taxes, regulations and policies in general are the main output of the political system. Explaining the design, adoption and implementation of policies, thus, requires an analytical framework for understanding the main issues involved in aggregating individual preferences into collective political choices. The translation of preferences into policies results from the interaction of the demand and supply sides of politics. Individual and group preferences expressed through voting, mobilization and lobbying, are central features of the demand side of politics. Supply-side conditions are framed by political institutions, namely the structures that shape the aggregation of political preferences into policy outcomes. Political analysis is the discipline that studies how the interaction between political demand and supply results in different patterns of policy-making and policies.

Throughout the semester we will study the fundamental analytical models of politics applied to such topics as collective action, majority rule, coalition formation, and the functioning of government. The course will also help you develop an understanding of how political systems operate, and acquire tools to critically analyze policy issues and problems, evaluate the effectiveness of existing policy programs, and learn to communicate effectively your analyses to others.

**BOOKS AND READINGS:**

The required textbooks for this class are:

- Kenneth A. Shepsle (2010). *Analyzing Politics. Rationality, Behavior and Institutions*. 2nd Edition. W. W. Norton
- David L. Weimer and Aidan R. Vining (2011). *Policy Analysis*, 5th edition. Longman.

Recommended books include the following:

- Ethan Bueno de Mesquita (2016). *Political Economy for Public Policy*. Princeton University Press.
- Avinash K. Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff (2008). *The Art of Strategy. A Game Theorist's Guide to Success in Business and Life*. W. W. Norton.
- Charles Wheelan (2011). *Introduction to Public Policy*. W. W. Norton.

All readings listed on the syllabus are available in the textbooks or can be obtained through UH Library resources in hard copy or digital form. The main readings for each session are marked with a bullet (●) on the syllabus. Importantly, before each meeting ALL students are expected to have completed ALL readings, including those marked with a bullet (●) as well as those marked with a box (□). We will also conduct several simulations and work on cases related to the topics covered.

**GRADING**

Course grades will be based on the following:

- I. CLASS PARTICIPATION, HOMEWORK AND ASSIGNMENTS (20%): You will be graded for your completion and performance in homework, in-class quizzes, policy simulations, and other class assignments. Contribution to class discussion is substantial component of the final grade for this class. You are expected to complete ALL required readings prior to class meetings, and be actively participation in discussions about readings, case assignments, simulations, and other class activities, including online discussion board.

2. **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF READINGS (20%):** Every week different groups of students will present to the class one of the readings marked with □ on the syllabus. Each student is expected to participate in the presentation of readings at least twice during the semester. The distribution of readings for each week will be done by the class, making sure that all the readings are covered, and send the list of assignments to the instructor by noon on Friday, January 21. All members of a group assigned to a specific reading are expected to contribute to the presentations. After the presentation the instructor will prepare questions about the reading and the topics covered for the class to discuss. Note that all students are expected to have read the papers and be ready for the class discussion. There will be a discussion board for each topic to continue the discussion on Blackboard after class. The presenting teams will upload their presentations and questions to the corresponding discussion board.
3. **TAKE-HOME EXAMS (20%):** two take-home exams will be given on March 1 and April 12. The exams will cover all topics and readings from weeks 1 through 14.
4. **POLICY DEBATES AND MEMOS (20%):** throughout the semester we will hold in-class debates about relevant public policy issues. In preparation for the class discussion students will work individually or in small groups; each group is expected to conduct in-depth research on the topic: this research should characterize the problem that the policy intervention addresses, identify the relevant stakeholders, their positions and the likelihood to mobilize in support or opposition to the policy, discuss the issues affecting the design, adoption, enactment and implementation of the policy, and address the expected institutional and political conditions under which the policy would be adopted. A week before the session when the class debates the policy each group will post on Dropbox a list of relevant readings, publications, data sources and other relevant resources for the class to peruse in preparation for the in-class debate. After the debate each group will submit a policy memo about the topic.
5. **FINAL ASSIGNMENT (20%):** your final assignment will be to write a memo on one of the policy issues debated in the last session of the course. The memo will be based on the research done in preparation for the final public policy debate. Your policy memo should identify the relevant stakeholders in the policy-making process, discuss the many different dimensions upon which the intended policy impacts, and make a recommendation on the course of action for a relevant stakeholder. The final assignment is an individual assignment and will be due at 12pm on May 4.

## LOGISTICS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Attendance Policy:* Hobby School students are expected to arrive on time for all their classes and remain in class until officially concluded. Students who miss more than three classes without a university approved excuse (e.g., military service, religious holidays), a written note from a medical provider, or pre-approval from the course instructor will receive an F for the course. Students who are more than 15 minutes late for a class and/or leave class 15 minutes before its conclusion will be counted absent. The University of Houston's Graduate Excused Absence Policy can be found here: <http://bit.ly/3ilbU5r>. Any student for whom this attendance policy represents a special hardship should talk to the instructor. Instructors are encouraged to make reasonable accommodations for students with special hardships or needs.

*Recording of Class:* Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities [<http://bit.ly/2XM7QBP>]. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and note-taking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

*Syllabus Changes:* Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email to students' official UH email account, and posted on Blackboard. You are expected to be aware of any additional course policies announced during class. You should also check Blackboard periodically for announcements and updates.

*Communications:* Email communications related to this course will be sent to your Exchange email account which each

University of Houston student receives. The Exchange mail server can be accessed via Outlook, which provides a single location for organizing and managing day-to-day information, from email and calendars to contacts and task lists. Exchange email accounts can be accessed by logging into Office 365 with your Cougarnet credentials or through Access UH. Additional assistance can be found at the Get Help page.

*Contact:* Please use email to contact me with any issues. In the subject of your message please use an informative heading including course number, e.g. POLC 6320–Question about Tuesday’s case. Please do not contact me through Blackboard; I rarely check the Blackboard message board.

*Webcams, Use of Cell Phones, Tablets and Laptops:* Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams must be turned on during the times when the class is in session and during examinations. Since they cause interruptions and distractions, phones should be turned off during class time. Please do not use any Instant Messaging software if you bring your laptop to take notes.

*UH Face Covering Policy:* To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the University recommends face coverings on campus including classrooms for both faculty and students [<http://bit.ly/3bUo4Bb>]. Face coverings must cover your mouth and nose and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is discouraged and is not an excuse for removing the face covering for any extended length of time. For additional information on the use of face coverings, please see Face Covering FAQs [<http://bit.ly/38XsdT3>]. Failure to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering in class will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately and a disciplinary referral through the Dean of Students Office. Requests for accommodations relating to the face covering policy may be directed to the Center for Students with DisABILITIES.

*Required Daily Health Self-Assessment:* Your presence in class each session means that you have completed a daily self-assessment of your health/exposure and you:

- Are NOT exhibiting any Coronavirus Symptoms
- Have NOT tested positive for COVID-19
- Have NOT knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or suspected/presumed COVID-19

If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class. Please see COVID-19 Diagnosis/Symptoms Protocols [<http://bit.ly/3ilgXme>] for what to do if you experience symptoms and Potential Exposure to Coronavirus for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 [<http://bit.ly/3sBV6vs>]. Consult the Graduate Excused Absence Policy for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons [<http://bit.ly/3ilbU5r>].

*Academic Integrity:* I strictly enforce all of the policies regarding academic integrity such as cheating and plagiarism as determined by University of Houston. A copy of these regulations is available at: <http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1025>; ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for violations. Violations of academic integrity are a very serious matter, and I will pursue the strictest punitive action in the case of a violation. I consider very serious cases of academic dishonesty the following: using and/or submitting as one’s own a paper/project that was written by another student in the past; using and/or submitting as one’s own a paper/project that was obtained through the Internet, or some other source; having someone else write (even partially) or help with the writing of any of the required papers; having someone else do any of the work required for an exam; engaging in plagiarism: using any statements (either in a verbatim or paraphrased form) found in other people’s work as one’s own, and without proper citations; cheating on an exam.

*University Sexual Misconduct Policy:* The University of Houston is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and University policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual misconduct or sexual exploitation. If you are a victim of sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, or discrimination based on sex, you are encouraged to seek help from a trained professional or law enforcement. At the University of Houston the following personnel are available to assist you: Title IX Coordinator and his assistant coordinators [713-743-8835, [eos@uh.edu](mailto:eos@uh.edu)]; Campus law enforcement and/or security; Campus-based counseling staff; Campus-based student health center staff; Human Resources staff; Dean of Students Office staff; Student Housing and Residence Life professional staff.

# CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING LIST

## PART I – INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ANALYSIS

### WEEK 1: JANUARY 18 – POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 1. It isn't Rocket Science, but...
- Wheelan 2011, Chapter 2, pp. 39–59: What is public policy?

### WEEK 2: JANUARY 25 – MARKETS AND GOVERNMENTS I

- Weimer and Vining 2011, Chapter 4: Efficiency and the Idealized Competitive Market
- Weimer and Vining 2011, Chapter 5: Rationales for Public Policy – Market Failures

#### STUDENT PRESENTATION:

- Stephen Levitt and Stephen Dubner. 2005. “Chapter 4: Where Have all the Criminals Gone?” In Levitt and Dubner, *Freakonomics*. Harper Collins.

### WEEK 3, FEBRUARY 1 – MARKETS AND GOVERNMENTS II

- Weimer and Vining 2011, Chapter 6: Rationales for Public Policy – Other Limitations of the Competitive Framework
- Weimer and Vining 2011, Chapter 7: Rationales for Public Policy – Redistribution and Other Goals

#### STUDENT PRESENTATION:

- Wheelan 2011, Chapter 3, pp. 80–104: Moral Hazard, Adverse Selection and Incomplete Information

## PART II – POLITICAL ANALYSIS: UNDERSTANDING COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

### WEEK 4, FEBRUARY 8 – RATIONALITY AND STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 2: Rationality – The Model of Choice

#### BACKGROUND READING:

- \* Bueno de Mesquita 2016. Appendix A

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 8: Cooperation

#### STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

- Dixit and Nalebuff 2008, Chapter 3 [pp. 64–84]
- Dixit and Nalebuff 2008, Chapter 3 [pp. 84–101]

### WEEK 5, FEBRUARY 15 – COOPERATION, COLLECTIVE ACTION AND PUBLIC GOODS

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 9: Collective Action

#### STUDENT PRESENTATION:

- Mancur Olson. 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press. [pp. 1–22, 33–65]

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 10: Public Goods, Externalities, and the Commons

#### STUDENT PRESENTATION:

- Elinor Ostrom et al. 1999. “Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges.” *Science* 284: 278–282.

### WEEK 6, FEBRUARY 22 – GROUP CHOICE

- Shepsle 2010, Chapters 3 and 4: Group Choice and Majority Rule

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 5: Spatial Models of Majority Rule

#### STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

- Larry Bartels. 2005. “Homer gets a tax cut: Inequality and public policy in the American mind.” *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1):15–31.
- Arthur Lupia, et al. 2006. “Were Bush Tax Cut Supporters ‘Simply Ignorant’? A Second Look at Conservatives and Liberals in ‘Homer Gets a Tax Cut’ ” *Perspectives on Politics*.

### WEEK 7, MARCH 1 – ANALYZING STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 6: Sophistication, Misrepresentation, and Manipulation

#### STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

- Gary W. Cox. 1994. “A Note on Crime and Punishment.” *Public Choice*, 78(1): 115–124.

#### BACKGROUND READING:

- \* Bueno de Mesquita 2016. Appendix B
- \* Dixit and Nalebuff 2008. Chapters 2 and 4

ANNOUNCEMENT: First take-home exam distributed; due on March 11

**WEEK 8, MARCH 8 – ANALYZING AND DEBATING POLICY I**

**POLICY DEBATE: TRADE POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES**

- In-class debate on voting for fast-track authority in Congress
- Readings, background material and instructions will be distributed by the instructor prior to the debate.

**BACKGROUND READING:**

- ✱ Arthur Lupia. 2013. “Communicating Science in Politicized Environments.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 110: 14048–14054.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Instructions for first policy memo distributed; due on March 22

**WEEK 9, MARCH 15 – SPRING BREAK**

**PART III – THE POLITICAL PROCESS**

**WEEK 10, MARCH 22 – ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS**

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 7: Voting Methods and Electoral Systems

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:**

- Wheelan 2011, Chapter 6: The Political Process
- Jong Hee Park and Nathan Jensen. 2007. Electoral Competition and Agricultural Support in OECD Countries. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(2): 314–329.

**WEEK 11, MARCH 29 – LEGISLATURES AND REPRESENTATION**

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 11: Institutions
- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 12: Legislatures

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:**

- Michael A. Bailey, Judith Goldstein, and Barry R. Weingast. 1997. “The Institutional Roots of American Trade Policy: Politics, Coalitions, and International Trade.” *World Politics* 49(3): 309–38.
- Roderick Kiewiet and Mathew McCubbins. 1991. *The Logic of Delegation*. Univ. of Chicago Press. Chapter 2.

**WEEK 12, APRIL 5 – IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: DELEGATION AND AGENCY**

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 13: Bureaucracy and Intergovernmental Relations

**RECOMMENDED READING:**

- ✱ Bueno de Mesquita 2016, Chapter 9: The Need for Information

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:**

- Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Policy Patrols versus Fire Alarms.” *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1): 165–179.

**WEEK 13, APRIL 12 – IMPLEMENTING POLICIES: POLITICAL LEADERS**

- Shepsle 2010, Chapter 14: Leadership

**STUDENT PRESENTATION:**

- Elizabeth R. Gerber and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2011. “When Mayors Matter: Estimating the Impact of Mayoral Partisanship on City Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 326–339.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Second take-home exam distributed; due on April 15

**WEEK 14, APRIL 19 – POLICY DEBATE: PUBLIC POLICY AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- Progress report on research for second policy debate on public policy and the COVID-19 pandemic
  - ✱ Weimer and Vining 2011, Chapter 16 Cost Benefit Analysis and Efficiency
  - ✱ William R. Shadish, Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell. 2002. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Houghton Mifflin. Chapter 8: Randomized Experiments.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Students should post on Blackboard the readings, background information and other relevant materials identified in their independent research no later than April 24

**WEEK 15, APRIL 26 – POLICY DEBATE: PUBLIC POLICY AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- In-class presentations and debate

ANNOUNCEMENT: Final policy memo on public policy and the COVID-19 pandemic due on May 4