

# Policy and Policy Making in the US Syllabus

This course examines public policy and its formation through the interaction of political groups and governmental institutions in selected areas of public policy in the United States. The course will also include relevant comparisons to other national systems, when appropriate.

## Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify the steps of the policy making process
- Describe how policy is shaped by the social, political, economic, and institutional contexts in which it is made
- Evaluate how the constitutional structure of the United States shapes public policy
- Define the conditions under which public policy is likely to change
- Generate an evidence-based, original policy proposal that addresses the housing crisis in the United States

## Contacts and Communication

**Office Hours:** I will be available in my office every Monday and Wednesday from 11 AM to 12 PM. However, I am also happy to schedule a zoom meeting at another time, just send me an email and we can arrange a time.

**Email:** [kscofield@tamusa.edu](mailto:kscofield@tamusa.edu)

**Phone Number:** 979-803-1653 This is a google voice number. If you hate to email feel free to call or text. Just make sure I know who you are and what you are texting about.

**Communicating with the Class:** I will send any announcements or schedule changes for the class on Blackboard messages.

## Textbooks

This course has two books. Make sure to get them through Perusall, so do not purchase them before the first day of class so we can walk through it.

- An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making, 5e by Thomas Birkland
- Evicted by Matthew Desmond

## Grading Scheme

### **Participation and Attendance – 20%**

This grade will be based on student's attendance in class as well as their willingness to

participate in each class/discussion. This is a small class that is largely based on discussion of the readings (rather than lecture) so attendance is very important. More than two absences will count against the student's grade.

### **Exams – 30%**

There will be two exams that will each count for 15% of the student's grade.

### **Reading – 20%**

Readings for each class will be posted in Perusall. Readings assigned on a Monday or a Wednesday will be due before class starts. Sections of Evicted may be due at 5PM on Friday instead as a way to spread out the workload. Please check the syllabus or the due dates in Perusall for details on each reading. Perusall will evaluate quality of student's reading and comments and give a grade. Ordinarily a 1 will score between a 0 and a 70 depending on the amount of time spent on the reading, a 2=85 and 3=100. These grades will be averaged together to form the reading grade. I will drop two reading grades, so students can miss up to two readings.

### **Policy Proposal – 30%**

Students will draft a policy proposal aimed at improving housing policy in the United States (and/or Texas). Students will write multiple drafts of the proposal and peer-review their classmates. In total this part of the class will be worth 30% of Student's grades. The breakdown is as follows

- Draft 1 = 7.5% of grade
- Peer Review Round One = 3.75% of grade
- Draft 2 = 7.5% of grade
- Peer Review Round 2 = 3.75% of grade
- Draft 3 = 7.5% of grade

Please note that Peer Reviews will be conducted in class, so if a student is going to be out those days, they need to make an arrangement prior to class to make-up the work.

## **Class Policies**

### **Late Work Policy**

I will not be accepting late work, since this class relies heavily on students coming to class with the readings and paper drafts completed. However, I will drop two reading grades.

### **AI Policy**

This course assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity. The prohibition on the use of AI extends to answering questions in Perusall. Students suspected of using AI will be asked to give an oral defense of their work.

## Course Schedule

Please note that while I will try my best to keep to this schedule, the course schedule is subject to change. If changes need to be made, I will post an updated schedule on Blackboard under the syllabus tab. All reading Assignments will be completed in Perusall, which will also have due dates for each assignment marked. All Friday deadlines are midnight on Friday. All other work is due BEFORE class on the date listed.

### Schedule by Date

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1/12	Chapter 1 Policy Making	
1/14	Policy Making and Ethnographic Research	Introduction and “About” chapter of Evicted
1/19	No Class for MLK Day	
1/21	Chapter 2 Policy Making	
1/23		Chapters 1-5 of Evicted Due
1/26	Chapter 2 Policy Making	
1/28	Chapter 3 Policy Making	Chapter 3 Policy Making Reading Due
1/30		Chapters 6-8 of Evicted due
2/2	Chapter 3 Policy Making	
2/4	Chapter 9 Policy Making	Chapter 9 Policy Making Reading Due
2/6		Chapters 9 and 10 Evicted due
2/9	Chapter 9 Policy Making	Chapters 11-13 Evicted Due
2/11	Chapter 9 Policy Making	
2/13		Chapters 14-17 Evicted Due
2/16	Chapter 10 Policy Making	Chapter 10 of Policy Making Due
2/18	Chapter 10 Policy Making	
2/20		Chapters 18-20 of Evicted Due
2/23	Chapter 10 Policy Making	

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
2/25	Discuss writing a white paper/expectations for project	
2/27		Chapters 21-24 of Evicted Due
3/2	Discussion of Evicted and Brainstorm paper ideas	
3/4	Test One on Chapters 1,2,3, 9, 10 of Textbook	
3/9-3/11	Spring Break!	
3/16	Chapter 4 of Policy Making	
3/18	Chapter 4	
3/20		Rough Draft Due
3/23	Writing Center Polish Rough draft	
3/25	Peer Review Round One	Draft One Due Before Class (Bring to Class)
3/30	I return “editor’s letter”; Chapter 5 Policy Making	Chapter 5 Policy Making Due
4/1	Chapter 5 Policy Making	
4/3		Second Draft Due
4/6	Peer Review Round 2 in Class	Chapter 6 Reading Due
4/8	Chapter 6	
4/10		Final Papers Due
4/13	Chapter 6	
4/15	Chapter 7	
4/20	Chapter 7	
4/22	Chapter 8	
4/27	Exam Two	

## General School Policies and Resources

## Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

## Academic Learning Center

The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu), calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

## Counseling/Mental Health Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit [tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling)

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.

## Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>. Download the

SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

## Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend by the census date will have their financial aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester, a Care report will be submitted, and you will possibly be dropped from the class. Your financial aid may have to be recalculated and a portion of your federal aid may have to be returned to the DoE.

## Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center

The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

## Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

## Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at [military.va@tamusa.edu](mailto:military.va@tamusa.edu) or (210)784-1397.

## Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to

make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

## The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

## Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu), 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

## Pregnant/Parenting Students

Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a

student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu); 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

## Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

### Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

### Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).