Seminar in Public Policy

The purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview and introduction to the literature on public policy. This class will expose you to a small sample of the enormous body of research in public policy. It is my hope that the course will expose you to just enough of a topic to help you determine if the area is of theoretical interest to you and help steer you towards future research topics.

Requirements

Each week, you will receive a question(s) of the week to be answered using the next week’s readings. You must answer the question(s) in a one page single spaced response. You may use parenthetical citations, for example (Davis and Bali 2008), throughout the paper but do not have to include a bibliography. These papers must be turned in at the start of each class. There are fourteen weeks of class. You must complete these questions 12 times out of 14. In other words, you get two free skips. Use them wisely! Thought papers are worth 25 points each for a total of 300 points.

Each student is required to complete two book reviews over the course of the semester. These reviews will be assigned by me based on students’ interests and availability of topics. The review should be 3 to 4 pages, single spaced, and include a discussion of the following: the research question, the theoretical context, data and methods used to answer the research question, findings, and the author’s conclusions. The final page of the paper should be your comments on the book. In your comment section, you should address how the reading relates to the week’s required readings. These book reviews should be provided to me by 5:00pm on Tuesday evening via email and should be sent to each of your classmates at the same time. Each book review is worth 100 points for a total of 200 points.

An original research design will be due on Friday, May 13th at 10am. A handout will be provided to you that details the structure of the research design and what is expected. If you would like for me to read a draft of your research design and offer suggestions, the draft must be given to me by April 15th. The research design is worth 300 points.

Class participation is a crucial component of any graduate seminar. Each student will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of their informed participation in the seminar discussion. The time you spend on the question of the week assignment should help prepare you for class discussion. In addition, on your book review weeks, you will have additional information to contribute to that particular class discussion. Class participation is worth 200 points.
Break Down
Thought Papers 30%
Book Reviews 20%
Research Design 30%
Participation 20%
Total 100%

Required Texts

Course Outline
1. Federalism
2. Agenda Setting
   -Public Opinion
   -Media
   -Interest Groups
3. Policy Passage
   -Legislative Bodies
   -Governors and Presidents
4. Implementation
   -Bureaucracies
   -Bureaucrats
5. Evaluation
6. Innovation and Diffusion
7. Initiatives and Referendum
8. Race and Public Policy
   -Representation
   -Bureaucracy
   -Welfare

Journal Abbreviations
American Journal of Political Science AJPS
American Political Science Review APSR
Journal of Politics JOP
State Politics and Policy Quarterly SPPQ
Social Science Quarterly SSQ
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory JPART
Political Research Quarterly PRQ
Legislative Studies Quarterly LSQ
Jan. 12: Introduction

Jan. 19: Federalism


Jan. 26: Agenda Setting and the Role of Public Opinion and the Media


Feb. 2: Agenda Setting and the Role of Public Opinion and the Media

Feb. 9: Agenda Setting and Interest Groups


Feb. 16: Policy Passage: Legislative Bodies
-TBA
-TBA
-TBA


Feb. 23: Policy Passage: Presidents and Governors


**March 2: Bureaucracies and Implementation**


**March 9: Mardi Gras**

**March 16: Bureaucrats and Implementation**


**March 23: Evaluation**


March 30: Innovation and Diffusion

Book Report: None.

April 6: Initiatives and Referendum

April 13: Race and Representation


April 20 Spring Break

April 27: Race and Bureaucracy

May 4: Race and Welfare Policy


May 13: Research Design Due 10am