POLS 4311
Urban Problems and Public Policy

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OFFICE HOURS: MWF 9-10 and M 11-6

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This class explores several policy areas that face urban areas and beyond. Unlike states, cities have no constitutional standing and policy is created and executed through interactions between federal, state, and local government entities in addition to interest groups and private sources of capital. As a result, policy making is often difficult. The course will begin with an overview of the history of urban governance and of how public policy is made. Through focusing attention on health care, criminal justice, social and immigration policy we explore issues that have been prevalent throughout urban areas across the country that will inform our study of public policy. Particular attention will be paid to policy making in Texas.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students completing this course will:
1. Understand the basic aspects of urban governance and federalism
2. Acquire knowledge of specific public policy areas
3. Gain the ability to critically analyze types of public policies
4. Improve written and oral communication skills
5. Demonstrate intercultural awareness and civic engagement.

BOOK ORDER
Elaine Kamarck’s How Change Happens or Doesn’t was ordered at the bookstore and is available on Amazon.

MEANS OF ASSESSMENT
Policy Paper (20%) Each student will write a short 5 page policy memo based on a list of topics distributed by the instructor. No additional research will be necessary for this assignment. Instructions will be available on Blackboard.
Documentary Review (10%) We will supplement lectures and discussions with viewing of documentaries. Students will be responsible for writing a 2-3 page review for the documentary, The House I Live In.
Exams (45%, 15% Each) There will be three exams in the course consisting of short answer questions. Students will have the option of substituting a presentation for an exam. Information will be available on Blackboard.
Final Exam (20%) Each student will complete a final exam consisting of short answer and essay questions.
Participation (5%) Students with more than four absences will have their grades negatively impacted.
Late papers will be reduced by one letter grade for each day they are late.
GRADING SCALE
A - 90% B - 80% C - 70% D - 60% F - Less than 60%

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES
Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

SPECIAL NEEDS
In accordance with OP 10.15 of ASU’s Operating Policies and Procedures, persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Angelo State University Honor Code http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/Honor_Code.pdf: Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Therefore, you are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code. Click on the link to access the code.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COURSE
The last day to drop a course or to withdraw from the University will be November 3, 2017.

Class Schedule
All Readings will be available on Blackboard or on links from the syllabus except for the Kamarck book.
8/29 Introduction
8/31 Public Policy Concepts
Excerpt from Krause and Smith U.S. Public Policy
9/5 Urban Politics and Policy
Excerpt from Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom’s City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America.
9/7 Public Policy Part I
Kamarck How Change Happens or Doesn’t, Chapter 1
9/12 Public Policy Part II
Kamarck, Chapter 2
Presentation #1
9/14 Public Policy Part III
Kamarck, Chapter 4
Presentation #2
9/19 Public Policy Part IV
Kamarck, Chapter 7
9/21 Exam 1
9/26 Introduction to Health Care

**Presentation #3**
9/28 Obamacare and Reform Efforts
Obama’s Deal

10/3 Policy Making in Texas
[http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/07/10/americas-future-is-texas](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/07/10/americas-future-is-texas)

**Presentation #4**
10/5 Texas Policy and Politics
*Poverty, Politics and Profit* shown in class

10/10 Education, Achievement and Mass Incarceration
Linda Darling-Hammond. “Structured for Failure for Failure: Race, Resources, and Student Achievement.” In Marcus and Moya, Doing Race

**Presentation #5**
10/12 Mass Incarceration and Politics
Excerpt from Amy Lerman and Vesla Weaver’s *Arresting Citizenship*

**Presentation #6**
10/17 War on Drugs Part I
*The House I Live In*
10/19 War on Drugs Part II
*The House I Live In*

**10/24 Exam 2**
10/26 Social Policy
Suzanne Mettler’s *The Submerged State*

**Presentation #7**

**Documentary Review Due 10/27 at 11:59pm through Blackboard**
10/31 Education Reform
*The Education of Michelle Rhee*
11/2 Education Reform
Excerpt from Diane Ravitch’s *The Life and Death of the Great American School System*

**Presentation #8**
11/7 Immigration Policy

**Presentation #9**
11/9 No Class
11/14 Overview of Immigration Policy
Readings to be Posted on Blackboard
11/16 *Eviction*
Excerpt Available on Blackboard

**Policy Paper Due 11/20 at 11:59pm through Blackboard**

11/21 *Eviction*

Excerpt Available on Blackboard

11/28 Policy Changes in 2017


11/30 **Exam 3**

12/5 Review for Final

12/7 Review for Final

**Final Will be Held 12/14 at 8am**