

**POLS 4311**  
**Urban Problems and Public Policy**

**Professor:** Dr. M. Gritter

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**OFFICE HOURS:**MTW 12-4

**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..

**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**

Simulation (20%) Each student will participate in a simulation in which a policy change is developed. Students will assume specific roles and be graded on their participation and performance.

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 on the Opioid Epidemic.

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. Particular attention will be devoted to the excerpt from *Eviction*.

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](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. October 31, 2019.

### **Class Schedule**

All Readings will be available on Blackboard or on links from the syllabus except for the Kamarck book.

8/27 Introduction

8/29 Public Policy Concepts

Excerpt from Krause and Smith *U.S. Public Policy*

9/3 Urban Politics and Policy

Excerpt from Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom's *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America*.

### **Presentation #1**

9/5 Public Policy Part I

Kamarck *How Change Happens or Doesn't*, Chapter 1

### **Presentation #2**

9/10 Public Policy Part II

Kamarck, Chapter 2

### **Presentation #3**

9/12 Public Policy Part III

Kamarck, Chapter 4

### **Presentation #4**

9/17 Public Policy Part IV

Kamarck, Chapter 7

### **9/19 Exam 1**

9/24 Introduction to Health Care

Edward Berkowitz "Getting to the Affordable Care Act"

### **Presentation #5**

9/26 Obamacare and Reform Efforts

Pencecare:

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/mike-pence-medicare-indiana-237241>

10/1 Policy Making in Texas

Lawrence Wright. "America's Future is Texas." *The New Yorker*, July 10, 2017.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/07/10/americas-future-is-texas>

### **Presentation #6**

10/3 Texas Policy and Politics

*Poverty, Politics and Profit* shown in class

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/in-americas-affordable-housing-crisis-more-demand-but-less-supply/>

10/8 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 #7**

10/10 Mass Incarceration and Politics

Excerpt from Amy Lerman and Vesla Weaver's *Arresting Citizenship*

### **Presentation #8**

10/15 Opioid Epidemic Part I

10/17 Opioid Epidemic Part II

### **10/22 Exam 2**

10/24 Social Policy

Suzanne Mettler's *The Submerged State*

### **Presentation #9**

**Documentary Review Due 10/27 at 11:59pm through Blackboard**

10/29 Education Reform

*The Education of Michelle Rhee*

10/31 Education Reform

Excerpt from Diane Ravitch's *The Life and Death of the Great American School System*

### **Presentation #10**

11/5 Immigration Policy

Linda Greenhouse. "What Would Justice Powell Due? The 'Alien Children' Case and the Meaning of Equal Protection." Social Science Research Network, January 5, 2009

### **Presentation #11**

11/7 *Evicted*

Excerpt Available on Blackboard

### **Presentation #12**

11/12 *Evicted*

Reading Posted on Blackboard

11/14 **Exam 3**

11/19 Simulation Part I

11/21 Simulation Part II

11/26 Simulation Part III

12/3 Review for Final

12/5 Review for Final

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