

POL285 - AMERICAN PUBLIC POLICY (3 credit hours)

Fall 2007

Dr. Mitzi Mahoney

Course Meetings: Tuesday, Thursday 11:00-12:30 in AB1 310

Office Hours: Huntsville campus - Tuesday, Thursday 8:00am-11:00am, 1:50-2:30pm

The University Center – Tuesday 5:00-6:00pm

By appointment on Monday and Wednesday

Office Location: AB1 319C Office Phone: 936-294-1464 E-Mail: pol_mlm@shsu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the dynamics of public policy making in the United States. Policy, defined by some as “whatever government does or does not do,” affects virtually every aspect of your life. My goal in this course is to equip you with the analytical skills to understand policy phenomena. By the end of the course you should be able to describe policies, to identify the factors that influence, affect, or “cause” policy, and to assess the consequences of policies. In the first section of the course we will discuss the basic elements of the policy making process – the actors, the procedures, the stages of the process. In the second section of the course we will discuss a number of conceptual models useful for analyzing policy making. Throughout the semester we will discuss substantive policy issues including health policy, family policy, immigration policy, and civil liberties/civil rights policies. The course includes a combination of lecture and discussion.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The objectives for students include:

- Building a knowledge base regarding American public policy
- Learning fundamental principles, theories, approaches in the study of public policy
- Learning how to analyze and evaluate arguments regarding public policy

COURSE READINGS:

Davis, Edwin. PUBLIC POLICY: THE BASICS. Huntsville, Texas: Edsal Publishing House. This is the only book you must buy for the course.

CQ Researcher. The CQ RESEARCHER will be available through the Newton Gresham Library’s Electronic Reserve system. You will be able to download and print copies of the readings. I will demonstrate how to do this in class.

Additional readings as assigned. I will assign readings about current policy issues. Most of these readings will come from newspapers and news magazines. They will be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Exams: Four exams will be given. They will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. You will need a Scantron 882 for each exam.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Each exam is worth 25% of the course grade. The four exams are averaged. An average of 90-100 constitutes an A, 80-89 constitutes a B, 70-79 constitutes a C, 60-69 constitutes a D, and any grade below 60 constitutes an F. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Make Up Exams: Make up exams will be given to students who miss an exam because of illness, a death in the family, or an official university activity. You must notify me immediately if you miss an exam. Make up exams will be given at the convenience of the faculty member. Make up exams will consist of essay questions.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly, to be punctual, to be prepared, and to not be disruptive. There are neither penalties nor rewards levied on grades for student attendance.

Academic Honesty Policy: Students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. **Any student found cheating on exams or plagiarizing another's work will be given an F for the course.**

University policies regarding Academic Honesty, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Religious Holidays, Instructor Evaluation, and the Classroom Rules of Conduct will be observed. These policies can be found www.shsu.edu/syllabus/ and at www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html.