

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY INTERN COMMITTEE 2021 SESSION INTERNSHIP

CLASS SYLLABUS

POLITICS AND POLICY IN THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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ACADEMIC COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Policy is what government does and does not do. Politics is the process by which it decides what to do and how. Politics and policy are integral to each other: just as there can be no policymaking without politics. We can also understand public policy as both the product of political struggle and the source of grievances for subsequent battles. In turn, those grievances and battles may constitute the sources of continuing civic engagement and governance processes that involve elected officials, affected groups, and citizens.

In a democracy, choices need to be made and politics is the best means we have of making those choices. Legislative processes are key to political action, since the legislature is the lawmaking branch of a representative government; however, politics goes beyond these arenas, since it refers to all activities designed to acquire and use power for some collective good and includes any arena in which one mobilizes constituents, acquires allies, and confronts resistance.

This course is designed to explore how politics influences policy in the New York State legislative process, as well as the role of policy analysis. We will examine the critical issues confronting New York State, and models for understanding how these issues are placed on the policy agenda. We will focus on the points in the policy process when politics plays a role, as well as the various political actors in the process, including legislators, the governor, the attorney general and comptroller, state agencies, citizens, non-profit organizations, lobbyists and policy entrepreneurs, as well as the media.

We will discuss how policymakers translate their preferred solutions into an agenda that others take seriously and how they take political action to advance this agenda. In addition, we will explore the built-in institutional relationships and fragmentation of the New York political system, as well as the constellation of constituent interests, agency rivalries, legislative conflicts, and external political factors. Furthermore, we will review the way that the political process functions in New York State, the benefits and obstacles that these political features can represent for orderly deliberation, and the proposals for reform.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of the courses, each student is expected to understand:

- The policy-making process and the influence of politics in a democratic system
- New York State politics and the legislative process
- How a policy is placed on the agenda
- The role that political, economic, and cultural diversity play
- Principles and practices of democracy, citizen participation, equity and rights
- The importance of Global/Intercultural fluency
- How to write effectively on diverse and complex subjects
- How to research and write a detailed policy and political analysis report

“Mock Hearing” and “Intern Pods” will enhance:

- Intern’s Legislative Portfolio
- Understanding of Legislative Materials (Press Releases, Bill Memos, etc.)
- How to use the Legislation Retrieval System (LRS - digital data base)
- Oral communication and debating skills
- Teamwork and group collaboration
- Professional and work ethics
- Leadership skills
- An understanding of a career in public service

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Courses and the Four Cycles** - Interns will attend four different courses over four (3 to 4-week) cycles. Only one course can be taken in any one cycle and interns will be assigned to courses during the first three cycles. These courses include the following:

Dr. Ledford – Democracy, Citizen Participation, Equity and Rights

Three Zoom Lectures and one Combined Zoom Lecture
Thursdays 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Dr. Maniscalco – Politics in New York State

Three Zoom Lectures and one Combined Zoom Lecture
Thursdays 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Dr. Nishiyama – Public Policy and Policy Analysis

Three Zoom Lectures and one Combined Zoom Lecture
Thursdays 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

The courses in the fourth cycle will be on special topics to be announced. Interns will choose which course they would like to take provided there is room. During the fourth cycle, there will be three Zoom Lectures on Thursdays from 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

2. **Off-the-cuff Meetings** - An adviser will be assigned to each intern and will remain the intern's advisor for the duration of the intern program. The assigned advisor will meet remotely with each assigned intern either one-on-one or in small groups every other week to discuss the interns' office experience and how practice (in the office) intersects with theory (course work). These meetings will usually proceed after the course on Thursday and are mandatory.
3. **Weekly Previews** – Each Monday at 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM interns must attend (remotely) the Weekly Previews, which are briefings on the important up-coming week's activities in the NYS Assembly, Legislature, and Government in general.
4. **Pods and the Mock Hearing** – Interns will be placed into a Pod (small group of six to eight interns), which will be led by a Graduate Scholar (the Pod Leader). Each Pod will meet at least once a week at a time determined by the Pod Leader. (for more detail, see the Pod Practicum or consult your Pod Leader)
5. **General Conduct** - Interns must be respectful toward speakers, staff, professors, all Assemblymembers, constituents, and other interns, in remote classes, during issue forums, through e-mails, on the phone, etc. Politics is often very contentious; there are ways to voice a political position while being respectful toward others.

3. **Zoom Conduct** – When attending remote classes or events interns must observe the following rules

- Do not be late to the remote class or event – A good idea is to arrive early and socialize with other interns and/or the professor
- Please **keep your video on** at all times, you must be able to be seen, and must respond to questions – failure to do so may result in being recorded as absent
- Give the speaker your undivided attention – do not text, talk on the phone, watch television, etc., while in class
- Raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking
- Behave in the remote classes as you would in physical classes – sit at a table or desk (as opposed to being in bed, driving, at the supermarket, etc.) Wear appropriate attire. Do not eat your lunch on Zoom unless otherwise directed
- Your name should appear in Zoom so that your professors, speakers, and other interns can identify you
- Be sure your computer and WiFi are working well
- Recording the class is permitted only with the permission of the professor and the class
- Your professor may impose other rules

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- Failure to follow any of these codes of conduct may result in being dropped from the Zoom class meeting and not receiving credit for attendance

6. **Grade Recommendation** - Provided that you have met the requirement of receiving at least a "C" in this course (see above), 30% of your proposed final grade will be based on the evaluation from your office supervisor, 15 % is determined by work in your Pod, and the remaining 55% will be allocated to the academic component.

7. **Grade Breakdown** - The 55% for the academic component will be calculated as follows:

- a. Interns must attend all Remote Classes, Issue Forums, Pod Meetings, the Mock Hearing, Weekly Previews, Mandatory Workshops, and Off-the-cuff Meetings. Only a signed doctor's note, police report, firefighter call, court order, or official military orders constitute an excuse. Promptness is necessary to receive credit for attendance.
- b. **The five highest quizzes out of six quizzes** comprise 15% of the overall grade (about 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ % of the academic grade). Six quizzes will be administered on: February 11, February 18, March 11, March 18, April 1 and April 8 (the second and third lectures of each class cycle). Also, pop quizzes are always a possibility, which will be averaged in with the scheduled quizzes. **QUIZZES WILL BE ADMINISTERED THROUGH MOODLE AT A DESIGNATED TIME.**
- c. **Two short papers** makeup 15% of the overall grade (around 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ % of the academic grade). These include papers on "District Characteristics Survey" (Due February 11) and "Procedural and Political Reforms" (Due March 11). All sources must be cited using **in-text citation in APA style**. **Be sure to upload onto Moodle every assignment on time; a zero on an assignment (or on a quiz) has a serious impact on your final grade.**
- d. A **Research Proposals** must be submitted and approved before beginning your research paper. Bill topic should be chosen in consultation with your professor based on the areas of policy or legislation that interest you and/or your office, what is in the newspapers, what was mentioned in the "State of the State Address" by the Governor, or in Speaker Carl E. Heastie's Address. **The bill must be currently considered in both the Assembly and the Senate** (Same-As Bill) with an active and researchable legislative history, as well as strongly articulated public views expressed by various supporters, opponents and interest groups. The proposal is **due February 25** and must be uploaded onto Moodle no later than 5:00 PM. See the next section on page 5, "Grading Policies", for late submission penalties.
- e. **The Final Research Paper (Report)** constitutes 25% of the overall grade (around 45 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the academic grade). This paper, 15-25 double-spaced, typewritten pages (not including the table of contents, illustrations, graphic maps, reference page, appendices, etc.), should focus on an analysis of a specific bill. The **Final Research Paper (Report)**, the bill text, summary and

memo from LRS are **due on Thursday, April 15** and must be uploaded to Moodle no later than 5:00 PM.

- f. Note that the paper must have a title page, headings and sub-headings, appropriate citations **in-text parenthetical citations** (no footnotes), and a separate references page in **APA style**. It must be typed and proofread. Paper should be double-spaced, with one inch margins and 12-point font print. **SUBMITTED PAPERS NOT FOLLOWING THE FORMAT ABOVE WILL BE RETURNED AND WILL BE CONSIDERED LATE AND PENALIZED** (See the next section, "Grading Policies")
- g. The **mid-session academic evaluations** consider only the academic grade average and not the office grade.
- h. In addition to **mandatory workshops** (including one on academic integrity), throughout the semester, Dr. Wesley Nishiyama will offer a series of remote presentations on selected topics. These presentations are not mandatory, but will prove to be engaging. Students will receive extra credit for attending. One point will be added to the quiz average for each optional presentation attended. Topics will be announced. Additional non-mandatory workshops will be offered, but no extra credit will be given.

GRADING POLICIES:

1. **Academic Portion:** Interns must receive at least a "C" (73%) in the academic part of their internship in order to receive a final grade recommendation for the internship. **IF A STUDENT'S OVERALL GRADE IN THE ACADEMIC PART IS LESS THAN A "C", A REPORT WILL BE SENT TO THE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDING A FAILING GRADE FOR THE INTERNSHIP, REGARDLESS OF THE OFFICE AND POD GRADES.**
2. **Plagiarism:** Any student guilty of plagiarism will fail the specific assignment, the entire course and/or the entire Internship Program pursuant to college, university and Internship Program guidelines. Plagiarism is defined as the representation of someone else's work as your own, or the use of someone else's wording or ideas without citing the source and/or not using quotation marks (and/or block quotes). Changing a few words here and there or placing a citation at the end of a paragraph taken from someone else's work without using quotation marks both constitute plagiarism. If you use your own work from another course, you must cite yourself. **A mandatory academic integrity workshop (plagiarism workshop) will be given at the beginning of the program. It is the student's responsibility to attend this workshop, and to be aware of what plagiarism is and the penalties against it within the Internship Program and his/her University or College.**
3. **Late Assignments:**
 - All **late short papers** (3 ½ - 4 ½ pages) will be penalized a grade (e.g. A to a B), and penalized an additional grade for each additional week it is late.
 - **Late research proposals** will result in a 1% deduction on the research paper

final grade for each day it is late (including weekends). For example, a student may originally receive a 90% on her research paper, but because she submitted her proposal two days late, her paper will be penalized 2% and so she will receive an 88% (90% - 2% = 88%) on her paper.

- **Late research papers** (15-25 pages) will only be accepted under extraordinary circumstances and with documentation (i.e., medical, legal, and military obligations). Unexcused late research papers will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late. Furthermore, all late research papers (including excused papers) will not be eligible for an Intern Paper Award.
- **Late quizzes** will not be administered without a documented excuse.

4. **No Revisions:** An assignment cannot be revised and resubmitted once it has been graded.
5. **Writing and Proofreading:** Good writing skills are crucial for participants in the policy process. Therefore, **EXCESSIVE SPELLING ERRORS, TYPOS, DISORGANIZATION, POOR GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION MISTAKES, INFORMAL LANGUAGE (UNLESS IN A QUOTE) AND/OR IMPROPER USE OF APA STYLE, WILL REDUCE YOUR PAPER BY ONE LETTER GRADE** (i.e., an A becomes a B). Please proofread your papers and assignments. Good organization, excellent writing style and clarity will improve your grade.
6. **Mandatory Attendance:** Perfect attendance for all Classes, Pod meetings, Off-the-Cuff Meetings, Weekly Previews, Mock Hearing, and Issue Forums will improve your grade if it is borderline (e.g., A- to an A). **AFTER THE FIRST TWO UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FOR THE SEMESTER, EACH ADDITIONAL UNEXCUSED ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN A 5% DECREASE IN YOUR ACADEMIC GRADE** (about a 2¼% decrease in the overall grade). **YOU MUST ATTEND THE CLASS TO WHICH YOU ARE ASSIGNED**, (see the schedule for your group).
7. Overall Grade Breakdown:

Office Grade	30%
Pods and Mock Hearing	15%
Two Short Papers (Each 7.5%)	15%
Five Quizzes (out of Six Quizzes)	15%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>25%</u>
Grade (Our Recommendation)	100%

Provided the student receive no less than a C in the academic portion of the internship.

Again Note: Late Assignments will result in a reduction of your academic grade. (See above)

8. Grading Scale

97% – 100%	A+	77% – 79%	C+
93% – 96%	A	73% – 76%	C
90% – 92%	A-	70% – 72%	C-
87% – 89%	B+	60% – 69%	D
83% – 86%	B	59% and Below	F
80% – 82%	B-		

The final class grade will be rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g., 79.4% will be rounded down to 79% and 79.5% will be rounded up to 80%)

Note: different colleges and universities have different grading policies. Most do not grant an “A+”, other institutions do not have a “-” and a “+”, while others will grant only a “satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade.” We will recommend a grade, but your academic institution will determine the grade you will receive for the program. Consult your institution for details.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR RESEARCH PAPER:

Based on the assigned readings for this course and your research on a particular bill (using materials mentioned in handouts on New York legislative research; readings in the *New York Times*, district newspapers, relevant academic literature, reliable websites—ending in “.gov” and “.edu” or very reliable and recognized sites ending in .org or .com, i.e., www.redcross.org, www.morganstanley.com, remote personal interviews, and information from LRS), consider the following questions below. The questions are arranged in three parts, around which the research paper should be organized—**Policy Analysis, Political Analysis, and Democratic Analysis**. Although the following is not a rubric, each section should be addressed, but not necessarily each question (DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS). Which questions should be considered depend on the nature of the policy analyzed.

I. Introduction

II. Policy Analysis (at least five pages)

- What is the specific bill that you are analyzing? (Attach a copy of the bill, summary, and memo in the Appendix)

1) The Catalyst

- What problem, conflict, or catalyst precipitated the bill (immediate causes and root causes)? Did a specific problem suddenly emerge or has the problem been building up gradually?
- Is the problem serious? Is it a current problem or a potential problem (i.e., averting a disaster)?

2) Policy Development

- Who will benefit, who will bear the cost, and to what degree? What indirect benefits and cost might it incur? What are the fiscal implications?
- Will the policy work if implemented? Will it eliminate the problem or only treat the symptoms? Can the feasibility of the policy be determined with the existing data and studies conducted?
- Have similar policies been implemented in the U.S., in New York, in other states and in other countries; and if so, what were the results? Are there better solutions to the problem? If so, why have they not been considered?
- Is there a more economical solution to the problem even if it is less effective?
- What values (i.e., fairness, equality, desert, liberty, economic utility, the common good, rights, public opinion, etc.) should be considered and what values indeed are considered?
- What different demographics must be considered?
- Are there any possible unintended consequences and known externalities? Will the policy be hindered by other existing policies, which are being considered?
- As written, are there any problems with the wording—ambiguities, vagueness, contradictions, loopholes, and unaddressed circumstances?
- Is the policy expected to yield serious results immediately, in a few months, before the next election, a few years, or in generations to come?
- How enduring will the outcomes be?
- How well have the staffs of the legislature (Assembly and Senate) analyzed the pros and cons of the legislation?
- How do policymakers translate their preferred solutions into an agenda that others take seriously?
- How do policymakers take political action to advance this agenda?

3) Implementation

- How will this policy be implemented? Will it require the cooperation of state and local governments?
- Will incentives be necessary? If so what are these incentives—tax breaks, penalties, grants, etc.?
- Who will implement this policy? State agencies? Municipalities? Institutions (schools, hospitals, corporations, prisons, etc.)? Street bureaucrats (teachers, nurses, police, etc.)?
- What are some obstacles, which might prevent the proper implementation of this policy?

4) Evaluation

- Once the policy is implemented, can it be accurately evaluated and if so how?
- What would be considered successful results? Has success been defined?
- What might impede proper evaluation?

III. Political Analysis – Agenda Setting and the Legislative Process (at least five pages)

- Does the bill have a political history extending back to previous sessions? If so what is it?
- What are the various political actors in the process, including legislators, legislative leaders, the Governor, the Attorney General, the Comptroller, state agencies, political parties, citizens, lobbyists and policy entrepreneurs, as well as the media?
- Who supports the bill and who opposes it and why? Which Assemblymembers and Senators support or oppose it, and to what degree? Are there Assemblymembers and/or Senators on the fence (undecided or uncommitted)?
- Of these groups, which are politically influential and in what way?
- Who introduced the bill and why?
- Are there other bills on the agenda that may affect the policy in question?
- Is the bill partisan? Is the division between support and opposition along party lines?
- Is this bill being reintroduced? If so, what is its history? Where had it failed—committee, Assembly floor, Senate floor, Governor? Will things be different this session and if so why? Has the bill been amended? If so how and why?
- If the bill is not moving out of committee in the Assembly or the Senate, why not?
- Does the leadership support or oppose the bill and how might this affect the bill?
- Are there any policy entrepreneurs?
- How does the election this November affect this bill?
- Is this bill high profile? How will this influence the passage of the bill?
- What role does the media, public opinion, interest groups, the two parties, other states, the federal government, etc., play?
- How will the political and cultural diversity of New York State affect this bill?
- If the bill is passed, what are the implications of the legislation for your Assemblymember's district? Have there been any public statements on his/her/their part, and from district newspapers or constituents?
- What are the built-in relationships and institutional fragmentation of the New York political system, as well as the constellation of constituent interests, agency rivalries, legislative conflicts, and external political factors?
- Will it pass in the Assembly? The Senate? Be signed by the Governor? Why or why not?
- If the bill is not passed or is highly unlikely to be passed, are there specific strategies for either the political or policy process that might enhance the likelihood of this bill passing in the future?
- What are the lessons about the intersection of politics and policy around the issue you choose for your paper?

IV. Democratic Analysis (at least two pages)

- Is the legislation process through which the policy is decided democratic? Why or why not? You need to discuss the model of democracy you are using, i.e., pluralism, Schumpeterian, procedural, direct democracy, etc. (Hint: The Guide to the NYS Legislature offers three models of democracy; also, see the article in your readings, Gabardi, W. (2001) Contemporary models of democracy. *Polity* 33(4), 547-568.
- If the process is not democratic, is this good or bad? Why? How can the procedure be made more democratic?

V. Conclusion

Note: although the minimum number of pages for sections II, III, and IV is five, five, and two pages, respectively, the overall **minimum number of pages for the paper is fifteen** (not including graphs, charts, diagrams, pictures, tables, contents, references, etc.). For example, you may write seven pages for the policy analysis, just as long as the political analysis and the democratic analysis are at least five pages and two pages and the overall paper is at least 15 pages.

REQUIRED READINGS FOR THE COURSE:

- Schneier, E. V., Murtaugh, B., & Pole, A. (2010). *New York politics: A tale of two states* (2 ed.). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. Both hard and digital copies are available for online purchase
- Readings—uploaded onto Moodle
- Daily newspaper—*New York Times* and/or district newspaper; newspaper articles on current events will often be used in class as case studies for the week's readings

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED SOURCES:

- Percorella, R. F., & Stonecash, J. M. (Eds.). (2012). *Governing New York State* (6 ed.). Albany, NY: SUNY Pres.
- Ward, R. B. (2006). *New York State Government* (2 ed.). Albany, NY: Rockefeller Institute Press.
- *The Legislative Gazette* (Online)
- *City and State*
- NY Now – on your local PBS station (<https://nynow.wmht.org/>); check listings for schedules or download the PBS app

INTERN PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

ALL INTERNS MUST CONDUCT THEMSELVES PROFESSIONALLY AT ALL TIMES! This is not limited to the class or the office, but also with respect to social activities and social media.

**MISCONDUCT MAY RESULT IN A DISMISSAL
FROM THE PROGRAM AND A FAILING GRADE!**