

## **PUBP 2010: Political Processes, CRN 82320**

Fall 2026

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### **Course description**

Politics in the policy process is about *combining individual and social beliefs, values, and preferences about a public problem into a collective decision that, ideally, promotes the public interest*. Politics is an unavoidable aspect of public choice. Our focus is both on how politics shapes policies (social science) and how professionals and citizens act as policy analysts or advocates (practice).

### **Course objectives / approved course learning outcomes**

By the end of the course you should understand:

- *The relationship between social science and policy studies, and between policy analysis and advocacy*
- *Fundamental constitutional principles such as representation, checks and balances, and liberty*
- *Differences between market decisions and political/policy decisions*
- *How people form political opinions and the roles of stakeholders in policy making*
- *Basic ideas about decision-making: rational choice, biases and heuristics, and narratives*
- *Agenda-setting, issue-framing, and problem definition*
- *The impact of political institutions, facts, and values on policy formulation, analysis, and implementation*

### **Core IMPACTS statement**

These objectives satisfy the designated learning objectives for courses carrying Social Sciences credit (Core Area E) at Georgia Tech: “how political relationships develop, persist, and change,” and an understanding of “the complexity of human behavior as a function of the commonality and diversity within groups.”

### **Required course materials**

The textbook for the course is Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Norton, 2012.

### **Grading policy and weighting (USG)**

Canvas DISCUSSIONS (5@2 pts each)	10 pts
PERUSALL Discussions (4@2.5 pts each)	10 pts
Quiz 1	10 pts
Quiz 2	10 pts
Memo Part 1	20 pts
Memo Final Version	20 pts
Final Exam	<u>20 pts</u>

A>90; B>80; C>70; D>60

There is no predetermined distribution of grades in my courses. Anyone who earns an A gets an A. Extensions on assignments are possible only in rare and unfortunate circumstances. There are no extra-credit opportunities. Late assignments will be penalized accordingly. Make-up exams are given for illness, approved Institute activities or religious observances.

**Two quizzes** will consist of short-answer questions that focus on course readings as well as material from

class meetings. (7.5% each)

The **final exam** will invite you to synthesize what you have learned. (15%)

**Discussions:** During the semester students will contribute comments and responses to **five Canvas discussion forums** (10% total) that pose assertions or questions related to course topics.

**Perusall readings:** Use this device in Canvas to annotate **four (4)** of the assigned readings with questions, comments, arguments, responses to other students' postings, etc. Guidelines will be provided. (10% total)

The **professional memo** (20% for first iteration, 20% for second iteration) will be a three-page presentation of the political aspects of a particular policy issue or problem. You will receive detailed feedback on your first submission and you must use it to revise and extend your memo. Detailed instructions will be provided and must be followed.

### **Attendance policy**

Many of your parents and grandparents sacrificed greatly for you to be here, so it's not just self-damaging but unethical to not engage fully with your courses. We will take roll on random days. A pattern of absences will be noted, especially if your final grade is near a cutoff.

### **Additional criteria for successful completion of the course**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. Policy analysts and decision makers must balance personal views and professional norms. Discussions about the policy implications of differing political values in society are encouraged in this course, online and in class. We have a duty to treat different political values with respect, but also to expect positions to be anchored by reasonable arguments and evidence. Positions might be espoused to develop argumentative and analytical abilities without necessarily reflecting genuine preferences. We all should be committed to cultivating an intellectual climate that embraces the many flavors of cultures and opinions we find in our student body.

### **Academic honesty / academic integrity statement**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

You are encouraged to form study groups before quizzes and the final exam. It is a matter of personal integrity whether you carry your weight. Others may depend on you for a portion of their studying and grade. How you work with your classmates will create a reputation that will persist long after you graduate. **All graded assignments must be your personal work.**

AI tools for writing and research to be useful but hardly perfect (much like Wikipedia) so whatever AI tells you should be verified. I will treat AI-based assistance the same way I treat collaboration with other sources: you can talk about your ideas and work with other people and you should use AI tools the same way. But just as you would never present another person's ideas as your own, you should **never include in your assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper acknowledgement or citation (e.g., AI prompts).**

### **Disability Accommodations**

If you have learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/> as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me to set up a time to discuss your learning needs. Do not assume that ODS will always contact me, so alert me before an assignment for which an accommodation will be requested.