

**Analyzing Political Issues  
PUP 3008  
Spring 2011**

Dr. Jocelyn Jones Evans  
Office Hours: T/R 2:30-4:30  
W 4:00-5:00  
(and by appointment)

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**Course Description**

From the education of our children to the safety of our airlines, those who make the laws affect each of our lives on a daily basis. Rarely, however, is the public aware of the process by which new ideas become law or the reasons why archaic policy solutions are left unchanged. This course is a survey of contemporary issues in American politics such as immigration, education, health care, welfare programs, crime, and the economy. Throughout the semester, we will grapple with competing theories of policymaking and competing research methods for critically evaluating the merits of these theories in explaining the political world in which we currently live. In addition, we will concentrate on building strong writing and research skills to promote quality scholarship across the political science curriculum.

**Student Learning Objectives**

The learning objectives for students of this course are three-fold. First, students will understand substantive policy issues being discussed and debated in government today. Secondly, students will recognize and apply concepts, principles, and theories of public policy. Students will analyze issues from a variety of methodological orientations and will understand the substantive conclusions to which they lead. Finally, students will communicate effectively both in written and oral form the results of their issue analyses.

**Required Texts:**

Gupta, Dipak K. *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts, Tools, and Techniques*. CQ Press.

Materials to be provided on elearning.

**Grading**

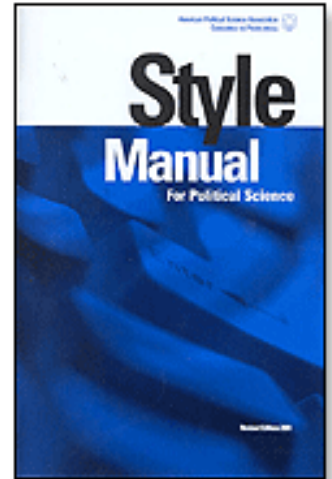
Grades will be based on two exams given during the semester, one paper on a current political issue (using the guidelines provided in the syllabus), and participation in a series of in-class writing workshops and diagnostic exercises. The weights for each assignment are listed below.

Grading Scheme					
Midterm Exam	25%	A	93-100%	C	73-76%
Final Exam	25%	A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
		B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
<u>Paper Module</u>		B	83-86%	D	60-66%
Paper	<u>20%</u>	B-	80-82%	F	0-59%
Developing a Thesis	(4%)	C+	77-79%		
Building a Reference Page	(4%)				
Constructing an Outline	(4%)				
Data Analysis	(4%)				
Citation	(4%)				
<u>Diagnostic Module</u>	<u>30%</u>				
Diagnostic Pre-test	2.5%				
Diagnostic Post-test	2.5%				
Writing Workshops and Diagnostic Exercises	25%				

## Paper Module

For your paper, I would like you to take a contemporary issue of debate in American politics, review the literature on that subject, and offer an analysis of the problem. In the first few classes, we will examine the components of a policy analysis. In this paper, you are to conduct your own policy analysis – highlighting the problem, establishing evaluative criteria, suggesting competing alternatives, and then identifying the preferred alternative given the chosen evaluative criteria.

You are free to choose any methodological approach we have discussed in class to conduct your analysis, whether it is qualitative or quantitative in nature. The body of the paper (written text) should be 5-6 pages in length, and you should include any references and illustrations at the end. You should follow APSA style (Chicago) found in *The Style Manual for Political Science* (2001) and elsewhere on the web ([http://cooklibrary.towson.edu/docsLibrary/styleguides/APSA\\_print.pdf](http://cooklibrary.towson.edu/docsLibrary/styleguides/APSA_print.pdf)).



\*\*\*We will work on the paper over the course of the semester. You will participate in writing workshops in class designed to build skills related to the paper assignments. In addition, you will turn in components of the paper along the way (as indicated by the tentative course schedule). Given my comments, you will revise your paper and turn in both the final copy as well as the originals with my suggested revisions. The paper grade will reflect your performance both in the process of writing the paper as well as producing the final product. I will be focusing on presentation, organization, composition, and citation. My goal for this semester is for you to develop a writing sample (approximately 5 pages in length) suitable to submit to a potential employer. The topic should be of general interest, and the final product should be polished.\*\*\*

The University of West Florida has an official policy concerning plagiarism. You may find it here: <http://uwf.edu/cas/aasr/Plagiarism.pdf>. Please observe that if I find plagiarized entries in your paper, I will give you a failing grade. You will not be given the opportunity to revise your work. Even if you feel confident about what constitutes plagiarism, take the time to review the university's policy. Plagiarism is a serious and growing problem; it will no longer be tolerated in my classroom under any circumstances. There are no excuses or exceptions.

### Five-Step Process for Analyzing a Complex Problem

- 1) Define the issue and lay out goals of analysis.
- 2) Identify the alternative courses of action.
- 3) Forecast the consequences of alternatives.
- 4) Compare and evaluate systematically all possible outcomes.
- 5) Choose most preferred alternative.

Adapted from (Gupta 1996: 72)

### Suggested Outline for Paper

- I. Introduction
- II. Presentation of Problem
  - A. Definition
  - B. History
  - C. Current Status
- V. Presentation of Alternatives and Evaluative Criteria
- VI. Application of Evaluative Criteria to Alternatives
- VII. Identification of Preferred Alternative and Conclusion







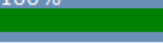




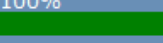

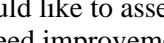
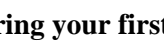
## Diagnostic Module

For this element of your grade, we will be doing some assessments throughout the course of the semester to help you identify problem areas in your writing. At the beginning of the semester, you will complete a diagnostic test.

The diagnostic is available at: <http://bedfordstmartins.com/exercisecentral>.

- Go to the website.
- Click on the Exercises tab; click on the Comprehensive Study Plan tab and register as a new student user; take the 65-question diagnostic (Take Diagnostic tab).
- After completing the diagnostic, click Submit.
- At the top of the screen that shows your results, click the View Report.
- Print this report, and bring it to class with you. Please make sure your name is on it. It should look like this:

### Diagnostic Score: 65/65(100%)

CATEGORIES	% CORRECT	CATEGORY RESULTS	STUDY PLAN
Adjectives and adverbs	3/3 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Apostrophes	4/4 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Capitalization	3/3 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Exercise</a>
Commas	5/5 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Commonly confused words	4/4 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Exercise</a>
Coordination and subordination	4/4 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Exercise</a>
ESL	5/5 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Exercise</a>
Fragments	3/3 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Misplaced and dangling modifiers	3/3 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Other punctuation	2/2 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Parallelism	5/5 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Pronouns	4/4 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Quotation marks	3/3 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Run-ons	4/4 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Tutorial / Exercise</a>
Spelling	4/4 100% 	<a href="#">View Results</a>	<a href="#">Exercise</a>

The site is free; the tools are free. I would like to assess your writing skills during the very first week of class (see the syllabus) so that we know what skills need improvement over the course of the semester.

As previously mentioned, **you are to bring your first attempt at this diagnostic to class** and will receive a completion grade (2.5%). Over the course of the semester, you will attend 6 workshops in class and complete related diagnostic exercises. These activities will constitute 25% of your final grade. Finally, you will complete a diagnostic post-test. Your score on this test will constitute the final 2.5% of this sequence (worth 30% of your final grade).

## **Expectations for Academic Conduct / Plagiarism Policy**

As members of the University of West Florida, we commit ourselves to honesty. As we strive for excellence in performance, integrity – personal and institutional – is our most precious asset. Honesty in our academic work is vital, and we will not knowingly act in ways which erode that integrity. Accordingly, we pledge not to cheat, not to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others. We pledge to share community resources in ways that are responsible and that comply with established policies of fairness. Cooperation and competition are means to high achievement and are encouraged. Indeed, cooperation is expected unless our directive is to individual performance. We will compete constructively and professionally for the purpose of stimulating high performance standards. Finally, we accept adherence to this set of expectations for academic conduct as a condition of membership in the UWF academic community.

### **Assistance**

Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), [dss@uwf.edu](mailto:dss@uwf.edu), (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

### **Student Conduct in the Classroom:**

Classroom disruption will not be tolerated. The professor reserves the right to dismiss any student for disruptive behavior. According to the Office of Student Affairs, this includes, “behavior a reasonable person would view as substantially or repeatedly interfering with the conduct of a class.”

## Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading and Materials
1/6	<b>No Class!!!!</b>	<b>No Class!!!!!!</b>
1/11	Syllabus	
<b>Public Policy</b>		
1/13	The Study of Public Policy <b>Diagnostic Pre-test Due</b>	Gupta – ch. 1, ch. 2 (34-43)
1/18	The Policy Process Analyzing Issues: Texas Colonias	Gupta – ch. 3 Elearning materials on issue
1/20	First Writing Workshop: Developing a Thesis	
<b>Foundations of Research</b>		
1/25	Critical Thinking and Research Design	Gupta – ch. 4
1/27	Basic Statistics	Gupta – ch. 5
2/1	Analyzing Issues: Crime <b>Thesis and Concept Map Due</b>	Elearning materials on issue
<b>Basics of Data Analysis</b>		
2/3	Sources of Data Data Analysis	Gupta – ch. 7 Supplemental materials
2/8	Analyzing Issues: Immigration	Elearning materials on issue
2/10	Second Writing Workshop: Building a Reference Page	
<b>The Meaning of Numbers</b>		
2/15	Making Sense of Numbers	Gupta – ch. 8
2/17	Making Sense of Numbers	
2/22	Third Writing Workshop: Correcting Common Errors	
2/24	Review	
3/1	<b>Midterm</b>	
<b>Looking to the Future</b>		
3/3	Projection Techniques <b>Reference Page and Outline Due</b>	Gupta – ch. 9 (200-207)
3/8	Projection Techniques	Gupta – ch. 10
3/10	Analyzing Issues: Social Security	Elearning materials on issue
3/15	<b>No Class!!!! Spring Break</b>	
3/17	<b>No Class!!!! Spring Break</b>	
3/22	Fourth Writing Workshop: Presenting Data	
<b>Examining Relationships</b>		
3/24	Causal Models <b>Data Analysis Due</b>	Gupta – ch. 11 (245-260)
<b>Weighing the Costs</b>		
3/29	Choosing the Best Alternative: Cost-Benefit Analysis	Gupta – ch. 14
3/31	Analyzing Issues: War in Iraq	Elearning materials on issue
<b>Does Method Matter?: Analyzing the Political Issue of Education</b>		
4/5	Fifth Writing Workshop: In-Text Citation and Quoting Sources	
4/7	Sixth Writing Workshop: Sentence Structure	
4/12	The Story of Education Policy <b>Paper Due</b>	Kozol (selections available online)
4/14	The Statistics Behind Education Policy	Herrnstein and Murray (selections available online)
4/19	Make-up Day	
4/21	<b>Diagnostic Post-test</b> Review for Final	
4/28	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>11:30am-2:00pm</b>