Instructor: Dr. Gabriel Ramón Serna, Assistant Professor, HESAL
Email: Gabriel.serna@unco.edu
Room: Lowry
Meeting Time: Monday 5:30-8:30pm
Campus Phone: 970-351-3796
Office: McKee 404
Office Hours: Monday 4:30-5:30 Lowry; Wednesday 2:30-5:30pm and By Appointment

Course Overview
This course provides an introduction to the field of public policy with special emphasis on theoretical and conceptual analyses of the decision-making behavior of stakeholders in higher education. It also examines the policy formulation and implementation process more broadly and applies these constructs to higher education. This course recognizes that leaders in higher education and student affairs need to develop conceptual knowledge and skills for analyzing and exploring, societal, organizational, and individual forces that influence higher education policy and decision making at all levels. It also assumes that effective leaders should be able to analyze, synthesize, and apply research and theory derived from the policy sciences to problems associated with positions they either currently occupy or aspire to hold as well as the field in general. By combining theoretical and research contributions with practical experience and application each class participant’s capacity to derive coherent rationales around higher education policy will increase.

Course Objectives and Themes
1. To introduce students to theories of policymaking and the individual, institutional, and system-level actors that influence policy;
2. To identify and apply techniques for analysis of postsecondary policy issues
3. To review the literature regarding the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies related to higher education
4. To become familiar with federal and state roles and perspectives on contemporary postsecondary education policy matters
5. To develop and demonstrate analytic, written, and verbal skills that are part of the public policymaking process
6. To conduct policy analysis and plan for implementation
Classroom and Course Policies

Student Attendance and Responsibilities
Students should attend ALL class sessions. Attendance is NOT an optional element for this course. Students are expected to attend each class. Please inform me via email if you are unable to attend class as a professional courtesy; however, there are no ‘excused’ absences. Missing more than two classes will result in a reduced final letter grade and missed in class assignments may not be made up. Due to the nature of this course, it is not feasible for students to do ‘extra’ work to make up for missed classes. All students are expected to demonstrate professional demeanor. This includes arriving to class on time, displaying professional courtesy to classmates and to the instructor, meeting deadlines, and notifying the instructor in advance if it is not possible to attend class. Exceptions to deadlines will be made through prior discussions with, and approval by, the instructor.

Always keep in mind I am here to assist you to succeed in this course. Still, the ultimate responsibility for your work and your success lies in your hands.

Student Behavior
Students are expected in every interaction, with both other students and the instructor, to maintain a respectful tone and demeanor. The instructor reserves the right to dismiss students from class at his discretion if the student’s behavior should be deemed disruptive to the classroom environment and learning experience. Please remember we can disagree without being disagreeable. Discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, political persuasion, religious beliefs, or other forms will not be tolerated.

Cell Phones, Texting, and Laptops
I ask that all students refrain from any cell phone usage and texting during class. Cell phones should be powered down or silenced before class. Students who do not abide by this policy will be dismissed and marked as “absent” for that day’s class. Students are allowed to use their laptops, or tablets to take notes or bring up readings during class. However, if at any point in the semester the instructor deems the use of technology disruptive, He reserves the right to revoke their use in class.

Religious Observances: Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. If you are not able to attend class due to your participation in religious observances, please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

Students with disabilities: Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must provide official notification to the instructor and are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. If you will require assistance during an emergency evacuation, notify your instructor immediately. Look for evacuation procedures posted in your classroom.

Student Academic Responsibilities: This graduate course indicates a high level of commitment as a student and scholar. To that end participants are expected to come to class having completed readings and
assignments. Not all readings may be addressed directly in class but are essential for classroom conversations and your professionalization. Additionally, participation in class is of utmost importance.

**Active reading:** Requires that you engage with the reading which includes identifying main points and inconsistencies, consider these points from a critical perspective, and make connections among the texts, professional experiences, and readings from other courses. Moreover, you should become familiar with the primary debates and issues in the field.

**Active participation:** Requires that you contribute your insights and informed experiences during the class. It means that you engage in dialogue with your colleagues—listening carefully, articulating thoughtfully, and making connections.

I do not mind if you bring food to our class, however, please be aware of how it impacts others in the course. Loud and crunchy or overly aromatic foods are discouraged.

**Instructor Responsibilities:** As the instructor for this course, I will hold myself to the same rigorous standards I maintain for students. Therefore, my responsibilities to the class include:

- Being prepared for class, read and returning students’ work in a timely manner.
- Remembering that students bring different experiences and perspectives to the course which are to be respected and incorporated whenever possible.
- Meet with students individually or in groups upon request and be available in person, by telephone, and by e-mail.

**Format and writing:** This is a heavy reading and writing course. Therefore, all papers required for this class should be submitted in APA style, 6th edition. Please cite both in-text and in the bibliography correctly. The UNC bookstore usually carries the spiral bound versions that are more helpful than regular bound. Purdue University has a great APA resource online: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).

Because writing is a high-level skill that only develops through practice. I encourage you to proofread and, if possible, to have another classmate edit and critique your papers to ensure a high level of quality and content. Please follow formal rules of writing, such as avoiding contractions, slang, and clichés. In general Wikipedia is not an acceptable source, in fact you should draw heavily from the class readings and the journals cited in this syllabus. All papers and work should be double-spaced, stapled, and in size 12-font. The UNC Writing Center is also available to students.

**Academic Honesty Statement:**

The HESAL faculty is committed to academic integrity in all its practices. The faculty value intellectual integrity and a high standard of academic conduct, and are expected to demonstrate this in their own courses. Activities that violate academic integrity undermine the quality and diminish the value of educational achievement. Cheating on papers, tests or other academic works is a violation of University rules. No student shall engage in behavior that, in the judgment of the instructor of the class, may be construed as cheating. This may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty such as the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials and/or
distribution of these materials and other academic work or turning in the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization. This includes students who aid and abet as well as those who attempt such behavior. The penalty for academic dishonesty is an “F” letter grade for the course and/or additional sanctions as permitted under University policy. If you are unsure of how to properly paraphrase or cite a source in APA style, please seek assistance.

**Copyright Statement:** Students shall adhere to the laws governing the use of copyrighted materials. They must ensure that their activities comply with fair use and in no way infringe on the copyright or other proprietary rights of others and that the materials used and developed by the University of Northern Colorado contain nothing unlawful, unethical, or libelous, and do not constitute any violation of any right of privacy.

**Accommodations Statement**
Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services, voice/TTY (970) 351-2289, or fax (970) 351-4166, or visit www.unco.edu/dss as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

**Inclusivity Statement**
The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty, administrators and staff within CEBS will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews may be different from their own.

**Required Texts:**


3. Multiple readings are assigned each week from a number of sources. The majority of the articles we shall be reading are available through Blackboard or UNC’s library. Any readings that are not will be handed-out in class or posted.

4. I recommend reading at least once a week both *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*. This will give you a good feel for what’s going on in higher education in general.
**Grading and Assignments**

**Grading scale:** 100 total points

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1. **Class Participation (15 points):** As mentioned above students should come to class having completed readings and assignments. This also means that you should be prepared to contribute your informed views and experiences during the class. It means that you will participate in class discussion and take part in dialogue with your colleagues always drawing upon the course and other relevant materials to support your points. Additionally, each student should choose an area of the syllabus, at least one reading, to help the instructor lead discussion upon for at least one class session. In some instances two students will help lead the discussion together on the readings. Your discussion leadership should include critical analysis and questions for the class as well as highlighting the themes between the readings for that week. Handouts or other activities are encouraged as ways to help lead learning of the material by all.

2. **Policy Memorandum (25 points):** This written assignment will require that each student undertake the composition of a structured narrative on a policy topic of interest to the student. Students should take their cue for writing the memo from Dunn’s (2012) Appendix 3, pp. 433-439. This memo should be structured like a typical professional memorandum (some students may find it useful to use a Microsoft Word template). You can address it to an actual person or to me and in the memo you can take on an imaginary position or one that you currently occupy. Some things to consider while writing your memo include:
   - Remaining cognizant of the fact that citing research literature provides evidence that you have considered what experts are saying
   - Citing appropriate literature and including a references cited list at the end of the document (Before any appendices)
   - Noting that methodological approaches should be brief, if included, and that any supporting documents should be included as appendices.
   - Taking care not to overwhelm the reader with too much information in this short written document
   - Remaining within a 2 page single-spaced limit (not including references and appendices)

3. **Summary Analysis / Oral Briefing (25 points):** This analysis/presentation is intended to help you prepare for the final paper due at the end of the semester. In this analysis you should include a brief summary and introduction to your topic. Groups can choose to base this on one of the policy memos presented earlier, a combination of such, or a new topic altogether. You should provide handouts and a basic PowerPoint presentation to both the instructor and one for each student. You should prepare for approximately 10-15 minutes of presentation and questions. This should serve as the basis for your final paper if you incorporate the suggestions made during feedback and comments. This summary analysis should follow Dunn’s (2012) Appendix 4 suggestions for Planning Oral Briefings (See Appendix 4 pp.440-447) with some caveats to the following bullet points:
• Under **background of the briefings** (bullet 2) you should use this to introduce the background and some literature on the topic

• Because you will not yet have **findings** (bullet 3) you should discuss what you expect to find based on your understanding of the literature and class discussion up to that point

• Under **Approach and Methods** (bullet 4) you should determine if you will carry out a descriptive, correlational, or causal analysis of a topic, the methods best suited to answering or analyzing your question, and why this is the case

• Under **Data used as basis for analysis** (bullet 5) you should explain which data (by the way literature can be a data source if you are suggesting a best practices approach)

This assignment will include 5 points allocated by each member of the group to other members. In other words, you will have up to five points per group member to allocate to each group member that will help peers evaluate relative contributions to this intermediate step in toward the final project.

4. **Final Policy Issue Paper and Analysis (35 points)**: The final project should clearly situate your topic in 10-15 double-spaced pages and it should follow the guidelines outlined by Dunn (2012) in Appendix 1, pp. 422-428. However we will discuss this at length in class to make sure all groups are on the right track. Additionally, please note that every paper:

• Does not require a letter of transmittal, but should include a professional cover page to the relevant stakeholder to whom the analysis is directed.

• Does not require a full executive summary, but does require an abstract. Please see research papers for an understanding of what this entails. Abstracts should concisely explain what your analysis engenders and a very brief synopsis of its findings/recommendations (no more than 300 words) on a separate page after the cover page

• Include and cite appropriate literature using strict APA guidelines and double-spacing

To help keep groups accountable to one another, this assignment will include 10 points allocated by each member of the group to other members. In other words, you will have up to ten points to allocate to each group member that will help peers evaluate relative contributions to the final project. You should provide a brief rationale for your assignment of points.

*For Master’s students a group project of no more than four members will be assigned. For Ph.D. students groups of no more than two will be assigned. Any grades assigned by the instructor for projects done by the group will be the same for each member. Also, for more Ph.D. students a research proposal (15 pages) is also acceptable but you must still follow the guidelines above. Moreover, for students who wish to truly conduct a full analysis, this project can serve as a start to a research project and possible presentation or publication.

6. **Extra Credit (2 points)**: At the end of each semester the CEBS holds a research evening for students (and groups of students) to present course related research, often in poster form, being worked on. The purpose of the evening is to get students thinking about the presentation of their work. In previous semesters students have presented posters on literature reviews they have conducted and proposals for conducting research. This year research night will be on Dec 11 from 5-7, space TBD. During the past few years HESAL has held its fall celebration immediately following in North or South Hall.
Reading Assignments by Week and Topic:
Please note that though all readings are suggested, the Professor will likely adjust reading assignments as the semester progresses.

1. Course Introduction and Overview (8/25, Choice for Discussion leadership due at end of class)
   Introductions
   Syllabus
   Expectations

2. NO CLASS: UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY (9/1)

   PART I: THEORETICAL AND METHODLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

3. The Policy Landscape in Higher Education (9/8)
   St. John et al. (2013), Chapters 1 & 2
   Ikenberry, S. )2009). Privatizing the Public University, in Morpew and Eckel (Eds.) Privatizing the Public University, pp. 1-7.
   (http://www.aft.org/pdfs/highered/academic/june04/Rhoades.qxp.pdf)

   Suggested:

4. Theories of the Policy Process (9/15)
   St. John et al. (2013), Chapter 3
   Dunn (2012), Chapter 2, pp. 42-57
   Birkland, T. (2012). An Introduction to the Policy Process. 3rd. Ed. Chapters 1 &10 (Skip case studies in these chapters)

5. Methodology and Elements of Policy Analysis (9/22)
   St. John et al. (2013), Chapters 14 & 15
   Dunn (2012), Chapter 1

**PART II: CURRENT POLICY ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

6. **State Policy and Governance** (9/29) (Policy Memos Due by 5pm)

   St. John et al. (2013), Chapters 4 & 6


   **Suggested:**

7. **Federal Role and Policy** (10/6) (In-class database and excel exercises)

   St. John et al. (2013), Chapter 5


**PART III: METHODS OF POLICY ANALYSIS AND COMMUNICATION**

8. **Methods of Policy Analysis I** (10/13)

   Dunn (2012) Chapters 3 & 4

9. **Methods of Policy Analysis II** (10/20)

   Dunn (2012) Chapters 5, 6 (pp. 245-254), & 7

10. **Policy Communication**. (10/27)

    Dunn (2012) Chapters 8 & 9
11. Summary Analysis/Oral Briefings Due in class (11/3) (In-Class Paper Discussions)

12. Writing Time: Use this Class Time to work on Final Project (11/10)
   I am available for consultation


15. Reflection and Course Wrap-up (12/1), Final Paper Due by 11:59pm

16. Finals Week (12/8)

Your receipt of this syllabus signifies your understanding and acceptance of all policies and timelines outlined. As the instructor, I reserve the right to modify the syllabus at anytime for pedagogical reasons.