Advanced Policy Theory II (PPOL 614)

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Oregon State University

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Office Hours: Monday 09.00 – 12.00

During my office hours, I will be available to speak with you without an appointment. Outside of my office hours, please email me for an appointment. You may stop by my office – if I am not busy, I may have time to speak with you. However, outside of my office hours I reserve the right to refuse to speak to you without an appointment.

I. Location and teaching schedule

II. Course Credits
PPOL 614 is a 4 credit course (PhD). There are ordinarily 10 learning sessions in the course (less public holidays) and each learning session is 4 hours in length. There are typically 40 hours (less public holidays) of classroom-based work. The learning sessions combine student directed learning, instruction, the analysis of topical issues and cases, discussion and debate and classroom presentations.

III. Prerequisites, Co-requisites and Enforced Prerequisites
PPOL 614 is a compulsory module within the PhD programme in Public Policy.

IV. Conduct as a member of the University
A full statement of expected conduct can be found at:

http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0

Please take time to study the rules and regulations
If you feel that the conduct of another member of the University is not desirable or is in violation of the University’s rules and regulations, please speak to your instructor, programme director or academic advisor in confidence.

V. Classroom Conduct
As students at Oregon State University, we come from many different countries and have had many different experiences. All of these will help you in the study of public policy and policy theory. However, to facilitate communication in the classroom, all communication (written and spoken) should be in English as this is a shared point of reference. All assessments must be submitted in English.

You should take your own personal notes in whatever language or format is most comfortable for you.

VI. Accommodation for students with disabilities
Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at http://ds.oregonstate.edu. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

VII. Course Specific Measureable Learning Outcomes
Having completed the course you will

1. be able to accurately describe and critically analyse different theoretical concepts useful for the study of public policy.
2. demonstrate an ability to select and apply appropriate public policy theory to critically analyse real life examples in both presentations and assessments.
3. demonstrate an ability to create presentations that will successfully communicate complex and original ideas to diverse range of audiences through in class assignments, presentations and summative assessments.
4. complete two presentations and 5 short written assignments in a manner that demonstrates the above.
VIII. Pedagogical approach

The course is based on the Bloom taxonomy on learning. The learning outcomes (LO) and content of PPOL 614 are designed to encourage students to draw upon and reinterpret the material that they have covered in previous courses in the public policy programme whilst adding new knowledge to promote deep learning practices.¹ This allows students to advance towards the higher order levels of the Bloom Taxonomy of Learning ², which are analysis and creating or synthesis. This is achieved through LO1, which requires accurate description and critical analysis and LO2, which requires the presentation and application of policy theory to examples. To progress to these levels, students need to be capable of remembering, understanding and applying knowledge.

LO2 is intended to encourage intellectual movement from the factual and conceptual (remembering and understanding) to the applied. This results in the generation of metacognitive knowledge (how to apply knowledge to address a specific issue). Both LO1 and LO2 require critical analysis and this forces students to engage in analysis. LO3 (demonstrating the ability to create and pitch material in manner appropriate to the audience)³ also assists in demonstrating this. The course is based around ‘questions of the week’ and these require the student to create their own evaluation and synthesis of the ideas in the reading. A student capable of synthesising the complex ideas in the reading to answer the ‘question(s) of the week’ is performing at the metacognitive level. The questions are designed in such a way that they can only be answered by actual engagement with the ideas and conclusions of the assigned material.

The classroom sessions involve discussion of the material based as through extensive discussion; active learning processes can be promoted to encourage high-level engagement with the literature and the concepts ⁴. Students are also required to take part in peer assessments of their classmates (in an advisory capacity). First, this is designed to ensure that LO3 is explicitly tested as there is a difference between material communicated to a professor and a PhD student. Second, peer assessment is intended to ensure that students are seeing to consider the material directly.

³ Ibid. p. 48
⁴ Biggs and Tang. pg. 10
The assessments are intended to recognise the importance of concept of 'spaced or expanded retrieval'® Spaced retrieval argues that information is committed to memory most through repetition and that it takes time for cognitive linkages to existing knowledge to be formed®. The assessments are conducted on a biweekly basis to force the process of repetition (students must look at their notes and look at the material once again) and benefit from the new understandings that have been created as they have processed the new information.

The Bloom taxonomy of learning (for reference only).

https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/

IX. Assessment:

PPOL614 is assessed through a combination of short writing assignments (assessment A) and two assessed presentations (assessment B)

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**Assessment A**

You are required to produce 5 short written assignments. Each assessment is a 2000 word reflective paper that considers the readings assigned for the week and the discussion in class.

The papers are submitted biweekly is due the following Monday at 5.00pm. Any late paper (not subject to a prior agreed extension will receive a grade of zero).

Each short paper is worth 12% of your final grade.

References DO NOT count towards the word count.

A good reflective paper is characterised by the following:

1. It is not a summary of the readings and discussion (description)
2. It engages with the underlying ‘thread’ of the literature assigned (demonstrates knowledge and understanding).
3. It takes a position on the arguments in the literature in light of other literatures and pre-existing knowledge, the two week blocks are not discreet – they tie in with each other.
4. It is critically reflective. Critical reflection does not mean simply identifying the flaws in something or stating what is right and wrong, instead it means looking at something and considering and evaluating whether or not the underlying assumptions and presupposition are fair, reasonable and convincing.\(^7\)
5. Does not offer normative critique. A normative critique is one that considers what *should be* done because this is the declared ‘best’ approach. A normative critique may rest on claims to authority or make use of authority but is an argument informed by ‘should’ rather than critical reflection.

**Assessment B: Presentations**

You are required to give two short presentations regarding the topic of week. Each presentation is worth 20% of the final grade.

1. The presentation should consider your research agenda or a topic of interest to help illustrate the arguments (applying knowledge)
2. The presentation should not be entirely theoretical but you should clearly outline your theoretical approach and your interpretation of it (I will make allowance of English as a non mother tongue).
3. The presentation should be critically reflective and make linkages between the different areas of study in policy theory (critical analysis and synthesis).

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4. Your presentation must be submitted through Canvas and should include a bibliographic (references) slide or on-slide references. It is subject to the same requirements.

**Referencing**
All papers and the presentations must include citations and references. References do not count towards the word count.

You may use other recognised referencing styles that fall under the generic category of Harvard style references (e.g. Chicago Style, APA, Modern Languages Association or MLA etc.)

I will fail any paper that is not referenced; it will count as complete but will receive a mark of zero. This is a doctoral level class.

**Plagiarism**
*Oregon State University takes plagiarism very seriously.*

Plagiarism is the act of representing another person’s ideas as your own without proper attribution. This may involve copying the words or ideas of another person or rephrasing another person’s work and not crediting it appropriately through references.

Plagiarism is cheating and it is dishonest.

Plagiarism is a violation of the University’s code of conduct, which can be found at:

http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0

Your instructor may ask you to or may submit one or more of your written assignments to the University’s plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students.

**Grading Criteria and Peer Assessment**

As part of the assessed presentations, you will be making peer assessment of each other’s work. The comments sheet should be used to provide these comments in an anonymous format.
I will take into account the peer comments in my grading but I make the final determination of the grades.

The peer assessment form is at the end of the syllabus.

This course makes use of grading criteria and a rubric to assess your work. The application of grading criteria is not a mechanical process as different criteria may be achieved to differing degrees. The criteria serve to provide a clear guideline as to what is expected for a particular letter grade.

You should pay close attention to what is required at each level.

Each assignment is graded against a 100 point scale and is weighted to reflect the appropriate % of the final grade. The weighted totals are summated to give the final grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| A (94+)      | Outstanding work that provides evidence that the student possesses, to a very high level, knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material.  
  The student demonstrates a clear ability to apply these theoretical concepts to analyze examples in an exceptional manner  
  The student's work demonstrates clear and convincing evidence of intellectual synthesis or the creation of new knowledge.  
  The student is able to build and present an argument of exceptional quality.  
  Overall the work can be considered to be exceptional. |
| A- (87 - 93) | Clearly superior work that provides evidence that the student possesses, to a high level, a highly sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the appropriate theoretical material.  
  The student demonstrates an clear ability to apply these theoretical concepts to analyze examples in an highly sophisticated or manner  
  The student is able to build a highly-sophisticated argument that is supported by an analysis.  
  The student's work demonstrates some evidence of intellectual synthesis or the creation of new knowledge but this is inconsistent and or patchy.  
  Overall the work can be characterized as of a clearly superior quality in terms of quality and composition but just falls short of the highest standards of excellence. The work is |
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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Very good work that provides evidence that the student possesses a sophisticated knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material. The student demonstrates an ability to apply these theoretical concepts to analyze examples in a sophisticated manner. The student is able to build a sophisticated argument. The student's work demonstrates an emerging or tentative intellectual synthesis or the engagement in the creation of new knowledge. Overall the work can be characterized as of superior quality in terms of quality and composition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Work that provides evidence that the student possesses above average knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material. The student demonstrates an ability to apply these theoretical concepts to analyze examples in an above average manner. The student is able to build a reasoned argument that is above average is quality. Overall the work can be characterized as above average in terms of quality and composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Work that provides evidence that the student possesses a knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material that can be characterized as slightly above average. There may be errors or misunderstanding but the student is not deficit in any critical areas of knowledge, understanding and comprehension. The student demonstrates a broad or emerging ability to apply these theoretical concepts to analyze examples in a manner that can be characterized as slightly above average. The student is able to build a reasoned argument that is generally coherent in a manner that can be characterized as slightly above average. Overall the work can be characterized as slightly above average in terms of quality and composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Work that provides evidence that the student possesses a knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material that can be described as between satisfactory and slightly above average. There may be errors or misunderstanding but the student is not deficit in any critical areas of knowledge, understanding and comprehension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Work that provides evidence that the student possesses an average knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material. There may be errors or misunderstanding in critical areas of knowledge, understanding and comprehension. The student demonstrates an emerging ability to apply these theoretical concepts to analyze examples. The student is able to build an argument that is generally coherent or suffers from a few errors of logic. The overall impression is of work that is average in terms of quality and composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Work that provides evidence that the student possesses a below average knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material. There are multiple errors or misunderstandings in the student's work. There may be errors of fact. The student demonstrates some ability to apply these theoretical concepts to consider examples. The student is able to build an argument but the argument is weak and is characterized by one or more of the following: illogical claims, fallacies, leaps of logic or magical thinking. The overall impression is of work that is below average in terms of quality and composition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;D</td>
<td>Work that suggests that the student is seriously deficient in terms of knowledge, and understanding. The work displays hardly any comprehension of the appropriate theoretical material. There are multiple errors or misunderstandings on display in critical areas. There are frequent or critical errors of fact. The student demonstrates little ability to apply theoretical concepts to examples. The student is barely able to build an argument or the argument is illogical or flat out wrong at the root.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall the work represents an inferior example in all respects.
(The precise grade will vary depending of severity of the characteristics identified above)

F (0)
The work was
- not submitted
- not submitted on time
(or)
- is generally of extremely poor quality
- contains one of more of the following: Significant and fundamental errors of logic and/or fact that cannot be explained as honest or good faith misunderstanding or misinterpretation, violations of academic integrity, a complete absence of correctly formatted references and/or citations.

The work gives grounds for failure.

XI: Learning Resources

As this is a doctoral class, you should buy the books listed. The material can usually be acquired as pre-owned copies. You will use the material in your future studies.

XII. Assigned Reading

Week 1: How to Map Arguments in Political Science

Class question(s):
1) How should we think about our underlying arguments in research?
2) How should we think about causality under each of the four approaches suggested by Parsons?

Week 2: Logics of Argument
Class question(s):
1) How should we approach the question of structure and agency in our research?

**Week 3: Structures and System**

Class Questions(s):
1) Structural arguments depend on a rejection of voluntarism and are inherently teleological. Discuss.

**Week 4: The State in time**
- Available at (sign in required):
  https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286110252_The_State_as_Cultural_Practice
  Posted on Canvas

Class question(s):
1) Why do we need to understand the state in the study of public policy?
2) How would you conceptualise the state in time and space?

**Week 5: Power and Rationality**

Class Question(s):
1) How does Flyvbjerg understand power as distorting decision making? (hint consider Steven Lukes)
2) What is Flyvbjerg’s central argument in respect of democracy?

**Week 6: Trust and expertise**
  Posted on Canvas
• Luhmann, N. (1979) Trust and Power. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons. (Chapters 1 – 4 and 6)
  Posted on Canvas

*Some of these texts are hard to acquire. I will post a selection of the relevant chapters.

Class question(s):
  1) Why is trust important in public policy?
  2) Can we operationalise a concept of trust without recourse to inference?

Week 7: The weakening of Democracy

Class question(s)
  1) Crouch and Mair are sceptical about the continued survival of a democratic system. Is this concern justified?
  2) Can Crouch and Mair's arguments be empirically tested and if so how?

Week 8: Governmentality

Class question(s):
  1) How does governmentality utilities the concepts of political reason and technology?
  2) Governmentality claims to focus on the practice of government, is this claim convincing?

Week 9: De-politicisation


Class question(s):
1. Do agree with the notion that policy has become depoliticised?
2. Does depoliticisation offer a practical research agenda for the study of policy?

Week 10: A State Relational Approach


Class question(s):
1. Based on what we know so far, can we just focus on the capacity of the state to govern?
2. Can other actors assume the role traditionally afforded to states to the governing or policy process?
Peer assessment form
Please comment on each part of the presentation and including your ranking on the 1 – 5 scale

Coverage of the material (Comments)

Overall, I would rank the coverage of the material as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (needed lot more work)</th>
<th>2 (needed a bit more work)</th>
<th>3 (Good)</th>
<th>4 (very good)</th>
<th>5 (Excellent)</th>
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Quality of argument (Comments)

Overall, I would rank the quality of the arguments as

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Organization of the presentation (comments)

Overall, I would rank the organization of the presentation as

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Other comments

Con’t. over if necessary