Policy Implementation Syllabus

West Virginia University
Fall 2025

Professor Samuel Workman
sam.workman@mail.wvu.edu
Field Hall 4104
: By Appt.

POLS 638
CRN 87077
Monday, 9 – 11:50 AM
3 Credit Hours
Woodburn Hall 306E
Prerequisites: Graduate Standing in POLS

Course Description

This is an advanced, graduate-level course on public policy. The course examines the theoretical and empirical science of policy implementation. Policy implementation is the science of how policies are adapted to conditions "on the ground" - the translation of collective decisions to government action. But policy implementation also conjures a politics and policy all its own, serving as a pressure valve where debates and conflict at earlier stages continue. The course will cover the institutions, actors, and processes that influence policy implementation, including bureaucracies, interest groups, coalitions, and networks. The course covers the most important frameworks and theories of policy implementation with a balance of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical work.

Students should expect to read theoretical, conceptual, and empirical treatments of policy implementation, necessitating some comfort with digesting qualitative and quantitative research, including case studies, regression tables, and visual displays of data. There are no specific prerequisites for this course, although familiarity with quantitative approaches to social science will help the student digest and engage with the research on policy implementation. This familiarity will also aid in writing the concept and original research papers.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand, engage, and reason on the frameworks and theories of policy implementation.
2. Understand and draft the central components of an original research paper.
3. Understand how to evaluate conceptualization and measurement and develop both in research.
4. Understand how to design and implement research on policy implementation.
5. Learn to engage professionally in scholarly discussions with peers and the instructor.
6. Learn to present original research, communicating it to a diverse audience.

Course Texts

The following are the required texts for the course. Students may purchase these from any outlet convenient and economical. E-books or other electronic versions are fine for the course, as is renting the texts.

- Lentsch, Justus, and Peter Weingart, eds. 2011. The Politics of Scientific Advice: Institutional Design for Quality Assurance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stokes, Leah Cardamore. 2020. Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Teodoro, Manuel P. 2022. The Profits of Distrust: Citizen-Consumers, Drinking Water, and the Crisis of Confidence in American Government. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Workman, Samuel. 2015. The Dynamics of Bureaucracy in the US Government: How Congress and Federal Agencies Process Information and Solve Problems. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Assessment

The course requirements are geared toward developing students' skills in research, analysis, and theorizing in the field of policy implementation. The assignments promote the development of research projects, the generation of data products, and the presentation of research results. In addition, the assignments develop students' ability to synthesize and integrate theories, ideas, and existing research. Each of the written requirements will be covered in class. Students may work in pairs on these requirements, but if choosing to do so, each receives the same assessment.

Participation. At each course meeting, one or more students will present lessons or takeaways from the week's reading to the rest of the seminar participants. In addition to presentations, each student is expected to participate in class discussions, ask thoughtful questions, and engage the Professor and their peers.

Conceptualization and Measurement Paper. Students will write a paper that explores the conceptualization and measurement of a concept of interest to them. This paper will rely on at least seven independent academic sources **NOT** included on the syllabus. In 2-3 pages, single-spaced, students will evaluate the conceptualization of the key concept in policy implementation and its measurement, including strengths and weaknesses, and alternative measurement approaches.

Data Paper. Each student will develop a data paper that addresses the data they will use for the research paper, analysis, and presentation. The paper will address the data source, issues of validity and reliability, and present any descriptive qualitative or quantitative justification for use of the data. The paper should include any descriptive analyses conducted with the data (e.g., descriptive statistics or rudimentary visualizations). If students choose a meta-analysis, this paper will take the form of an annotated bibliography.

Research Paper. Each student will develop an original research paper that addresses the study of policy implementation. The paper will include theory development or testing and take the standard form in public policy studies in political science. If choosing a meta-analysis, the

paper will require 40 readings on policy implementation outside the syllabus. See the instructor for additional details.

Research Presentation. Each student will prepare a presentation of their research paper for delivery at the last meeting of the seminar. Presentations will take the standard conference form and include theory, background, and analyses. In place of an original research paper, students may conduct a meta-analysis of the literature on policy implementation. If choosing a meta-analysis, the presentation will contain the arguments developed in the meta-analysis.

Important Due Dates

Project	Date	Points or %
Participation	Weekly	20
Conceptualization & Measurement Paper	October 1st	20
Data Paper	October 22th	10
Research Paper or Meta Analysis	December 3st	20
Research or Meta Analysis Presentation	December 8th	30

Course Policies

Use of AI

Per University policy, use of AI requires express permission of the instructor. If given, the student will additionally be required to submit the log of prompts used in writing and analysis. As for everyone, the student is ultimately responsible for the quality of submitted work. AI makes mistakes. Your grade will reflect the quality of the submitted work, regardless of errors or mistakes in prompting or analysis from the AI.

Statistical Computing

In this course, I will offer some advice with analyses utilizing R for statistical procedures and protocols. Students may use their preferred software for quantitative analyses, though advice will only be provided in R.

Late and Makeup Policy

All assignments are due on time. Since all assignments are specified well in advance or, alternatively, are completed contemporaneously, late assignments will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.

Professional Communications

Most general course administration questions can be answered by referring to the syllabus. I respond to student emails only once every 24 hours. Depending on when I check my email on a given day, the earliest time at which a response may be expected is within 24 hours. Please be aware that I also do not respond to emails on weekends or holidays. I am generally available to meet in person in my office.

Use of Technology

During seminary discussions, students should be focused on contributing to discussion and engaging the instructor and their peers. If the use of laptops or mobile devices, including cell phones and tablets, impedes class discussion and participation, then these devices will no longer be permitted for use in class. Students with accommodations requiring technology for note-taking will be permitted with written documentation.

University Policies

Students are responsible for reviewing policies on inclusivity, academic integrity, incompletes, sale of course materials, sexual misconduct, adverse weather, as well as student evaluation of instruction, and days of special concern/religious holiday statements here.

Course Schedule

August 25th

Professionalization

- Wasby, Stephen L. 2001. "Introduction: Advisors and the Dissertation Proposal." APSC 34, no. 4(October): 841–842. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096501000798
- May, Peter J. 2001. "Constructing the Prospectus." APSC 34, no. 4 (October): 843–844. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096501000804
- Farrar-Myers, Victoria A. 2001. "The "Rights" of Passage." APSC 34, no. 4 (October): 845–846. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096501000816
- Anderson, Kristi. 2001. "Faculty Roles and Student Projects." APSC 34, no. 4 (October): 847–848. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096501000828
- Fox, Richard L. 2001. "Developing the Dissertation Prospectus." APSC 34, no. 4 (October): 849–850. https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909650100083X
- Dulk, Kevin R. den. 2001. "Proposing a Dissertation with a Free Rein." APSC 34, no. 4 (October): 851–852. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096501000841
- Benesh, Sara C. 2001. "The Key to a Successful Prospectus: Consult an Advisor, Early and Often." APSC 34, no. 4 (October): 853–854. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096501000853

September 8th

Data and Research Design

- Workman, Samuel. 2020. "Four Principles of Data Collection." Towards Data Science, June 5, 2020. Accessed January 21, 2023. https://towardsdatascience.com/four-principles-of-data-collection-82ad07938ac1
- Wickham, Hadley. 2014. "Tidy Data." J. Stat. Soft. 59 (10). https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v059.i10
- Broman, Karl W., and Kara H. Woo. 2018. "Data Organization in Spreadsheets." Publisher: Taylor & Francis eprint: https://doi.org/10.1080/00031305.2017.1375989, The American Statistician 72, no. 1(January 2, 2018): 2–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/00031305.2017.1375989

- Ellis, Shannon E., and Jeffrey T. Leek. 2018. "How to share data for collaboration." The American Statistician 72 (1): 53–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/00031305.2017.1375987

September 15th

Broad Perspectives on Policy Implementation

- Van Meter, Donald S., and Carl E. Van Horn. 1975. "The Policy Implementation Process: A Conceptual Framework." Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc, Administration & Society 6, no. 4 (February 1, 1975): 445–488. https://doi.org/10.1177/009539977500600404
- Elmore, R. 1979. "Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions." Political Science Quarterly
- Sabatier, Paul A. 1986. "Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Implementation Research: a Critical Analysis and Suggested Synthesis." Publisher: Cambridge University Press, Journal of Public Policy 6, no. 1 (January): 21–48. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X00003846
- deLeon, Peter, and Linda deLeon. 2002. "What Ever Happened to Policy Implementation? An Alternative Approach." Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 12, no. 4 (October 1, 2002): 467–492. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a003544
- Hill, Heather C. 2003. "Understanding Implementation: Street-Level Bureaucrats' Resources for Reform." Publisher: [Oxford University Press, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Inc., Public Management Research Association], Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART 13 (3): 265–282
- Saetren, Harald. 2005. "Facts and Myths about Research on Public Policy Implementation: Out-of- Fashion, Allegedly Dead, But Still Very Much Alive and Relevant." _Eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/0072.2005.00133.x, Policy Studies Journal 33 (4): 559–582. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2005. 00133.x

Professionalization

- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." Publisher: Cambridge University Press, PS: Political Science & Politics 39, no. 1 (January): 127–132. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096506060264

September 22th

Policy Design & Policy Goals

- Kreitzer, Rebecca J., Elizabeth A. Maltby, and Candis Watts Smith. 2022. "Fifty shades of deservingness: an analysis of state-level variation and effect of social constructions on policy outcomes." J. Pub. Pol. 42, no. 3 (September): 436–464. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X21000222
- Bell, Elizabeth. n.d. "Deserving to Whom? Investigating Heterogeneity in the Impact of Social Constructions of Target Populations on Support for Affirmative Action." Policy Studies Journal 49 (1): 268–299. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12347
- Lüpke, Heiner von, Lucas Leopold, and Jale Tosun. 2022. "Institutional coordination arrangements as elements of policy design spaces: insights from climate policy." Policy Sci (November 28, 2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-022-09484-0
- Mondou, Matthieu, and Éric Montpetit. 2010. "Policy Styles and Degenerative Politics: Poverty Policy Designs in Newfoundland and Quebec." _Eprint: https://onlinelibrary.

wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1541- 0072.2010.00380.x, Policy Studies Journal 38 (4): 703–722. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541- 0072. 2010.00380.x

- Petek, Ana, et al. 2021. "Unboxing the vague notion of policy goals: Comparison of Croatian public policies." _Eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/epa2.1106, European Policy Analysis 7 (2): 451–469. https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1106
- Koski, Chris, and Saba Siddiki. 2022. "Linking policy design, change, and outputs: Policy responsiveness in American state electricity policy." _Eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/psj.12442, Policy Studies Journal 50 (3): 553–574. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12442

Professionalization

- King, Gary. 2006. "Publication, Publication." Publisher: Cambridge University Press, PS: Political Science & Politics 39, no. 1 (January): 119–125. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096506060252

September 29th

Information & Expertise

- Bromley-Trujillo, Rebecca, and Andrew Karch. 2021. "Salience, Scientific Uncertainty, and the Agenda-Setting Power of Science." Policy Stud J 49, no. 4 (November): 992–1018. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12373
- Koski, Chris, and Samuel Workman. 2018. "Drawing practical lessons from punctuated equilibrium theory." Policy Politics (Bristol, UK) 46 (2): 293–308. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557318X15230061413778
- May, P. J., S. Workman, and B. D. Jones. 2007. "Organizing Attention: Responses of the Bureaucracy to Agenda Disruption." Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 18, no. 4 (October 17, 2007): 517–541. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mun015
- Peterson, Holly L. 2018. "Political Information Has Bright Colors: Narrative Attention Theory: Political Information Has Bright Colors." Policy Stud J 46, no. 4 (November): 828–842. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12272
- Princen, Sebastiaan, Katrijn Siderius, and Sebastián Villasante. 2021. "Information processing in the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy." J. Pub. Pol. 41, no. 3 (September): 532–552. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X20000124
- Workman, Samuel, Bryan D. Jones, and Ashley E. Jochim. 2009. "Information Processing and Policy Dynamics." Policy Studies Journal 37, no. 1 (February): 75–92. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2008.00296.x

Professionalization

- Murphy, Kevin R. 2021. "In praise of Table 1: The importance of making better use of descriptive statistics." Ind. Organ. Psychol. 14, no. 4 (December): 461–477. https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2021.90

October 6th

No Class - Appalachian Regional Commission Conference.

October 13th

The Bureaucracy and Public Policy

- Workman, Samuel. 2015. *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy in the US Government: How Congress and Federal Agencies Process Information and Solve Problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Workman, Samuel, JoBeth Shafran, and Tracey Bark. 2017. "Problem definition and information provision by federal bureaucrats." Cognitive Systems Research 43 (June): 140–152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogsys.2016.11.002

Professionalization

- Schwabish, Jonathan A. 2020. "Ten Guidelines for Better Tables." J. Benefit Cost Anal. 11 (2): 151–178. https://doi.org/10.1017/bca.2020.11

October 20th

The Advocacy Coalition Framework in Policy Implementation

- Koebele, Elizabeth A. 2020. "Cross-Coalition Coordination in Collaborative Environmental Governance Processes." Policy Stud J 48, no. 3 (August): 727–753. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12306
- Albright, Elizabeth A. 2011. "Policy Change and Learning in Response to Extreme Flood Events in Hungary: An Advocacy Coalition Approach: Albright: Policy Change and Learning." Policy Studies Journal 39, no. 3 (August): 485–511. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00418.x
- Satoh, Keiichi, Antti Gronow, and Tuomas Ylä-Anttila. 2021. "The Advocacy Coalition Index: A new approach for identifying advocacy coalitions." Policy Stud J (September 3, 2021): psj.12450. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12450
- Weible, Christopher M. 2008. "Expert-Based Information and Policy Subsystems: A Review and Synthesis." Policy Studies Journal 36, no. 4 (November): 615–635. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2008.00287.x
- Nowlin, Matthew C. 2021. "Policy Learning and Information Processing." Policy Stud J 49, no. 4(November): 1019–1039. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12397
- Arnold, Gwen. 2022. "A threat-centered theory of policy entrepreneurship." Policy Sci 55, no. 1(March): 23–45. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-021-09445-z

Professionalization

- Ecarnot, F., et al. 2015. "Writing a scientific article: A step-by-step guide for beginners." European Geriatric Medicine 6, no. 6 (December): 573–579. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurger.2015.08.005

October 27th

Ecology of Games & Polycentric Governance

- Lubell, Mark. 2013. "Governing Institutional Complexity: The Ecology of Games Framework: The Ecology of Games Framework." Policy Stud J 41, no. 3 (August): 537–559. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12028

- Berardo, Ramiro, and Mark Lubell. 2019. "The Ecology of Games as a Theory of Polycentricity: Recent Advances and Future Challenges." Policy Stud J 47, no. 1 (February): 6–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12313
- Ingold, Karin. 2011. "Network Structures within Policy Processes: Coalitions, Power, and Brokerage in Swiss Climate Policy: Ingold: Network Structures within Policy Processes." Policy Studies Journal 39, no. 3 (August): 435–459. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00416.x
- Olivier, Tomás, and Ramiro Berardo. 2022. "Birds of a Feather Fight Together: Forum Involvement in a Weakly Institutionalized Ecology of Policy Games." Policy Studies Journal 50, no. 1 (February): 176–198. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12418
- Mewhirter, Jack, and Ramiro Berardo. 2019. "The Impact of Forum Interdependence and Network Structure on Actor Performance in Complex Governance Systems." Policy Stud J 47, no. 1 (February): 159–177. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12302
- Lubell, Mark, and Matthew Robbins. 2022. "Adapting to Sea-Level Rise: Centralization or Decentralization in Polycentric Governance Systems?" Policy Studies Journal 50, no. 1 (February): 143–175. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12430

Professionalization

- LaPorte, Jody. 2014. "Confronting a Crisis of Research Design." APSC 47, no. 2 (April): 414–417. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096514000328

November 3rd

Scientific Advisory Boards

- Lentsch, Justus, and Peter Weingart, eds. 2011. *The Politics of Scientific Advice: Institutional Design for Quality Assurance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- MacKillop, Eleanor, and James Downe. 2022. "What counts as evidence for policy? An analysis of policy actors' perceptions." Public Administration Review (November 30, 2022): puar.13567. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13567

Professionalization

- Ricks, Jacob I., and Amy H. Liu. 2018. "Process-Tracing Research Designs: A Practical Guide." APSC 51, no. 4 (October): 842–846. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000975

November 10th

Energy Policy & Interest Groups

- Stokes, Leah Cardamore. 2020. *Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Lockwood, Matthew. 2022. "Policy feedback and institutional context in energy transitions." Policy Sci 55, no. 3 (September): 487–507. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-022-09467-1

Professionalization

- Schwoerer, Kayla, et al. 2022. "CO-DESIGN-ing a more context-based, pluralistic, and participatory future for public administration." Public Administration 100, no. 1 (March): 72–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12828

November 17th

Drinking Water & Trust in Institutions

- Teodoro, Manuel P. 2022. *The Profits of Distrust: Citizen-Consumers, Drinking Water, and the Crisis of Confidence in American Government.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

December 1st

Students will attend the seminar and have the opportunity to ask questions about research papers and presentations. No reading.

December 8th

Student research Presentations. No Reading.