Term Information

Effective Term
Spring 2017

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area
Educ Sts: Educational Policy

Fiscal Unit/Academic Org
EHE Educational Studies - D1280

College/Academic Group
Education & Human Ecology

Level/Career
Graduate

Course Number/Catalog
7225

Course Title
Approaches to Policy Inquiry

Transcript Abbreviation
Policy Inquiry

Course Description
Introduction to guiding principles for policy inquiry and analyses. The focus is on learning analytical vocabularies and approaches distinctive to policy inquiry. Students learn to read and think critically and creatively about public policy problems and solutions through the lens of research.

Semester Credit Hours/Units
Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course
14 Week, 12 Week

Flexibly Scheduled Course
Never

Does any section of this course have a distance education component?
No

Grading Basis
Letter Grade

Repeatable
No

Course Components
Seminar, Lecture

Grade Roster Component
Lecture

Credit Available by Exam
No

Admission Condition Course
No

Off Campus
Never

Campus of Offering
Columbus

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites
None

Exclusions

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code
13.0901

Subsidy Level
Doctoral Course

Intended Rank
Masters, Doctoral, Professional

Requirement/Elective Designation
Required for this unit's degrees, majors, and/or minors

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- By the conclusion of the course, students should have an understanding of the politics of policy inquiry, and an introductory knowledge of key approaches to inquiry, including inquiry on policy actors, policy networks, policy mobility
- and policy implementation, diffusion, and mobility. By the end of the course students will defined your own areas of interest and begun developing a reading list in those domains of inquiry.

### Content Topic List

- Politics of Research utilization by educators
  - Basic concepts of policy network inquiry
  - Mainstream approaches to policy implementation, diffusion, and mobility
  - Inquiry on policy experts and elites
- Approaches to critical inquiry on educ. policy
  - Critical Discourse Analysis as Policy Inquiry
  - Action Research as Policy Inquiry

### Attachments

- ES-POL - Policy Inquiry Syllabus for Inclusion in Revision of MA Program.pdf
  (Syllabus. Owner: Nespor,Jan Kent)

### Comments

- New syllabus uploaded 4/5/2016 (by Wheaton,Joe Edward on 04/05/2016 01:41 PM)
- revision requested (by Odum,Sarah A. on 04/05/2016 09:41 AM)

### Workflow Information

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Preparer name: Jan Nespor

Instructor Name: Jan Nespor, RA 101A, 688-3084, nespor.2@osu.edu, Office Hours: Mondays 1-3

Course Title: Approaches to Policy Inquiry

Credit Hours: 3

Description: Introduction of assumptions and key literature on inquiry and research Perspectives characteristic of education policy research.

Prerequisites: Graduate Standing

Level: Graduate

Semesters Offered: Spring term, alternating Years

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

This course introduces you to guiding principles for policy inquiry and analyses. It does not duplicate or serve as a substitute for in-depth methodology courses in quantitative and qualitative methods. Rather, the focus is on helping you learn to read and think critically and creatively about public policy problems and solutions by introducing you to analytical vocabularies and approaches distinctive to policy inquiry.

At the end of the course you should

A) have an understanding of:

1) factors shaping policy-makers’ utilization of policy inquiry
2) Mainstream approaches to inquiry on implementation and diffusion
3) Basic conceptual issues of network analysis
4) Inquiry approaches to the study of policy networks
5) Inquiry approaches to the study of policy elites and experts
6) Critical Inquiry approaches to education
7) Critical Discourse Analytic approaches to policy inquiry
8) Activist and participatory action research approaches to policy inquiry

B) have defined your own areas of interest and begun developing a reading list in those domains of inquiry.

Texts (Examples)


Online Readings

Many of the required journal readings must be downloaded as free pdfs. If I’ve provided a URL, you should be able to just click on it if you’re online at the university – it probably won’t work if you’re off campus. If no URL is provided, the material will either be available in the Carmen folder or through the library. To access journals through the library, go through the library webpage – http://library.osu.edu/, then click on the “Online Journals” link: http://nf4hr2ve4v.search.serialssolutions.com/. NOTE: If you are off-campus, you must log in through ‘off-campus sign-in’: http://library.osu.edu/account/off-campus-sign-in/. All downloads I assign should be available free if you’re registered at OSU. If you’re asked to pay, don’t. Contact me. If you get a message on screen asking for money for an article, it is most likely because you’re off-campus and didn’t log in, or didn’t go through the library’s online journals webpage.

Class Rules

No side talking; respect for all.

Turn off phones/beepers. Do not use a phone in class. If you are in a situation in which you must be on-call, let me know in advance.

Keep computers offline – do not use wireless. Do not use computers to check mail, search the web, or do any non-class related activities during class. To do this while I am talking, or any of your peers is talking, is disrespectful, against class rules, and voids the A- contract. If I find people doing this I will ban all electronics from the classroom. I have done this before.

Food and drink are okay if you clean up. If you use recyclable material (plastic or glass, paper) please put it in one of the recycle containers in the hall rather than the trash.

Attendance Policy

These are small classes. Your absence will be noticed and have an impact on the class. I have adapted an attendance policy from the syllabus of the historian Vijay Prashad:

If you miss even one class without prior permission, you are liable to fail the course. I am ruthless about this point. Please make sure that you send me an email at least an hour before class. If you have to miss a class (even for health reasons), I expect, by the following class session, to have a ten-page paper that lays out the main analytical points in the reading for the class you missed. This is non-negotiable. If I do not hear from you before class that you are missing class, or if you fail to get me this paper by following class your final grade will drop a grade.

The writing is not “punishment.” I assume that 1) you should be taking critical notes on the readings as a habit. Notes are not segments of texts cut-and-pasted from a pdf: they are efforts to summarize the arguments of the articles, and to quote where the author has expressed something in a particular distinctive or useful way. 2) Notes thus should lay out the “main analytical points” of the piece and show you thinking about how to use the ideas, or identifying weaknesses in them. With such notes, doing the 10-page then should be relatively easy – a matter of pulling your notes together and perhaps comparing or contrasting the different readings. If you present a paper as first author, you may submit your paper/presentation in lieu of the report on readings. There are no make-ups for missed classes. I do not give extensions for end-of-term assignments. I will make exceptions for serious, documented illness.
Required Tasks

1. Construction of a Reading List around Area of Interest.

The idea is to draw on the readings in the course to develop a list for further reading. This needs to be organized around basic areas of interest: an area you’re trying to become expert on as you move through the MA program. Constructing a reading list is one way to prepare yourself to learn in the future. It is challenging: an incoherent list, or a list with scores of long books on it, won’t help you much. Instead, a) you need to define the topic or topics you want to pursue b) identify the key texts and authors related to this area; c) identify key texts and authors in related areas. You may want to build lists around particular problems, particular theories, particular geographical regions, and so forth. You may want to break the list into subparts: 1) Theory Readings; 2) Readings around a particular policy topic (e.g., implementation, policy borrowing); 3) readings around particular policy episodes (e.g., introduction and revisions of Common Core curricula and related tests); 4) case studies; (5) review pieces.

Consult with faculty and other students, but your own reading will be the key to this task. Insofar as possible, annotate the list, that is, explain why a particular text or author is listed, and by all means take down all the relevant bibliographic information. If the text is available online through the university, you are advised to download it now (you can lose access). These lists are a key step in preparing for the future (whether that’s the PhD program, or policy work). Even if your interests shift, the experience of assembling such a list will be highly useful. If you plan on doing scholarly work, such lists are essential.


There is a blog for this class. I’ll expect you to be weekly from the 3rd week through the 12th week of classes. There are two types of postings, which rotate every other week. You must post each week: you cannot wait until the end of the term and put up a semester’s worth of posts the last week.

First, you’ll be posting “Critical Comments and Responses on Readings”. Every other week (beginning the third week of classes and ending with the 12th class – you will write a total of five comments/critiques) you must write a roughly 400-500-word critique or commentary on the week’s readings: these are not to be summaries of the reading, but reflect and comment on it.

Do not pick something to write about at random. Concentrate on things like: How are these issues framed? Why study or write about this? What political and epistemological assumptions does this article make? Who would this kind of research be useful to?

Again, your schedule for submitting these will be determined the second class. These should be posted by 5:00pm the day before they are due.

Second, on the weeks you are not posting about the readings, I’ll ask you to post about current education policy: This is intended to encourage you to read news sources (available through the OSU library) like Education Week, and the Chronicle of Higher Education, and for those with international interests, the University World News is a free online resource. By all means read the Washington Post and New York Times as well. Don’t just report or summarize: comment upon what you’ve read, raise questions, try to relate to the readings.

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The writing can be informal in tone. But as in all writing and discussion for this course, you demonstrate critical analytical thinking. I expect good, tight thinking – saying you agree or disagree with someone is not enough, you need to articulate your reasoning. Do feel free to disagree with one another, and with the readings.

3. Text Critique.

Read one of the following texts, and write a critical analysis of the book, noting both its strengths and weaknesses, and, in particular, identifying the inquiry approaches used in the text, and discussing how the text might have been improved or changed by using some of the other inquiry approaches discussed in the course [texts will change with term]:


Or


The critiques should be 6-10 pages long. The aim should be critical and analytical, by which I mean:

- framing an argument or taking someone else’s argument apart, systematically inspecting a document, an issue, or an event, synthesizing different points of view, applying a theory to disparate phenomena, and so on. (Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary*, 1989, p. 188)

In other words, don’t just summarize the text and say you like it or not. Instead consider which issues were not raised that might have been raised if another analytic approach were taken, or how use of a particular analytic approach by the author led to particular insights. Raise criticisms, by all means: How might the book have been improved? What is its strength? What are its weaknesses?

**GRADING GUIDE**

**Grade Weights**

- Reading Lists - 25%
- Blog Postings - 35%
- Text Critique - 40%

**Grading Criteria**

1. Reading Lists. Much of my grading on the reading lists will be ‘formative’ – I will provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. However, there are some criteria for a summative evaluation as well. Each list must begin with a one- to two-page overview explaining why these texts were selected (how do you see them informing either your career in policy, or your academic work, or some other project); and how you went about identifying texts for inclusion (e.g., spoke to faculty, other students, consulted syllabi of courses at other universities, attended conferences, read deeply in relevant journals, etc.)

   A. The list should represent readings that are to be done in the future (it is **not** to be a list of things you’ve already read for courses)
   B. The list should be organized into sections (e.g., by theory, by issues (e.g., implementation, policy borrowing, etc.), by types of policy actors (e.g., experts, advocacy coalitions, think tanks, etc), by particular policy (e.g., Common Core, etc.) or others.
C. The readings listed within each section should clearly reflect either – a) a systematic effort to examine a range of different perspectives or b) a systematic effort to explore one (or more) perspectives in depth

2. Blog Postings. There are 10 blog posts, each is worth 3.5 out of 100 total points for the course. The posts must meet the criteria listed above in the section on Required Tasks, and must be posted within the appropriate time frame. If you do this you get credit for the post. If you don’t, you don’t.

3. Rubric for Text Critique

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<th>SUBSTANCE</th>
<th>STRUCTURE &amp; ARGUMENT</th>
<th>QUALITY OF WRITING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>A or A-</td>
<td>Demonstrates a thorough reading and understanding of the text. States the argument of the text in its strongest form, then examines the limits of the argument or evidence. Uses appropriate examples from the text. Brings other readings to bear in the argument and situates the text in a wider literature. Articulates how the book might be useful in further research &amp; policy: what are its theoretical insights? What perspectives does it give voice to? How might it inform educational policy or reform?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>B+, B or B-</td>
<td>Demonstrates a thorough reading and understanding of the text; Appropriate use of examples from the text; identifies some strengths and weaknesses of the text. Some attempt to situate subject in wider context; Use of evidence for specific cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>C+, C or C-</td>
<td>Uneven or derivative—Summarizing what others have said without critical insight; little attempt or success in place the issue or topic in a wider societal context; Undeveloped or poor examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>D or F</td>
<td>Poorly framed. Text not read thoroughly or understood. Little or no evidence of reading beyond syllabus. Subject is not situated in context; Inadequate or improper use of examples and evidence.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Writing Style and Plagiarism. For all writing in this class, please use “APA style” for in-text citations and reference lists. Remember that if you refer to specific arguments or claims in the readings you must cite the particular pages where those arguments or claims appear (and of course, place all quotations or borrowed language in quotation marks and give a proper citation). Plagiarism can result in a failing grade. Do not plagiarize! Different national educational systems and disciplines have different assumptions about how to cite other’s works and how to show influences and quotations. You are expected to abide by the definitions of plagiarism accepted at major U.S. Universities. Plagiarism may result in a grade of “F.” When in doubt - cite. Consult: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/) [http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_what_is_plagiarism.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_what_is_plagiarism.html) Also examine: [http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9](http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9)

Academic Integrity (Academic Misconduct) -- Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University’s Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University’s Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute “Academic Misconduct.”

The Ohio State University’s Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University’s Code of Student Conduct is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University’s Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Statement on Diversity – The College of Education and Human Ecology affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Office of Disability Services Statement – Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Grievances and Solving Problems – (Example statement) According to University Policies, available from the Division of Student Affairs, if you have a problem with this class, “You should seek to resolve a grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, with the department chairperson, college dean, and provost, in that order.”
procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-7-23, which is available from the Office of Student Life, 208 Ohio Union.” “Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant’s department. “

**SCHEDULE & READINGS**

**WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION, REVIEW OF SYLLABUS, DEFINITIONS OF POLICY**

**WEEK 2 - HOW IS RESEARCH USED IN POLICY? CONCEPTUAL ISSUES.**


http://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/Agnotology%20Intro%20Chapter%2C%20Robert%20Proctor_0.pdf

**WEEK 3 - HOW IS RESEARCH USED IN POLICY? EMPIRICAL STUDIES**


http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.1905


**WEEK 4 - MAINSTREAM APPROACHES TO IMPLEMENTATION & DIFFUSION**


**WEEK 5 - POLICY NETWORK ANALYSIS - CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES TO NETWORK ANALYSIS**


WEEK 6 POLICY NETWORK ANALYSIS – EMPIRICAL STUDIES AND ISSUES


Week 7 - THE STUDY OF POLICY ELITES AND EXPERTS


**WEEK 8 - CRITICAL APPROACHES TO POLICY INQUIRY - CONCEPTUAL ISSUES**


**Week 9 - CRITICAL APPROACHES TO POLICY INQUIRY - EXAMPLES OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES**


### WEEK 10 - CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS POLICY INQUIRY


Mulderigg, J. (2015). ‘Enabling’ participatory governance in education: a corpus-based critical policy analysis. *International Handbook of Interpretation in Educational Research.* Google it – From an OSU computer, you should be able to download the entire book as a pdf. Or, get a draft version of the Mulderigg chapter from her papers on Academia.edu

### WEEK 11 - CRITICAL ANALYSES OF POLICY DISCOURSE - EXAMPLES


### WEEK 12 - ACTION RESEARCH APPROACHES TO POLICY INQUIRY


**WEEK 13 - ACTION RESEARCH IN POLICY INQUIR - EMPIRICAL EXAMPLES**


Pearce, J. (2008). “We Make Progress Because We are Lost”: Critical Reflections on Co-producing Knowledge as a Methodology for Researching Non-governmental Public Action, www.lse.ac.uk/ngpa

Week 14 - Wrap Up and Review