

**Mississippi Valley State University
Department of Social Sciences
Masters in Rural Public Policy
Fall 2018**

Course Syllabus

Course Title: **Rural Policy Planning, Evaluation and Analysis**

Course Number: RP: 503

Credit Hours: Three (3)

Meeting Days/Time/Location: Monday: 6:00-8:40 p.m.

Instructor: Cassie Osborne, Ph.D Office: MRPP Social Sciences Building

E-mail: cosborne@mvsu.edu Phone: 662-254-3876 or 662-254-3352
Fax: 662-254-3312

Office Hours: Office Hours:

Other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores a variety of theories of rural communities and their ability to explain contemporary conditions and problems. The course also provides the basic techniques of rural policy analysis and the evaluation methods for the design and assessment of public policy programs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students enrolled in this course will be able to:

1. Comprehend what constitutes a rural community;
2. Provide an understanding of the public policy process;
3. Comprehend the key approaches to state and rural public policy planning, evaluation and analysis;
4. Comprehend the institutional, economic, demographic, ideological, and cultural context of contemporary public policy; and,
5. Conduct research and analysis of state and rural policy.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Anderson, James. *Public Policymaking*, 7th or 8th Edition, Wadsworth Cengage, 2011, or 2013, Boston, MA.

Cochran, Clarke E., Mayer, Lawrence, Carr, T.R., and Cayer, N. Joseph. *American Public Policy*. St. Martin's Press, 2012. New York, New York

Dye, Thomas R. *Understanding Public Policy*, 12, 13 or 14th Edition, Pearson Education, Inc., 2013, New York, NY.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:

Birkland, Thomas A. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*, 2nd Edition, M. E. Sharpe, 2005, Armonk, NY.

Dunn, William N. *Public Policy Analysis*, 5th Edition, Pearson Education, Inc., 2012, New York, NY.

Stewart, Joseph Jr., David M. Hedge and James P. Lester. *Public Policy: An Evolutionary Approach*, 3rd edition, Thomson Wadsworth, 2008, Belmont, CA.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

Instructional methods will consist of lectures, discussions, guests and student presentations. Class meetings will be organized on a lecture/discussion basis, with questions, comments, and discussions encouraged during all class meetings.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

SYNOPSIS OF REFERRED JOURNAL ARTICLES **Total points=100**

Students will summarize and critique **five (5)** journal articles. Summaries and critics should be limited to five pages. The synopsis should be informative and should state the findings and conclusion. At the end of your summary, you are to conduct a critique of the article (i.e. what items were not covered in the topic that could have shed further light on the issues involved; whether you agree with the author(s) and why/why not; and what other authors have noted on the subject matter, etc.).

Each synopsis should highlight important information, including the following key items:

- A) Thesis (author's purpose)
- B) Literature (prior research/theory)
- C) Design (hypothesis, methods)
- D) Findings (results)
- E) Conclusion (implications)

Students should bring sufficient copies of abstracts of each journal for members of the class. All students will make an oral presentation of his/her article. For this reason, each article must be brief-about ten minutes per article and focused. The oral report should be used to highlight essential material, key findings, and to stimulate discussion on the implications of the research. A failing grade of **ZERO (0)** will be granted to students who fail to show up on the night their article is to be reviewed. However, exceptions will be granted to students who present a verified excuse.

Please check tentative schedule for article presentations.

BOOK REVIEW

Total points=100

Students will choose a book whose subject matter is pertinent to issues that have or are currently impacting individuals in rural areas. The most important aspect of this assignment will be an examination of the manner in which public policy was or is being enacted. Students must consult with the Professor regarding the book's approval. You are to conduct a synopsis of the book. You will be graded on your ability to: 1) communicate theories and issues; 2) communicate the topic in an interesting manner; and 3) display creativity during your presentation.

The book must be approved by the Professor by **Monday, September 29, 2015.**

DEBATE

Total points=100

Students will engage in a debate on a contemporary rural public policy issue. Students will be judged on the following: ability to defend the theory behind the issue; ability to answer arguments; reasoning and evidence; organization; expression and delivery; and listening and responding.

RESEARCH PAPER -CASE STUDY

Total points =100

A paper will be prepared that highlights our discussions of rural communities and public policy. Papers should research issue in Rural Communities. PLEASE REVIEW CASE STUDY HAND OUT. Your paper should depict the following:

1. Major ideas/propositions discussed in the literature in the last ten years, and;
2. Critical evaluations of the evidence offered to support the propositions, and adequate usefulness of the ideas/propositions.

CHAPTER PRESENTATIONS

Total points=50

Students will be required to work in groups and choose a chapter to present in class. Grades will be based on knowledge of the chapter, the ability to thoroughly answer question, the ability of group members to contribute to the discussion, and the use of visual aids.

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Total points=50

The mid-term examination study guide will be presented to students a week prior to the examination. Please check the tentative schedule for date of examination.

FINAL EXAMINATION

Total points=100

The final examination study guide will be presented to students a week prior to the examination. Please check the tentative schedule for date of examination.

GRADING CRITERIA

Final letter grades will be based on a total of **600** points which can be accrued by each student during the semester. Points may be accumulated as follows:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Points</u>
Journals	100
Book Review	100
Debate	100
Research Paper	100
Chapter Presentations	50
Mid-term Examinations	50
Final Examinations	100
MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS	= 600

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

A=90-100

B=89-80

C=79-70

D=69-60

F=below 60

GRADE APPEALS

Any student who feels he/she has been graded unfairly after speaking with me, may appeal his/her grade by following university procedures outlined in the Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) Student Handbook.

EXAMINATIONS

Examinations will consist of all essay questions. Test questions will come from lectures, textbooks, presentations, videos, and any handouts you may receive. **No makeup examinations will be given.**

PARTICIPATION

Class discussions and effective group work, must reflect knowledge of material read. Prior to entering the classroom, please turn cell phone(s) off or to vibrate.

Special Needs Learners

“If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator and Compliance Office on campus or call at (662) 254-3446 as early as possible in the term.”

SYLLABUS

This syllabus is designed to guide learning and instructions and is subject to change based on students' needs and the Professors' assessment of the process. Should the syllabus change, oral and written notification will be provided by the Professor. Students who are absent are responsible for obtaining all assignments from their peers and the instructor.

TENTATIVE OUTLINE

August 24	Overview
August 31	Discussion of Rural Communities
September 07	Labor Day
September 14	First Journal Article; Dye, Chapter 1 – Policy Analysis; Anderson, Chapter 1 – The Study of Public Policy; Dunn, Chapter 2 – Policy Analysis in the Policy-Making Process; Dye, Chapter 3 – Policymaking Process;
September 21	Cochran, Chapter 1 – Issues and Public Policy: An Introduction; Dye, Chapter 2 – Models of Politics. Second Journal Article
September 28	Book Review Approval; *Anderson, Chapter 3, Policy Formation: Problems, Agendas, and Formulation;
October 05	Midterm Exam
October 12	Anderson, *Chapter 4-Policy Adoption; Dye, Chapter 3 continues.
October 19	Second Journal Article; Anderson, *Chapter 6-Policy Implementation; Dye, Chapter 3 continues; Third Journal Article
October 26	*Anderson, Chapter 7-Policy Impact, Evaluation, and Change; Dye, Chapter 4 – Policy Evaluation.

November 02	Fourth Journal Article
November 09	BOOK REVIEWS
November 16	Fifth Journal Article
November 23-27	Fall Break
November 30	Review for Final Exam
December 07	Research Paper and FINAL EXAMINATION

* CHAPTER PRESENTATIONS

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Students are required to complete the following research projects:

I. JOURNAL ARTICLE CRITIQUES

In order to acquire a substantive understanding of the research process in the public policy and planning discipline-as well as Social Science disciplines in general-you are required to select a current article on a rural social policy issue from a social and public policy journal and critique the research process which has been employed by the author(s). MVSU's library has several public policy journals in its current collection. Or you may utilize any of the libraries at area universities. You must select the article and submit a copy to the Professor for approval.

Your critique must be typewritten (double-spaced) with an appropriate title page, indicating the author(s), title, journal, date, and page numbers. Your name and the course number and name should be affixed. Late critiques will not be accepted without a **documented** excuse.

You must concern yourself with the following questions:

1. What is the research question/problem?
2. What are the major concepts?
3. What are the major variables?
4. What research methodology is used?
5. What research techniques are used?
6. What is the hypothesis? What are the hypotheses?
7. What is the nature of the literature review?
8. What are the major findings?
9. What is the conclusion?
10. What are the implications for future research?

II. A CASE STUDY OF A RURAL TOWN/CITY

Each student is to conduct a Case Study of a rural town/city. The purpose of the Case Study is to ascertain all of the pertinent data on the town/city. We want to document a profile of the town/city and the social policies which characterize the functions and operations of the town/city. Primary (data and information from the town/city public and private sectors) and secondary (data and information called from library resources and the like) sources should be utilized to develop an exhaustive case study. Late critiques will not be accepted without a **documented** excuse.

You must choose a rural town/city from the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

A short explanation of the Case Study method is provided below. Please secure a good writer's manual for your use in preparing case studies, research papers, and theses. I highly recommend you purchase Kate Turabian, *a Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). A more recent edition might be available at bookstores.

The Case Study Method

A Case Study enables the researcher to focus on a single individual, group, community, event, policy area, organization or institution, and study it in depth perhaps over an extended period of time.

The researcher will pose a number of research questions or hypotheses to give focus to the research and organize the data collection, analysis and presentation of the material.

The Case Study is closely associated with historical study and anthropology. Both qualitative and quantitative data can be generated. Moreover, the Case Study is unique to the case under study and cannot be generalized to a population as a whole. The ultimate objective of the Case Study is to provide a complete account of the phenomenon under study.

Why Employ the Case Study in Rural Planning and Social Policy

The Case Study will enable us to develop a full treatment of a totality. We will be interested in towns, communities, governments, policies, problems, issues, and politics in the larger Delta region. We want to know every aspect of public life and what shapes and impacts public life in the larger Delta region. Who are the significant political actors? What are the major public policies? Who do those policies effect? Who wins? Who loses? How are policies formulated and implemented? We will concern ourselves with these and other questions.

III. Research Paper

Each student must conduct research on a problem in rural public policy and write, submit, and present a paper of no more than fifteen (15) typewritten (double-spaced) pages (the body of the paper), footnotes/citations, and bibliography/references. Internet sources are absolutely prohibited. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in the student failing the course and being dismissed from the MRPP program. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** The paper should include a title page (Please note: The title page does not constitute the first page) and observe the accepted canons of graduate level research and writing. The Professor will provide further details.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE FINAL EXAMINATION

A comprehensive essay examination, based primarily on readings and class discussions, will be administered. Study questions will be provided for your preparation. Please take and keep good notes from your readings and class discussions.

SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER:

This syllabus is designed to guide learning and instruction and is subject to change based on students' needs and the Professors' assessment of the process. Should the syllabus change, oral and written notification will be provided by the Professor. Students who are absent are responsible for obtaining all assignments from their peers. This document does not constitute a contract with the University. It contains guidelines.