Summer 2021
Reading List

Master of Public Policy
The following is a collection of pre-readings for the summer months, in preparation for the four core policy courses in the fall of 2021. All incoming students, no matter your academic or work background, should read these descriptions carefully and do the readings appropriate for your own background.
Orientation

REQUIRED READINGS

Christopher Ragan. *Microeconomics 16e*, Pearson Canada (Chapters 1 to 5). Note that this textbook will be used for PPOL 602. Students must purchase or have access to this textbook for PPOL 602 Microeconomics in Public Policy


From Sonia Laszlo
Professor for Microeconomics for Public Policy (PPOL 602)

REQUIRED READING

In addition to the textbook *Microeconomics 16e* by Christopher Ragan (Pearson Canada), students are required to purchase or to have access to Jean Tirole's *Economics for the Common Good* (Princeton, 2017) for this course starting August 30.

RECOMMENDED READINGS


I would like to give you summer readings on two topics. The first reading is Jonathan Swift’s *A Modest Proposal For preventing the Children of Poor People From being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and For making them Beneficial to the Publick*, a satirical essay Swift wrote in 1729 – I look forward to discussing with you what you can take from this essay about effective policy analysis and writing.

The other topic is tax reform, specifically the report of the Canadian Royal Commission on Taxation, known as the Carter Commission, which was established by the Diefenbaker government in 1962 and reported to the Pearson government in 1966. If you wish, you can find the entire report at https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pco-bcp/commissions-ef/carter1966-eng/carter1966-eng.htm but it is HUGE. Tax policy is probably the most significant policy tool available to governments and, while it is over 50 years old now, the Carter Commission remains the most comprehensive analysis of how to create a fair tax system that we have seen in Canada. The two commentaries I have attached will get you thinking about how policy-makers, or their advisors, can balance competing interests in a principled fashion to make good public policy; Brazer’s article is a good review of the Commission’s key recommendations, with commentary, and Bittker’s article is a thoughtful analysis.

Beyond these, I think you could make worse use of your summer than by reading the book *Political Management in Canada* by Allan Blakeney and Sanford Borins. Allan Blakeney was Premier of the province of Saskatchewan between 1971 and 1982, having previously been a bureaucrat in the government of T.C. (Tommy) Douglas and a Cabinet Minister in the governments of Douglas and Douglas’ successor Woodrow Lloyd. Having been both a bureaucrat and a Cabinet Minister, he had an excellent perspective on the structure of government how to manage the policy process; it is therefore a worthy read.
From David Shribman
Professor for The U.S. Political and Policy Landscape (PPOL 612)

RECOMMENDED READING


From Jennifer Welsh
Professor for Global Political and Policy Landscape (PPOL 613)

RECOMMENDED READINGS


From Nicholas King
Professor for Science, Experts and Evidence (PPOL 606)

RECOMMENDED READING

For many of you, studying law will be a very new experience. We often hear of “economic policy” and “social policy”, but law is often seen as an end-of-pipe exercise, just one among many policy instruments chosen after decisions are taken. But law is also a fundamental and normative determinant of how societies organize both knowledge and themselves. There are other norms, of course, like customs, morals and religious precepts, but this course focuses on the powerful role that law plays in public policy and in connecting policy to global legal norms.

Because the Max Bell School of Public Policy has students from around the world, the course takes a transsystemic approach, including legal systems grounded in oral tradition such as Indigenous law, using principles that transcend any particular legal system. Human rights (and the evolving pressure to deal with environmental challenges) is one such such set of principles and laws, and for this reason is a central focus.

This course aims to help you begin to answer these questions and to develop the legal literacy tools to understand them. The course will enable you to read statutes and understand the legal terminology, and to read case law in a way that strengthens your understanding of the policy framework in which you are working. Before starting, though, it will be helpful for you to dip your toes into context and issues that are front of mind in the course.

---

1 Transsystemic approaches to legal education were pioneered at McGill’s Faculty of Law and heavily influence the teaching of this course. The original idea was to enable students in civil law (e.g., most of continental Europe, Scotland, most of West and Central Africa, and elements of former Soviet countries and of Chinese law) and common law traditions (e.g., most of Canada, the U.S. the U.K., India, Bangladesh, etc.) to study law in an integrated fashion. The approach is dialogic and recognizes legal pluralism as a pervasive phenomenon in the modern world that includes informal legal systems, Indigenous law systems and others. Transsystemic approaches have evolved to include Islamic law, Indigenous law, and international law, as well as customary and “informal” law, among others.

---

RECOMMENDED READINGS

1. Dapo Akande et al., Human Rights and 21st Century Challenges: Poverty, Conflict, and the Environment (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2020). DOI:10.1093/oso/9780198824770.001.0001 - Introduction only. This book offers a contemporary insight into wicked global policy problems and serve as a lens through which public policy should be approached and understood and will get you thinking about the roles that human rights and law can play.


The Akande reading is available as an eBooks through the McGill library system and will also be available in MyCourses. If you do not have access through your university, please connect with the School and we will make arrangements. Finally, if you have suggestions for readings that you thing may interest your future colleagues, please write to me at pearl.eliadis@mcgill.ca or eliadis@rights-law.net (law office) and I will share them with your colleagues before term starts. If you have questions about what you are reading or having difficulty, do not hesitate to send an email!