Issues: Canadian Public Policy (POLS 321)

Professor: Tari Ajadi
E-mail: tari.ajadi@mcgill.ca
Office: Leacock Building 416
Office hours: Mondays 2pm – 4pm
Communications: Please feel free to reach out to me via email. When you email, please put the course code in the subject line so that I can catch it. I aim wherever possible to respond within 24 hours, though that timeline will extend on weekends.

Term and year: Winter 2023
Course pre-requisite(s): At least one other course in Canadian or Comparative Politics
Course schedule: Mondays and Wednesdays – 10:05-11:25am
Classroom: Birks Building 111
Number of credits: 3 credits

Land acknowledgement

McGill University is located on unceded Indigenous lands which long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

Learning Objectives

The study of Canadian public policy has become one of the most fascinating and complex fields of political science. To study public policy is to study the authoritative allocation of values, as David Easton pointed out over fifty years ago. In the words of Sherri Torjman, “we literally eat, sleep and drink public policy.” No matter what level of government we may discuss – federal, provincial or municipal – public policy involves the support by the state of a set of values, and a decision to use the instruments available to the state to that end.

Issues: Canadian Public Policy will provide you with an introduction to public policy in Canada that exposes you to the practical and political realities of policymaking in complex decision-making environments. From the very beginning, the course will put students in the role of a policy analyst seeking to provide good policy analysis and advice. During the
course, students will learn public policy by doing public policy. This course has 4 learning objectives:

1. Students will be able to explain the policy process using both traditional and critical approaches.

2. Students will be able to discuss policy issues of local, regional, and national importance with an aim to illuminate the complexities of “good governance” in Canada.

3. Students will be able to use practical policy analysis skills to systematically engage with policy problems.

**Instructional methods:**

POLS 321 will comprise interactive lectures and small group discussions. Students are expected to prepare for each class by completing the assigned readings and participating in class discussions. The classes may incorporate some additional learning technologies that will contribute to student learning and understanding as well as providing source material for class discussion and debate. Several guests with subject expertise will be invited to engage with the class and contribute to policy discussions. All class content will be delivered synchronously and in person.

**Learning Materials**

**Lydia Miljan, Public Policy in Canada. An Introduction (8th Ed.), Don Mills, Oxford University Press, 2022.** Other learning materials will be posted to the myCourses page.

**Helpful Policy Websites**

Atlantic Provinces Economic Council – [https://www.apec-econ.ca/](https://www.apec-econ.ca/)
Canada West Foundation – [http://cwf.ca/](http://cwf.ca/)
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – [https://www.policyalternatives.ca/](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/)
C.D. Howe Institute – [https://www.cdhowe.org/](https://www.cdhowe.org/)
Institute of Public Administration of Canada – [https://www.ipac.ca/](https://www.ipac.ca/)
Yellowhead Institute – [https://yellowheadinstitute.org/](https://yellowheadinstitute.org/)
ADD/DROP dates

Winter Term:  Last day to add/drop classes – January 17, 2023
    Last day to drop with a refund– January 24, 2023
    Last day to drop without a refund – March 7, 2023

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Provided is the Course Schedule and Reading Assignments that outlines the topics to be
addressed and accompanying required readings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part I: Understanding Public Policy</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 0 (January 4ᵗʰ)</td>
<td>Course outline and introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1 (January 9, 11)</td>
<td><strong>The Policy Cycle/Policy Context Part 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Miljan, chapter 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leckey (2022), “Robust public debate needed on use of notwithstanding clause”</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Course Outline Confirmation and Autobiography due Jan 9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 (January 16, 18)</td>
<td><strong>The Context of Policy-Making in Canada (Part 2 – w/ Julia Rodgers)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Miljan, chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 (January 23, 25)</td>
<td><strong>Theories of Public Policy/Problem Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miljan, chapter 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cairney (2013), “Power and Ideas – podcast and blog”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 (January 30, Feb 1)</td>
<td>Agenda Setting &amp; Policy Formation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://doi.org/10.1300/J014v25n01_07">https://doi.org/10.1300/J014v25n01_07</a></td>
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<td>on Track: A Multiple Streams Framework Analysis of High-</td>
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<td>Frequency Rail Policy in Canada.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Practical Policy Assignment Part 1 is due January 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 (February 6, 8)</td>
<td>Policy Design, Instruments and Implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ramesh &amp; Howlett (2009), “Policy Instruments” (provided on</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Degenerative Politics: Poverty Policy Designs in Newfoundland and Quebec.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6 (February 13, 15)</td>
<td>Policy Evaluation</td>
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<td>persuasion and compulsion: The case of COVID-19 vaccination</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in Canada.</td>
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<td>Part II: Policy Fields</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 27-March 3</td>
<td><strong>Reading Break – no class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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</table>
| Week 10 (March 20, 22) | **Climate Change and Environmental Policy (w/Prof. Amy Janzwood)**  
[https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/brownjwa28&i=338](https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/brownjwa28&i=338)  
IRPP (podcast), “[Rapid changes and transformations: The future of Canada’s energy transition](https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/09/26/decolonizing-clean-energy-policy-in-canada/)” |
| Week 11 (March 27, 29) | **Policing and Governance (w/Harry Critchley)**  
[https://doi.org/10.1111/capa.12448](https://doi.org/10.1111/capa.12448)  
Jones et al. (2022), Chapter 1 of “[Defunding the Police: Defining the Way Forward for HRM](https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/09/26/decolonizing-clean-energy-policy-in-canada/)”  
**Practical Policy Assignment Part 3 is Due March 29** |
| Week 12 (April 3, 5) | **Urban Planning and Housing Policy**  
[https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758211041120](https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758211041120)  
Pitter (2021), “[We need to heal traumatized urban landscapes – and people – after COVID](https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/09/26/decolonizing-clean-energy-policy-in-canada/)” |
| Easter Monday – no class April 10 |                                                                                     |
| Week 13 (April 12) | **Wrap-up class**                                                                  |
| Mid-April TBD     | **Take-Home Exam**                                                                 |
## Method of Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Final Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Outline Confirmation &amp; Autobiography</td>
<td>January 9, 2023</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Policy Assignment: Part I - <em>Problem Identification and Definition</em></td>
<td>January 30, 2023</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Policy Assignment: Part II - <em>Analysis and Identification of Policy Options</em></td>
<td>February 22, 2023</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practical Policy Assignment: Part III - <em>Development of a Memorandum to Cabinet</em></td>
<td>March 29, 2023</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>Assessed Throughout Term</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Term Take-Home Exam</td>
<td>Mid-April 2023 - TBD</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</table>

All assignments to be submitted on myCourses by 4:59pm on the day that they are due.
Assignment Details

All assignments should be submitted electronically via myCourses. If you have any questions about how to submit your assignment, please consult this link.

Course Outline Confirmation and Autobiography
January 9, 2023 – 5%

Please confirm that you have read the entire course syllabus and accept the course syllabus as our learning contract.

This Assignment, which should be presented in paragraph form and be no longer than one page, should ideally address the following:

1. Name, preferred pronouns, number of years in University
2. Where are you from?
3. What contribution do you want to make to your community, society, family, etc? Why are these contributions important?
4. Why are you taking this course?
5. What are your expectations for POLS 321?
6. Any particular issues/topics/public policy issues you would like to see addressed?
7. What media story (newspaper, radio, television or social media) related to public policy have you been following recently? Summarize it in a paragraph.

This assignment is pass/fail (i.e. provided you complete it, you will receive full marks).

Practical Policy Assignment

Practical Policy Assignment: Part I – Problem Identification and Definition
January 30, 2023 – 15%

Part I of the Practical Policy Assignment asks you to record a “podcast” where you define a topical public policy problem or opportunity and provide a clear concise summary of the issue, e.g., who, what, when, where, why and how.

The thematic public policy area that your policy problem (or opportunity) falls under is your choice, but if the problem or opportunity does not emerge from one of the thematic public policy areas covered in class, you must briefly explain its pertinence as a public policy issue in Canada.

The podcast can be no longer than 3 minutes long, and you should express your ideas in a manner that is clearly understood and logically organized (i.e. you should write yourself a script). Please ensure your recording is submitted in .mp3 or .m4a format.
Practical Policy Assignment: Part II – *Analysis and Identification of Policy Options*
February 22, 2023 – 20%

Part II of the Practical Policy Assignment consists of an *Analysis and Identification of Policy Options*. This comprises:

- the nature of the problem being addressed;
- the ways this problem would be broached by the new policy and related programs;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed initiative as well as options for dealing with the problem, and;
- the positive or negative impacts the proposed policy and other options would have on targeted groups, society overall, and any province or region it directly affects;

The expected length is 750 words and you should express your ideas in a manner that are clearly understood and logically organized. It is recommended that you use the problem/opportunity you defined in Part I, but you can switch to a new topic area.

Practical Policy Assignment: Part III – *Development of a Memorandum to Cabinet which includes a Recommendation*
March 29, 2023 – 25%

Part III of the Practical Policy Assignment builds on parts 1 and 2 and consists of *the Development of a Memorandum to Cabinet which includes a Recommendation*. The Memorandum should focus on a recommended policy option.

This assignment comprises the following:

**Background**

- Provide a description of background to current situation. This should be a concise, factual statement of events that have led to the current situation.

**Current Objective**

- Describe the current situation. That is, there must be issues related to the current situation that have become the impetus for this issue. **Be sure to include the legislative context that this issue falls within.**

**Evaluation**

- State the criteria that will be used to evaluate whether the desired outcomes will be attained.

**Key Issues**
- Identify key issues such as:
  - timing issues related to meeting certain government, department, or other deadlines;
  - legislative and/or regulatory changes that may arise from the results of the action;
  - transitional issues that may result from the outcomes of the action; and,
  - stakeholder expectations

In some instances, there may be only one or two key issues and in other instances there may be several issues.

Consultation

- Describe any consultations that will have to take place. The stakeholders consulted should be listed, along with their positions and reasoning behind their positions. The type of consultation should be noted, for example, public meetings, focus groups, invitation to stakeholders, advertisements, etc.

Assessment of Alternatives

- Identify different options that have been considered to achieve the same outcome. Show the pros and cons of each option against the pre-established evaluation criteria (e.g., effectiveness, efficiency, cost/benefit, stakeholder reaction, ease of implementation). Based on this analysis, select the preferred option and provide the rationale. This should be based on the evaluation criteria outlined above. There should be at least two alternatives, and four will most often be the most that can be dealt with practically in one submission. Do not expect to find a perfect policy alternative.

Proposed Action and Timing

- Set out the preferred alternative and the action plan for carrying it out. The proposed action and timing may be dependent on many factors, including the type of action being requested and the possible outcomes from this action.

Benefits and Liabilities

- Describe the benefits and liabilities of the proposed course of action.

Financial Impact

- This section should identify the financial implications of the action itself and any financial implications that may be incurred from decisions or policy direction derived from the action.

Other Issues
- Any other issues that may have been considered too minor for the “Key Issues” section and have not been included elsewhere may be included in this section. Consideration may be given to actions that may need to be considered in the future or for other groups, programs, etc.

**Recommendation**

- The recommendation should concisely summarize what is being asked for approval.

**This Memorandum should be no longer than 2000 words (excluding references).**

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**End of Term Take Home Exam**

**TBD** Mid-April 2023

25%

The Final Exam will be a take-home practical assignment designed to test the skills and content you have learned throughout the course. You will be given a policy problem based on one of the lectures you have received in the second half of the class, and your task will be to produce a 1500 word briefing note on the topic (structured in the same way as the Memorandum to Cabinet assignment in Part III). You will have a 48 hour window to complete the assignment. The assignment will be open-book. **All sources must be cited in correct APA format. The exam must be completed individually. Any evidence of collaboration on this exam will be considered as plagiarism.**

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**Attendance**

Assessed Throughout the Term – 10%

Attendance sheets must be signed during each class as these will be used to determine students’ attendance grades.

Note:

1. Please do not sign the attendance sheet on behalf of someone else.

2. Students may only sign the attendance sheet if they attend the entire class.

3. Punctuality is expected as a courtesy to other students and to the instructor.

POLS 321 is a combination of lecture and discussions. Course sessions are conducted with the expectation that students attend classes having reading all assigned materials in advance and are prepared to discuss materials. **We will, as a class, set norms during the first class session that will be in place for the rest of the semester.**
Students should strive to be knowledgeable of current affairs as they to relate government and public policy management, and be willing to engage in discussions of contemporary relevance.

**Grading of Written Work**

This class will be graded using the McGill numerical grading scale as seen below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Numerical Scale of Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>85 - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>80 - 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>75 - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>70 - 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>65 - 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>60 - 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>55 - 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>50 - 54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (Fail)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 - 49%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The following criteria will also be used in the grading of written assignments. A paper that receives an A grade will contain:

**Thesis**
- Clearly stated, creative, original and insightful.
- Presents a Point of View (POV) based on a critical analysis of factual evidence and relevant theory.

**Background and Course Content**
- Contains relevant background information.
- Draws upon course text and lecture material.

**Research, Supporting Data and Analysis**
- Refers to a full range of relevant current resources (course materials, external sources), and other research.
- Uses relevant data, analyses, and conclusions.
- Refers to legislation or official policy whenever possible
- Includes a critical analysis of the sources used.

**Conclusions**
- Are clear, creative, and insightful.
- Contain a clear, cogent reiteration of and support for the central points of the thesis.
Writing Style, Essay Structure Grammar and Mechanics
- Essay is very well organized.
- Central ideas are presented very clearly, cogently, and effectively.
- There is critical analysis and integration of ideas throughout the paper.
- Type-written.
- Double spaced.
- In 12-point Times New Roman font.
- A one-inch wide margins on all four sides.
- Inclusive of page numbers.
- Submitted in .docx format.
- Inclusive of a separate title page.
- All assignments must include citations in correct APA format.
Course Communications & Policies

Submission of Written Work: Please endeavour to submit your work on time. If something comes up that impacts your ability to submit on time, **talk to me as soon as possible before the assignment is due.**

Ten percent (10%) will be deducted from the final grade of any assignment received 24 hours after the assignment is due. All assignments (excluding the Final Exam) must be submitted by April 12, otherwise the assignment will be given a 0.

The required format for electronic written submissions is `.docx` and the file name should include the **student’s first name, last name and assignment name.** For example, `john_smith_essay#1` is an acceptable format. The format for recorded submissions is either `.mp3` or `.m4a`.

Inclusive learning environment: As the instructor of this course, I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and/or [Student Accessibility and Achievement](#).

Preferred pronouns: Please send me an email or indicate in your course autobiography if you would like me to refer to you by a different name than the name indicated in your student record or to inform me of your preferred pronouns.

Communications: There are many of you. There is one of me. Below is advice about when and how to email.

- **When to email.** There are times when it is appropriate to email. Check your syllabus, your notes, and the class website. If your question is still not answered, you likely have an important question that should be addressed. If you can explain why you are emailing in one or two sentences, email is probably appropriate. If not, your question will be better served by coming to office hours.
- **Send the email from a valid McGill University email address.** This makes it less likely that your email will end up in my spam folder. As a general rule, I only respond to student emails from valid McGill email addresses.
- **POLS 321 should appear at the start of the subject line.** For example, “POLS 321: Materials for Office Hours Appointment.” The subject line is important, because I scan my inbox for emails with the course code in them. This allows me to prioritize responding to student emails.
- **Response time.** During regular business hours (9 a.m. Monday through 5 p.m. Friday), I will try to respond to emails within 48 hours. If you do not hear back within that timeframe, please feel free to follow up with me. I do not regularly check or answer emails during evenings or weekends. If you email during those times, I might be delayed in responding to you.
Office hours: According to the Cornell University Learning Strategies Centre: Office hours are “times when you can meet with your professors and teaching assistants to discuss the material being presented in class or other related interests you have. Course-related discussions include asking for extra help, seeking clarification of material presented in class and following up on aspects of the class you find compelling. In addition, students also discuss majors and programs of study, and graduation requirements, as well as summer internships, graduate schools, campus events, and much more.” I will be available for office hours on Mondays between 2 and 4pm in Leacock 416. Please feel free to stop by!

Language of submission: “In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.” (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté, sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue. » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 21 janvier 2009)

Academic Integrity: “McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See McGill’s guide to academic honesty for more information).

Assessment: The University Student Assessment Policy exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads.

Basic needs: If you have difficulty affording food or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, and believe that these circumstances may affect your performance in this course, I encourage you to contact the Dean of Students, who can connect you with support services. If you feel comfortable doing so, please let me know as well so we can discuss how I can best support your learning.

Charter of Students’ Rights: Additional policies governing academic issues that affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students’ Rights.

Extraordinary circumstances: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Recording policy: I will notify you if part of a class is being recorded. By remaining in classes that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in myCourses to students registered in the course. Please consult me if you have concerns about privacy and we can discuss possible measures that can be taken.
Wellness: Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when you need it; wellness resources are available on campus, off campus, and online.

Workload management skills: If you are feeling overwhelmed by your academic work and/or would like to further develop your time and workload management skills, don’t hesitate to seek support from Student Services.