COURSE SYLLABUS

The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley

College of Liberal Arts, Department of Public Affairs and Security Studies

Master of Public Administration Program (MPA)

PAFF 6314 – Formulation of Public Policy,

Summer Module 2: June 20 – August 08, 2018

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: George Atisa, Ph.D
Office: College of Liberal Arts, ELABN 229 A
Location: Online – Through Blackboard Learn
Office Hours: Online – Monday Through Friday.
If you have urgent questions, feel free to send me an email.

Office Telephone: 956-665-2545/3841 (Always leave a message with phone number and will get back with you on a timely fashion
E-mail: george.atisa@utrgv.edu

Generally I will respond to emails within [24 hours] of receiving them. If I plan to be away from my computer for more than a couple of days, I will let you know in advance. For the online classes, any technical questions can be referred to Blackboard Support. Assignments, tests and exams will all be administered through Blackboard. I will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete—typically [3 days] days following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Blackboard home page under the link to this course.

Coaches:

Please print a copy of this syllabus for handy reference.

Whenever there is a question about what assignments are due, please remember this syllabus is considered to be the ruling document.

REQUIRED READING: Students are required to read all materials available at the Blackboard Learn site for this course on https://mycourses.utrgv.edu

Course Textbook
American Public Policy: Promise and Performance, by B. Guy Peters, Tenth Edition About $120 new or $50.00 used from Amazon.
Words of Welcome

Welcome to (PAFF 6314). I look forward to working with you in this class. Dr. Borrego developed the first version of this syllabus. Public policy is how government solves problems. There is no shortage of problems that need solutions. There are many rational solutions to the nation’s problems. Elected officials determine the solutions. These are the legislative bodies, Congress, state legislatures, county commissioners, and city councils. There are also elected executive positions, President, Governor, Mayor, and County Judge. The political perspective on policy varies from the extreme left to the extreme right along with libertarians. Many of the assignments allow you to develop policy alternatives from wherever your own political beliefs are. I want you to feel comfortable discussing solutions from your own political beliefs and to be tolerant of your colleagues who may have different political beliefs.

In MPA programs and in many university classes we teach the rational solution. I also would like you to appreciate the political process. Depending on the organization where you work, you may work for the executive leadership of both parties. I do hope that you will enjoy the discussions and the assignments.

Many of you have been in my previous classes – welcome back. For those we are meeting online for the first time, welcome. Please check with my previous students to see how I conduct classes. If you have any questions/problems please ask before the deadlines. Once the deadlines have passed, we do not have much discretion.

Your Academic Coaches are wonderful. They have been especially selected because of their background and experience. They have my complete and full support. Please feel free to ask them any questions and for any clarifications you need.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a class on the formulation of public policy. The class will examine the structure of public policymaking. The class will analyze five broad policy areas. The class is designed for you to develop competencies in public policy formulation.

Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites for this course. Some familiarity with basic concepts in public policy will be helpful for coverage of the analytic components of the material.

Students who have not had recent exposure to policy issues may find it helpful to refer to an introductory policy text, finance, economics or general public administration.

Course Structure
This course is delivered completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. To facilitate class interaction, forum discussions and all other assignments including - classmate responses, papers, projects, and quizzes/examinations submitted for review by the Faculty Member and the assigned instructional coach are due by Tuesday evenings of each week.
**Course Objectives**

This is a class on the formulation of public policy. The assignments are designed to have you develop public policy formulation competencies in each policy area. Each assignment is a mini-case study where you help a just-elected Member of Congress, who is taking you to Washington D.C., prepare him/her to be effective in developing public policies to help the constituents in her/his district.

Upon completion of this course you will be able to:

1. Design and develop an action plan for your Member of Congress on the structure of the public policy process which will allow her/him to be effective Legislator in Washington D.C.

2. Design and develop an action plan for your Member of Congress on Education Policy to effectively represent his/her district.

3. Design and develop an action plan for your Member of Congress on Social Security and Welfare policy.

4. Design and develop an action plan for your Member of Congress on National Defense.

5. Design and develop an action plan for your Member of Congress on Health Care Policies.

6. Design and develop an action plan for your Member of Congress on Energy and Environmental Policies.

7. Design and develop an action plan for your Member of Congress to navigate the Federal Budget Process.

**TOPICS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Topic 1:** The Structure of Policymaking in American Government – Chapter 2

- Objective: At the end of Week 1, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze and recommend an action plan on how to navigate the policymaking structure for your Member of Congress

**Topic 2:** Education Policy – Chapter 13

- Objective: At the end of Week 2, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan for your Member of Congress to effectively represent her/his district’s education constituents.

**Topic 3:** Income Maintenance: Social Security and Welfare – Chapter 12

- Objective: At the end of Week 3, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend policy positions for your Member of Congress on either Social Security or Income Maintenance Programs such as Aid to Family with Dependent Children.

**Topic 4:** Protective Policies: Defense and Law Enforcement – Chapter 15
Objective: At the end of Week 4, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan on defense policy for Member of Congress.

**Topic 5: Health Care Policies – Chapter 11**

- **Objective:** At the end of Week 5, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan on health care policies for your Member of Congress.

**Topic 6: Energy and the Environment – Chapter 14**

- **Objective:** At the end of Week 6, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan energy and the environment for your Member of Congress.

**Topic 7: Budgeting: Allocation and Public Policy – Chapter 7**

- **Objective:** At the end of Week 7, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan on how to effectively represent her district for your Member of Congress, when she gets to Washington D.C.

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (https://my.utrgv.edu/); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades.

**The Online Weekly Schedule**

Electronic weeks: Begin on Wednesday and end on Tuesday.

Day 1 - Wednesday  
Day 2 - Thursday  
Day 3 - Friday  
Day 4 - Saturday  
Day 5 - Sunday  
Day 6 - Monday  
Day 7 - Tuesday

**Where to Go to Class: Your Online Course Areas**

**Example:**

**Main:** This is the main forum for the class and is where discussion is conducted. It has read-and-write access for everyone.

**Chat-Room:** This is a read-and-write access forum. It is designed as a place to discuss issues not related to the course content. This is the forum to which we will send our bios.

**Course-Materials:** This is a read-only forum, which means you can read messages here but cannot send any. This is where I will post the course syllabus and materials.
CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - Attendance

Please see the attendance policies included in the first message posted in the Main forum.

Participation

Participation is very important online. You will be expected to participate in several different discussions and to contribute to substantive discussions. This is a required part of your grade. This generally means your answer to the discussion board question of the week and your response to two of your colleague’s postings that should be about 100-200 words each.

Please note that both quantity and quality are important considerations when it comes to participation. For example, a message, which says simply, ”I agree,” does not constitute participation, because it does not add anything of substance to the discussion.

In order to earn full participation points, you must add something of substance to the discussion, this would consist of new ideas, your perspectives, pointed follow-up questions, etc. and are about 100-200 words in length. You will find it is much easier to keep up with an online class when you are logging in and participating regularly.

Participation and Discussion Question Grading

Read the Discussion Board Rubric

Final Week Requirements

Week 7 is the same as the other six weeks

I expect your discussion question responses to reflect critical thought. Whenever possible, please try to relate the course content to real-world applications from your work experience.

Attachments Please do not send assignments via email as attachments.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted

Academic Integrity

By virtue of membership in the University’s academic community, students accept a responsibility to abide by the Student Code of Academic Integrity. A link to the Code can be found on the Student Life and Transition Services Web site or by clicking the following URL:

What is the process for resolving accusations of academic dishonesty?


Confidentiality and Proprietary Information

One of the cornerstones of the University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley online learning model is the practical application of theoretical concepts. You are encouraged to share your personal and professional experiences as a means to integrate knowledge by reflecting on its application. However, it is important to note that we all are bound by confidentiality in this class. To assure that we can have a free and open discussion in which you may elect to discuss your company and its policies and procedures as they apply to the course material, I expect each person to respect the confidentiality of what your classmates are willing to share with us. At the same time, I ask that each of you exercise good judgment in what you choose to share and avoid disclosing non-public or competitively-sensitive information.

As a rule students and faculty members must not share present or past employer information that is considered to be proprietary, confidential, companysensitive, or protected trade secrets. Students are encouraged to examine their organization's limitations on sharing information externally.

Students and faculty members may appropriately choose to illustrate lessons from their experience that might challenge these boundaries, without identifying specific employers or individuals by name.

If you have any questions about any of the information contained in this syllabus, or about any other aspect of this class, please do not hesitate to ask!

GRADING FEEDBACK

Feedback on your discussion board participation and on your assignments will be provided through the rubric used for grading. It is helpful to look at the rubrics before you begin your assignments. That way you know how it is being graded.

Grading Formula

Grades are assigned on a four-point scale to correspond to A-F grades. In graduate classes there are no D grades. The discussion board participation will be worth 20% of your total class grade. The assignments will be worth 40% of your total class grade. Policy Research will be 40% of the total grade. The grading center will track your averages but please understand that because of the formula, the grade won’t be accurate until the final week.
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<td>3.51 – 4.0</td>
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<td>80% - 89%</td>
<td>2.75 – 3.5</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
<td>2.0 - 2.74</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>69% and Below</td>
<td>Below 2.0</td>
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**Incomplete Grades** - Incomplete grades will not be awarded.

**Point Values for Course Assignments**

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**Week One Assignments**

**Title:** The Structure of Policymaking in American Government

• **Objective:** At the end of Week 1, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze and recommend an action plan on how to navigate the policymaking structure for your Member of Congress

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Scenario:** You are a recent MPA graduate who worked on a campaign for your Representative to Congress. You are from a western state. The Congresswoman’s district has a two large cities and a large rural population. There are many senior citizens in her district. She knows that you
have completed your MPA and know the federal public policy process. She is taking you with her to the Capital. She has asked you to brief her the structure of policy making. She is very popular in her district, but is not knowledgeable about public policy. (If it is helpful, you can make her a member of whatever party you want.) (The scenario is not included in your submission) Late assignments will not be accepted.

**Cover Sheet:** Your name, the assignment, the date, and the class number (This page does not count as part of the 3-5 page assignment. The 3-5-page assignment should be a standard single spaced, 12 pt. font, and normal margins.) Since all the material used is from the readings, you do not have to cite the material. If you use material from outside the required readings, then use APA style citations.

**Summary:** Summarize the following from the readings: (Include the title e.g. Federalism, but not my discussion. Delete my part and add your summary.

1. **Federalism** – think about all the recent discussions of state’s rights in the news and the roles of the federal vs. state governments (one of the latest was in Nevada over grazing rights for ranchers). Surveys show that only one in five Americans trust the federal government to do the right thing.

2. **Separation of Powers** – Members of Congress want to represent their constituents and bring programs ($) to their districts. To do this they need 50%+1 from the authorization and appropriation committees. The President wants to fulfill the campaign promises. If one party controls the Presidency and both Houses of Congress, then it is easy to pass legislation – think of the Affordable Care Act. The U.S. seems to like divided government, which makes getting programs approved much more difficult. While listening to TV, it seems that there is a wall between the parties, in reality there is much more cooperation that goes on. The party in the minority works with other legislators in the majority to get the programs that they need for their constituents. Once a program has been authorized and Congress has implemented the money, it is the executive branch that implements it. The executive branch doesn’t always implement the program in the way that the legislators want it implemented. This has led to earmarks. This is a way for the legislators to say this program/money is intended for my district and it takes the discretion away from the executive branch and the bureaucracy.

3. **Subgovernments** – This is the area of the iron triangle – interest groups & Congress & the Executive Branch. Members of Congress who get elected try to get on committees who represent the interests of their constituents, education, biofuels, agriculture, banking, environment, business, manufacturing, defense, etc. There are advocacy/interest groups that represent the same interests.

4. **Public and private** – What work should be done by government employees and what work can be done for the private sector. What can be privatized, outsourced, and done by contractors? Should the government run federal and state prisons or should the private sector run these prisons? The same can be said about many other government functions. This is an area that is changing.

**Analysis:** This is a big picture analysis. This means that you are analyzing the broad structure of how an institution functions. Analyze the material in your summary and for each section discuss what the Congresswoman should know about each.

**Recommendations:** Based on your summary and analysis of the structure of the policymaking, develop your top five recommendations for your Member of Congress do when she gets to the Capital.
Assignments Due Dates

Due Day 3 (Friday): Discussion Board – Introduce Yourself Discussion

Introduce Yourself discussion post – Not for a grade.

Write a self-introduction describing you and your life. Be sure to address the each of the following:
  • Background (for example where you grew up)
  • Academic / Career Goals (your intended college major, career aspirations)
  • Hobbies and Interests (things you enjoy doing when you're not working, studying or sleeping)
  • The Most Interesting or Unusual Thing About You (an interesting life experience, special talent, or anything that makes differentiates you)

Due Day 4 (Saturday): Discussion Board (for a grade) Answer the question and respond thoughtfully to two of your colleague’s postings.

Question: What do you see as the most pressing public policy issue for your country and why?

Due Day 7 (Tuesday): Assignment 1: Described above

Week Two Assignments

Research – Policy Analysis

Week 2 to Week 6 – Policy Research and Analysis. Prepare 10 to 15 slides of powerpoint with voice-over on either child welfare policy or chemical policy.

Week 2 Assignments
Title: Education Policy
• Objective: At the end of Week 2, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan for your Member of Congress to effectively represent her/his district’s education constituents.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 2: Education Policy

Scenario: You are a recent MPA graduate who worked on a campaign for your Representative to Congress. The Congressman’s district has a two large cities and a large rural population. One of the large cities has a university with 15,000 students. He knows that you have completed your MPA and know the federal public policy process. He is taking you with him to the Capital. (If it is helpful, you can make him a member of whatever party you want.)

Cover Sheet: Your name, the assignment, the date, and the class number (This page does not count as part of the 3-5 page assignment. The 3-5-page assignment should be a standard single spaced, 12 pt. font, and normal margins.) Since all the material used is from the readings, you do
not have to cite the material. If you use material from outside the required readings, then use APA style citations. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**Summary:** Summarize the following from the readings - Chapter 13: Education Policy

2. Local Financing and the Federal Role: Describe how education gets funded.
3. Higher Education: Describe the federal government’s role in higher education.
4. Elementary and Secondary Education: Describe the federal role in elementary and secondary education.
5. Issues of Education Policy: From the issues in this section choose and describe the three issues that the most important to your Congressman’s district. You can choose either elementary and secondary education or higher education. If it helps, you can make the Congressman of any party that you want

**Analysis:** For each of the three issues that you have chosen in the summary, describe how each affects the constituents of the Congressman’s district.

**Recommendations:** Based on your summary and analysis of the education issues, recommend a plan of action with five action items for your Member of Congress to do when he gets to the Capital

**Assignments Due Dates**

**Due Day 4 (Saturday): Discussion Board: Answer the following question and respond thoughtfully to two of your colleagues postings.**

Question: You can use either K-12 or higher education. What is the biggest problem that you see in either K-12 or higher education today?

**Due Day 7 (Tuesday): Assignment 2: Described above**

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**Week Three Assignments**

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**Week 3 Assignments**

**Title:** Income Maintenance: Social Security and Welfare

• Objective: At the end of Weeks 3, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend policy positions for your Member of Congress on either Social Security or Income Maintenance Programs such as Aid to Family with Dependent Children.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

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**Assignment 3: Income Maintenance: Social Security and Welfare**

**Scenario:** You are a recent MPA graduate who worked on a campaign for your Representative to Congress. The Congresswoman’s district has a two large cities and a large rural population. It is in a part of the country where winters are very mild. There are many senior citizens in her district including many snowbirds or seniors who move from northern states for the winter. There is also a large population of constituents who are receiving many government services. She knows that
you have completed your MPA and know the federal public policy process. She is taking you with her to the Capital. **For this assignment choose either social security or welfare for the issue, but not both.** She is very popular in her district, but is not knowledgeable about public policy. (If it is helpful, you can make her a member of whatever party you want and choose a region of the country that broadly fits the description above.)

**Cover Sheet:** Your name, the assignment, the date, and the class number (This page does not count as part of the 3-5 page assignment. The 3-5-page assignment should be a standard single spaced, 12 pt. font, and normal margins.) Since all the material used is from the readings, you do not have to cite the material. If you use material from outside the required readings, then use APA style citations. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

**Summary:** Summarize the following from the readings:

**Social Security**
1. **Social Insurance** – Describe what social security is and how it is financed.
2. **Problems in Social Security** – describe each problem in this section.
3. **Social Security and the Economy** – Describe how social security affects the economy.
4. **Financing Social Security** – With the number of people receiving social security increasing dramatically, paying for social security becomes very important. Describe how social security is financed and the pressures that it faces.
5. **Reforming Social Security** – How to reform social security has been a political issue for many years.

**Income Maintenance**
1. **Means-Tested Programs** – Describe what means-tested programs are and what means-testing means.
2. **AFDC and the Origins of Welfare** – AFDC is the largest means-tested programs. Describe what program is and the issues associated with AFDC.
4. **The 1996 Reforms and PRWORA** – Describe how PRWORA reformed the welfare system including how to implement workfare.
5. **Alternatives for Further Reform of Income Support** – Describe the alternatives for reform of income support.

**Analysis:** For either social security or income maintenance, identify and explain how each of the items that you have discussed in your summary affects and is important to the constituency of your Congresswoman.

**Recommendations:** Based on your summary and analysis of either issue, recommend 5 policy positions on your issue for the Congresswoman when she gets to the Capital. These policy positions should represent the constituents in her district who elected her. She faces re-election in two years.

**Assignment Due Dates**

**Due Day 4 (Saturday): Discussion Board:** Answer the following question and respond thoughtfully to two of your colleague’s postings.

*Question:* What do you see as the most pressing issue for social security or what is the most pressing issue for welfare programs and what are your suggestions for solving that issue?

**Due Day 7 (Tuesday): Assignment 3:** Described above.
Week 4 Assignments

Title: Protective Policies: Defense and Law Enforcement

• Objective: At the end of Week 4, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan on defense policy for Member of Congress.

Assignments

Assignment 4: Protective Policies: Defense and Law Enforcement

Summary: Summarize the following from the readings:

1. Defense Policy – describe the difficulties of developing defense policy.
2. The Environment of Defense Policy – describe the context for developing defense policy. There are five areas to describe. You are answering the following questions: who are our enemies from whom we need to be protected, who will help us, how can science help, are citizens tired of war, how should the military be structured?
3. Problems of Defense Policy – There are several problems in developing defense policy; nuclear weapons: how many and do we really use them; many of the tools of defense, aircraft carriers, airplanes, tanks, etc. are expensive – how does this country ensure we are getting the best at a price the country can afford; it is best to prevent conflict – how do we do that; we no longer have a draft – what does that mean; what should we expect of our military personnel; what does our military mean to our country’s role in the world; what role does military spending play in our economy?

Analysis: Analyze and describe what is most important for your member of Congress to know about defense policy and explain why. Keep in mind the constituents and needs of your district. (If it makes it easier for you, you can make the member of Congress of any party that you want. Also you can change the makeup of the member of Congress’s district to support an interest that you have about defense policy.)

Recommendations: Based on your summary and analysis develop a 5 action items on National Defense Policy your member of Congress should do when he gets to the Capital.

Assignment Due Dates

Due Day 4: (Saturday): Discussion Board: Answer the following question and respond thoughtfully to two of your colleague’s postings.

Question: What do you see as the most dangerous threat this country is facing and what should be done about it?

Due Day 7: (Tuesday): Assignment 4: Described above
Week 5 Assignments

Assignment 5: Health Care Policy

Summary: Summarize the following from the readings:
1. Overview or the introduction to the chapter.
2. Problems in Health Care: The Congresswoman should have a good understanding of problems in health care.
   a. Access to Medical Care:
   b. Cost:
   c. Quality:
3. Health Care Regulation: The federal government also affects health care through regulation
   a. Hospital and Physician Costs:
   b. Health Care Quality:
   c. Drug Regulation:
4. Canadian-Style Comprehensive Coverage: many people would like the U.S. to offer a single-payer health system. There are also many who are very opposed to the idea.
5. Medicare
6. Medicaid

Analysis: For each of the areas 2-6, determine how each affects the constituents of the Congresswoman’s district.

Recommendation: Design a plan for the top 3-5 top action items on health care policy that you will recommend the Congresswoman will do when she gets to the Capital.

Assignment Due Dates

Due Day 4 (Saturday): Discussion Board: Answer the following question and respond thoughtfully to two of your colleague’s postings.

Question: In terms of health care, what do you see as the most important needs for people in their 20’s, people in their 30’s – 40’s & 50’s with children, and retirees. What policies would you develop to solve these needs?

Due Day 7 (Tuesday): Assignment 5: Described above.
Week 6 Assignments

**Title:** Energy and the Environment

At the end of Week 6, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan on energy and the environment for your Member of Congress.

**Assignments**

Assignment 6: Energy and the Environment

**Summary:** Summarize the following from the readings:

1. **Energy** – Briefly describe the energy options and the problems associated with each:
   a. Oil
   b. Natural gas
   c. Coal
   d. Nuclear power
   e. Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources
   f. The Formation of Energy Policy

2. **Environment:** Briefly describe:
   a. Environmental policies
   b. The Politics of Pollution
   c. Environmental legislation:
      i. Water pollution
      ii. Air pollution
      iii. Environmental impact statements
      iv. Toxic wastes
      v. Implementation of Environmental Controls
      vi. Alternatives to Regulation

**Analysis:** From your summary identify 5 of the most important elements of energy or environment policy issues that are important to the constituents of the Congressman’s district and explain why.

**Recommendations:** Evaluate your summary and analysis and recommend a 5 point action plan for what your member of Congress should do about energy and the environment when he gets to DC.

**Assignment Due Dates**

**Due Day 4: (Saturday): Discussion Board:** Answer the following questions and respond thoughtfully to two of your colleague’s postings.

Question: What do you see as the:

1. Most important energy problem facing your country and why? What do you see as the best solution?
2. What do you see as the most important environmental problem and why? What do you see as the best solution?
Due Day 7: (Tuesday): Assignment 6:

1. As described above.

2. **Powerpoint Policy Analysis Assignment from Week 2**
   
   Policy Research and Analysis. Prepare 10 to 15 slides of powerpoint with voice-over on either child welfare policy or chemical policy.

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**Week Seven Assignments**

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**Week 7 Assignments**

**Title:** Budgeting: Allocation and Public Policy

- **Objective:** At the end of Week 7, you should be able to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and recommend an action plan for your Member of Congress, when she gets to Washington D.C.

**Assignments**

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Assignment 7: Budgeting: Allocation and Public Policy

**Summary:** Summarize the following from the readings:

1. Characteristics of the Federal Budget:
   - **An Executive Budget**
   - **The Line Item**
   - **An Annual Budget**

2. The Budget Cycle
   - Setting the Parameters: The President and His Friends
   - The Agency Requests
   - Executive Review
   - Congressional Action
   - Budget Execution
   - Budget Control

3. Problems in the Budget Process
   - The Deficit
   - Uncontrollable Expenditures
   - Supplemental Appropriations
   - Earmarks
   - The rebirth of program budgeting.

**Analysis:** Your member of Congress has to provide for programs for his/her district. That means that s/he has to find ways to bring resources/money to her/his district. How does s/he do this considering each fiscal year deficit and the national debt? From your summary identify 5 of the most important elements of the budgeting process that s/he needs to know explain why.

**Recommendations:** Based on your summary and analysis of the structure of the policymaking, what are your top five recommendations for your Member of Congress to navigate the Budget Process in terms of providing services/programs/resources to her/his district?

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**Assignment Due Dates**
**Due Day 4: (Saturday): Discussion Board:** Answer the following question and respond thoughtfully to two of your colleague's postings.

Question: Think about the first six weeks of the class. Synthesize what you learned from the readings, the discussion board discussions and your professional experience. Knowing all of that, what would you advise the MPA graduate to know and do when s/he gets to D.C?

**Due Day 6 (Monday): Assignment 7:** Described above.

**Protocols:**

**Classroom Expectations**

The following ground rules will help your work in this course to go much more smoothly. Please carefully review these expectations and follow them.

2. Don’t turn in late assignments. Late submissions will result in a lower grade (will not be accepted).
3. Keep up with the reading. You have quite a few chapters, modules, discussion postings, and e-mail messages to read for the class. Please keep up with the reading. Students who keep up with the reading tend to do much better in this kind of class than those who do not.
4. Don’t miss a quiz. Missed quizzes may not be retaken.
5. Work with others. You are required to make every effort to work effectively and promptly with others in your groups. Fair criticism of your failure to work effectively with others will significantly affect your collaboration and participation grade.

**E-mail**

E-mail will be an integral part of this course. Make sure you:

1. Check your e-mail at least twice per week (more often is better).
2. Be patient. Don’t expect an immediate response when you send a message. Generally, two days is considered reasonable amount of time to receive a reply.
3. Include "Subject" headings: use something that is descriptive and refer to a particular assignment or topic.
4. Be courteous and considerate. Being honest and expressing yourself freely is very important but being considerate of others online is just as important as in the classroom.
5. Make every effort to be clear. Online communication lacks the nonverbal cues that fill in much of the meaning in face-to-face communication.
6. Do not use all caps. This makes the message very hard to read and is considered "shouting." Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation (you may want to compose in a word processor, then cut and paste the message into the discussion or e-mail).
7. Break up large blocks of text into paragraphs and use a space between paragraphs.
8. Sign your e-mail messages.
9. Never assume that your e-mail can be read by no one except yourself; others may be able to read or access your mail. Never send or keep anything that you would not mind seeing on the evening news.

Note: Review the Netiquette and Viruses section below

**Discussion Topics**

Many of the "rules of the road" or protocols that apply to e-mail also apply to the use of discussions. Use the following conventions when composing a discussion posting:

1. During a Discussion assignment, deadlines for posting to and replying will be specified with each assignment. It is a good practice to always check the Discussions multiple times during the week.
2. If you want to send a personal message to the instructor or to another student, use e-mail rather than the discussions (see above E-mail Protocols).
3. Use the appropriate Discussion Topic; don’t post everything on the "Main" Discussion Topic.
5. A helpful hint for use with both discussions and e-mail --- Compose your message in your word-processing application in order to check spelling, punctuation, and grammar -- then copy and paste your composition into e-mail or the discussion. This also saves online time.
6. Everyone should feel free to participate in class and online discussions. Regular and meaningful discussion postings constitute a substantial portion of your grade.
7. Respect each other’s ideas, feelings and experience.
8. Be courteous and considerate. It is important to be honest and to express yourself freely, but being considerate of others is just as important and expected online, as it is in the classroom.
9. Explore disagreements and support assertions with data and evidence.
10. "Subject" headings: use something that is descriptive and refer to a particular assignment or discussion topic when applicable. Some assignments will specify the subject heading.
11. Use the "reply" button rather than the "compose" button if you are replying to someone else’s posting.
12. Do not use postings such as "I agree," "I don’t know either," "Who cares," or "ditto." They do not add to the discussion, take up space on the Discussions, and will not be counted for assignment credit.
13. Avoid posting large blocks of text. If you must, break them into paragraphs and use a space between paragraphs.
14. Use the Technical Discussion topic for assistance with technical issues. Use the Help Discussion topic for questions about course material or assignments. There will be specific discussion topics for particular discussions - pay close attention to the assignment, and post appropriately.

Note: Review the Netiquette, Viruses and Technical Resources sections below.

**Netiquette**

"Netiquette" has evolved to aid us in infusing our electronic communications with some of these missing behavioral pieces. "Emoticons" and other tools have become popular and I encourage their use when it will add to the clarity of your communication.
• :-) happy, pleased
• :-( sad, displeased
• :-O surprised
• >:-| angry

Abbreviate when possible. Examples:

• LOL laugh out loud, "I find this funny"
• ROFL rolling on floor laughing, really funny
• BTW by the way
• *grin* smiling
• IMHO in my humble opinion
• FYI for your info
• Flame antagonistic criticism

Netiquette continues to evolve and I am sure that we will have constant additions to this growing language. The important thing to remember is that all of the "cute" symbols in the world cannot replace your careful choice of words and "tone" in your communication.

Viruses
A virus can spell disaster. Your use of a reputable anti-virus program is a requirement for participation in this course (good ones include McAfee or Norton).

Also, back up your files: "My hard drive crashed." "My modem doesn’t work." "My printer is out of ink." These are today’s equivalents of "My dog ate my homework." And these events really do occur and they are really inconvenient when they do. However, these are not valid excuses for failing to get your work in on time.

Build Rapport
If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you know, building rapport and effective relationships are key to success. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that they can help you find a solution.

Complete Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Blackboard unless otherwise instructed. Assignments should be submitted by the given deadline. All discussion assignments should be completed by the assignment due date and time. Late or missing discussion assignments may affect the participants’ completion of the course.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus:
Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions when Online evaluations will be available. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades.

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:

As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

COURSE DROPS:

According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.
Technical Resources

For specific problems in any of the areas below or for further information go to the corresponding link for assistance.

- [https://my.utrgv.edu/web/myutrgv/home](https://my.utrgv.edu/web/myutrgv/home) will help find UTRGV resources
- [UTRGV Help Desk](https://my.utrgv.edu/web/myutrgv/home) – You can also call the Service Desk at 956-665-2020.
- [http://www.utrgv.edu/it/](http://www.utrgv.edu/it/) This site provides information on Information Technology issues…