Instructor: Dr. Valerie G. Damasco
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Office hours: By appointment (virtual office hours)
Quercus page: https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/206531

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description
This course explores how policy processes and frameworks need to be evaluated in light of the social context in which they are developed. Factors to be considered include the interplay between public values and expectations and public policy, the implications of cultural diversity and demographic change, and understandings of ethical principles of conduct in public organizations. A related goal is to help students learn how to use empirical research to answer highly contested issues in policy circles and in public life. These objectives are pursued by introducing students to major trends in inequality in Canada, assessing these trends within a comparative context, reflecting on their normative implications, and examining alternative policy responses to these developments. Restricted to 4th-year sociology majors and specialists.

Goals and Learning Objectives
- Critically read, analyze, discuss, and develop arguments pertaining to the social contexts of how policy processes and frameworks are developed.
- Analyze the intersection of how ideas, ideologies, values, expectations, discourses, actors, institutions, and structures influence the policy-making process.
- Apply the theories, frameworks, principles, and concepts from the course to authentic public policy concerns in society and across the world and assess these trends in a comparative perspective.
- Critically analyze a broad range of research studies on major trends in inequality and identify alternative policy responses and collective processes to these developments.
- Develop an understanding of the complexity associated with policy evaluation and the evaluation of such policies on contested issues.

1 The course will be delivered during Eastern Standard Time (EST). Weekly online synchronous classes and assignment deadlines adhere to this time zone.
Prerequisite and Exclusion Criteria
The prerequisite for this course is 1.0 SOC FCE at the 300+ level. Students who do not meet this requirement will be removed without notice. Please note that this course is restricted to 4th-year sociology majors and specialists. Sociology majors cannot take more than 0.5 SOC FCE at the 400 level and Sociology specialists cannot take more than 1.0 SOC FCE at the 400 level without written permission from the Sociology Undergraduate Program Administrator.

Recommended Preparation: SOC214H1 or SOC366H1 or SOC367H1 or SOC365H1

Course Delivery, Structure, and Organization
This online synchronous course is delivered through Quercus with mandatory weekly synchronous online classes on Zoom, Tuesdays from 2:00pm-4:00pm EST.

You will require speakers, microphone, or headphones, video camera, and internet connectivity to participate in weekly synchronous online classes. Please visit this link for information about the recommended minimum specs for technology to facilitate remote learning and financial support to meet these requirements.

Quercus will serve as the Learning Management System (LMS) to facilitate this online synchronous course. All communication and coursework will be delivered online through Quercus and Zoom. The course page on Quercus contains the syllabus, announcements, posted lectures, readings, assignment guidelines, and grades. Moreover, all course information, documents, assignment information, and electronic copies of handouts will be posted on Quercus. We will use Zoom as a platform for weekly online synchronous classes.

Quercus – Accessing the Course Page
Please follow the instructions below to access the SOC478H1S course page on Quercus:
- Go to https://q.utoronto.ca
- Use your UTORid and password to log in.
- Once you have logged in, you will be in your dashboard.
- You should see a course card for each of the courses in which you are enrolled.
- Click on the SOC478H1S course card to access the course.
- If you do not see your courses listed, try activating your UTORid and/or verifying your UTORid

Zoom – Accessing and Connecting to Weekly Online Synchronous Classes
Please follow the instructions below to join weekly online synchronous classes on Zoom:
- Click on the invitation link.
- You will be prompted to download the Zoom plugin.
- Follow the prompts to join the meeting.
- You will be asked to verify if you would like to join the meeting using video from the camera and audio from the microphone on your device.

Course Structure
Each week, what you will see posted under the Modules section in Quercus is a step-by-step process for learning. The folders and associated subfolders will have the same headings weekly to enable you navigate the materials in a sequential and logical manner.
We will learn together through:
- Course materials
- Online synchronous classes which will take place weekly on Zoom.
  - Weekly class discussions will reflect theories, principles, and concepts, and applying them to authentic mental health concerns facing institutions of higher education today.

Each week will contain the following folders and contents in each folder:
(i) WEEK X – Overview of the Week
- Summary of learning outcomes from the previous week.
- Overview and summary of the theme/topic(s) of the current week.
- Learning goals and guidance for the class discussion and/or assignments for current week.
- Intended learning goals for the following week, building from the previous week(s).
- PowerPoint presentations, where necessary, will be posted the day after the synchronous class.

(ii) WEEK X – Reading and/or Viewing Materials
- Assigned course materials (e.g., academic journal articles, book chapters, news articles, multimedia) related to the theme/topic(s) of the week.
- Course materials reveal multiple perspectives about, for example, key theories, perspectives, and concepts regarding the theme/topic(s) covered during the week.

Course Readings
Prior to the start of each synchronous class, please complete the required readings assigned for the week. You are not required to read the supplementary readings; they serve as resources for those interested in reading more deeply about a particular theme/topic(s) and can be used as sources for assignments. On the Quercus course page under each weekly module, supplementary readings (e.g., news articles) and media sources (e.g., documentaries, YouTube videos, TED/TEDx talks) that offer additional content on certain themes or topics.

My Approach to Teaching and Learning and Responsibilities of SOC478H1S Class Members
My role as instructor is to act as a guide and facilitator for your learning experience this term in relation to the subject area.

We will each contribute to a conducive and respectful learning atmosphere by:
- Reading and engaging with the assigned weekly materials and being fully prepared to discuss them with peers.
- Sharing analyses, critiques, thoughts, and observations in a respectful manner.
- Maintaining confidentiality. Sensitive information that is contributed is to be respected as confidential.
- Helping others learn and accepting assistance from others in our own learning.

We must always conduct ourselves in a collegial and respectful manner in all teaching and learning environments, which includes online formats. Please note that language or behaviour that is combative, abusive, or offensive will not be accepted.
EVALUATION CRITERIA

Following are the course deliverables and their relative weights for the final grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE DELIVERABLES</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reading Responses</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Mondays by 5:00pm EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Facilitation of Class Discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Week of group facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Policy Issue During COVID-19</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>February 21st by 11:59pm EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Assignment Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>April 9th by 11:59pm EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Critical Reading Responses (25%)
Students are to submit 6 critical reading responses throughout the term, between WEEK 2 and WEEK 12. Each critical reading response should be 600 words excluding references and provide a brief summary of the central ideas or concepts from the readings. Please move beyond descriptive accounts to analytical accounts.

Your critical response should answer at least some of the questions below:
- What do you perceive to be important insights or ideas from the assigned readings?
- How do the readings relate to each other?
  - Do they raise similar points? Do they disagree with each other?
  - Do they provide different or new perspectives?
- What are your critical reactions to the readings?
  - What are their strengths? What are their weaknesses?
  - What issues did you find particularly interesting?
- What questions do the readings raise?
- What would you like to discuss in class?

Please upload your critical responses to Quercus no later than Monday 5:00pm EST (the day before class). The purpose of these critical responses is to prepare you for an in-class discussion, therefore late assignments will not be accepted. Your responses should reflect the readings assigned for the week, demonstrate your thoughts about them, and raise discussion points for the class discussion the following day, on Tuesday.

Please note that you cannot submit a critical reading response for the week that your group will facilitate a class discussion (see next section).

II. Group Facilitation of Class Discussion (15%)
Each student will be assigned to a discussion facilitation group for one of the 5 weeks (WEEK 7 to 11). For each weekly topic, depending on course enrollment, 3 students will be assigned to a group.

Analytical Memo

This is a group assignment. Therefore, each member of the group must work together to write the group analytical memo, which should be no more than 750 words excluding references (for the entire group) on the readings for the week in which they lead a class discussion. The analytical memo is a brief essay that has a similar format to an abbreviated research paper (i.e., statement of the research question and
policy issue, answer(s) to the question, conclusion, and discussion).

The group analytical memo is due after your assigned class discussion and facilitation, by the end of the week on Sunday at 11:59pm EST. One member of the group should upload the analytical memo onto Quercus.

Facilitation of Class Discussion
Students who are assigned to lead class discussion will begin the class with a brief presentation and then followed by a class discussion. This will take place during the first hour of the class. All students in the class are required to read the assigned readings for each week and to prepared to discuss them with their peers.

III. Analysis of Policy Issue During COVID-19 (20%)
Drawing on the readings from WEEK 2 to WEEK 5, students will be required to apply the material (i.e., policy process, frameworks, concepts, etc.) into their analysis of a policy issue. Issues can be identified by reviewing traditional sources (e.g., online news articles, news broadcast, etc.), working papers, journal articles, books, etc. The analysis should be 2000 words excluding references and should focus on a contemporary policy issue since the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in March 2020. The assignment is due by Sunday, February 21st at 11:59pm EST. More details about this assignment (i.e., questions, structure, format) will be provided during the first and/or second synchronous class.

IV. Final Assignment (25%)
Students will write a paper on a policy issue of their choice, which could be an extension of the topic they chose for the first assignment. The final assignment will be essay format and should build on or emphasize a connection with the first assignment. Students will be required to draw on materials from throughout the course. The final assignment should be 2500 words excluding references. The final assignment is due by Friday, April 9th at 11:59pm EST. More details about this assignment (i.e., questions, structure, format) will be provided in class.

V. Participation (15%)
Class attendance is mandatory. Proper documentation is required to justify an absence. Since this is a seminar course, students are expected to attend class each week and participate in class discussions. If you are unable to attend due to illness or serious personal reasons, you must provide verification of illness and/or discuss with me in advance. Your participation grade will be based on two equally weighted components: attendance and active participation in class discussions.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Every attempt will be made to follow this course schedule; however, it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any adjustments to topics or readings will be announced on Quercus.

Prior to the start of each synchronous class, please complete only the required readings assigned for the week. Supplementary readings serve as resources for further reference on each theme or topic.

All the readings below can be downloaded from a shared folder which is uploaded to the Quercus course page entitled, SOC478H1S Winter 2021 Library. The shared folder is organized according to weekly themes as follows:

WEEK 1
JANUARY 12
Introduction to the Social Contexts of Public Policy:
Social Policy Issues and Challenges

During our first synchronous class, I will provide an overview of the main themes of the course. We will begin by examining the social contexts of public policy, discuss current social policy issues and associated challenges, and review the relationship between sociology and public policy.

I will also review the course policies, course deliverables (i.e., assignments, participation), and my expectations for your success in the course. Please read the course outline thoroughly.

WEEK 2
JANUARY 19
Relationship Between Sociology, Social Policy, and Public Policy:
Critical Policy Sociology, Relational Network Approach, and Public Policy Process

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


**WEEK 3**  
**JANUARY 26**  
**Agenda Setting and Problem Identification:**  
Social Inequality, Knowledge, and Epistemic Communities

**Required Readings**  


**Supplementary Readings**  


**WEEK 4**  
**FEBRUARY 2**  
**Policy Formulation, Decision-Making Processes, and Design:**  
Understanding the Dynamics of Power, Intention, and Meaning

**Required Readings**  

Supplementary Readings


WEEK 5
FEBRUARY 9
Policy Adoption and Evidence-Based Policy:
Addressing Intersectionality, Inequalities, Inequities, and Hierarchies

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


FEBRUARY 15-19
University of Toronto, Faculty of Arts and Science
READING WEEK
WEEK 6  
FEBRUARY 23  
Policy Implementation:  
Mediating Issues of Resistance, Compliance, and Limitations

**Required Readings**


**Supplemental Readings**


WEEK 7  
MARCH 2  
Work, Employment, and Precarious Work

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


**WEEK 8**

**MARCH 9**

**Health Equity, Access to Healthcare, and Health Promotion**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


WEEK 9
MARCH 16
Mental Health and Access to Social Support and Services

Required Readings


**Supplementary Readings**


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**WEEK 10**

**MARCH 23**

**Migration, Integration, and Control**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


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**WEEK 11**  
**MARCH 30**  
**Education, Higher Education, and Internationalization**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


**WEEK 12**

**APRIL 6**

**Policy Evaluation, Impact, Learning, and Social Change: Addressing the Challenges of Effectiveness and Sustainability**

**Required Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Communication
I respond to e-mail correspondence within one to two business days (except weekends and holidays). Students should bear this in mind if last-minute questions or issues arise, especially before any assignment deadlines. In the subject line of your email, please kindly include the course code SOC478. Adhering to policy at the University of Toronto, please ensure that all correspondence is sent from a University of Toronto email address.

If you have any questions regarding illness, special accommodations, missed assignments, deadline extensions, grading inquiries, or any other matters you would like to discuss privately, please email me. Please note that emails that contain questions that are answered in the course syllabus will not receive a response. Please always ensure you carefully read through the syllabus first.

Please set your notifications on Quercus to receive announcements. I will send out announcements through Quercus rather than delivering individual e-mails. You will receive a notice from me via the Announcements section on Quercus. Please check your University of Toronto e-mail address regularly for official communication from the Faculty of Arts and Science (or your associated faculty) and your instructor(s).

Office Hours
My office hours are by appointment. If you wish to meet with me, please kindly send me an e-mail and we will schedule an appointment. I could meet with you via your preferred method of communication (e.g., Zoom, MS Teams, Skype).

Please note that for simple and concise questions, email is the preferred method of communication. However, for more in-depth questions, students should book office hours and/or schedule an appointment to meet with me.

Best Practices for Online Participation
There are a few guidelines and expectations for engagement in synchronous environments:

- Be respectful to the speakers and your peers.
- Mute your microphones unless you are speaking to reduce background noise.
- Use the ‘raise your hand’ feature and wait to be called upon before you speak.
- Recording online discussions is strictly forbidden without the instructor's permission.

Missed Sessions, Deadline Extensions, and Late Penalties
Students who are unable to attend synchronous classes are responsible for obtaining notes on all material covered, as well as information regarding administrative announcements.

Electronic copies of assignments are due on Quercus by the designated time on the scheduled due dates unless otherwise stated. Please note that I will NOT accept electronic copies of assignments via email.

Late assignments are penalized at a rate of 5% per day (24-hour period, including weekends and holidays). After 10 days, the late assignment will no longer be accepted. Exceptions for late penalties will only be considered in cases that align with declared absences or accessibility accommodations.
The process for requesting deadline extensions are as follows:

- Students must use the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN to formally declare an absence from academic participation on the day of the assignment submission.
- Students must also inform the instructor in writing within 3 days of the missed assignment.
- Students eligible to get an extension will be informed by email.
- For extensions on the basis of family or other personal reasons, students should have their College Registrar email their instructor within 3 days on the missed deadline. Students eligible to receive an extension will then be informed by email.
- For extensions on the basis of accessibility accommodations, students should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Grade Appeals
Instructors (and teaching assistants) take the marking of assignments very seriously and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. In the case of a mathematical error, please simply alert me of the error.

For more substantive appeals you must adhere to the following policies. To appeal a grade and have your work re-assessed, you must provide written justification to me explaining the basis for this reconsideration and, where relevant, attach your original assignment with comments. You should specifically address how you believe your assignment better met the criteria from the assignment guidelines while also considering the individual comments or community feedback.

To start this re-assessment process, students must wait 24 hours following the return of the grades and comments—any grade appeals sent within this timeframe will not be considered. Note, that as per FAS policy, once your work has been re-assessed, the grade can go up, down, or remain the same based on this second evaluation. Subsequent appeals will go to the course instructor. Furthermore, no requests for grade appeals will be granted after two weeks following the return of the assignment’s grade and feedback.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the University of Toronto degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (link). To avoid issues related to plagiarism, please see the advice on documentation format and methods of integrating sources (link).

Students agree that by taking this course, submitted works may be subjected to processing through Turnitin for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website.
Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0%) unless a student instead provides, along with their paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via *Turnitin*) is in place because, strictly speaking, using *Turnitin* is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

**Accessibility**
The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, contact your instructor as soon as possible to discuss how best to assist you in the course. Furthermore, if you are registered with Accessibility Services, you will need to supply the appropriate documentation, or your counselor will need send an email message on your behalf. You can visit this [link](#) for more information.

**Writing Support**
Students are encouraged to make use of the available writing support at the University of Toronto. All seven [writing centres](#) will be operating during this session, and all will be offering remote instruction. The modality may differ by college. Students should visit each individual centre's site for information on how to make an appointment. There are also more than 60 advice files on all aspects of academic writing available from this [link](#). Furthermore, students can take advantage of the offerings through the [English Language Learning (ELL) Program](#).