

Fall 2025
PADM 577-001/002
Practice of Policy Development
Tuesday 6 - 8:45 pm
Dane Smith 225 / Online MAXUNM Canvas

Instructor: Roli Varma

Office: Social Science Bldg. Room 3014.

Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 4 pm to 6 pm and by appointment.

Telephone: 277-7756

E.-Mail: varma@unm.edu

Course Description

As a field, public policy is concerned with examining the causes and consequences of governmental decisions. It focuses on the intellectual activities of understanding how government works and what difference it makes. Public policy is a multidisciplinary field, involving the traditional social sciences disciplines (e.g. economics, law, political science & sociology) and the more applied fields (e.g. education, public administration, public health & social work). All are understood as offering valuable work to decision-makers and the larger community. Despite definitional and disciplinary differences, there is an agreement that the goal of the field is to understand and improve public policies through the application of rigorous analysis. Public policy analysis requires utilization of analytical methods, understanding of the politics of the given policy, and background knowledge of the complexities of the policy area.

Course Objectives

- to increase students' knowledge of the public policymaking process
- to introduce students to the questions and controversies surrounding policy arenas
- to relate substantive policy issues to conceptual approaches in public administration and other social sciences disciplines
- to focus on issues pertaining to contemporary issues
- to analyze public problems and policy alternatives/study a policy problem and design policy innovations and proposals/develop policy research skills
- to evaluate methods and tools of policy analysis/develop critical thinking skills

These objectives will involve various activities (e.g., assignments, discussions, presentations, written work) so that you can demonstrate you have met above objectives.

Students Learning Outcomes

- Students can define the basic principles and concepts in public policy;
- Students can describe the major conceptual approaches used in policy studies;
- Students can locate sources for policy research by searching electronic and traditional databases;
- Students can work collaboratively in a team to achieve project goals;
- Students can analyze the quality of the argumentation provided in support/opposition of a policy position;
- Students can describe the importance of considering diverse perspectives in policy research;

- Students can analyze public problems and policy alternatives/study;
- Students can write policy legislations.

Technical Skills

In order to participate and succeed in this class, you will need to be able to perform the following basic technical tasks:

- Use Canvas (help documentation located in “Help”>”UNM Canvas Help Site” link on left course menu, and also at [Online Student Documentation](#)).
- Use the in-course web conferencing tool (Zoom)
- Download and install an application or plug in – required for participating in web conferencing sessions

Technical Requirements

- A high-speed Internet connection is highly recommended.
- Supported browsers include: [Detailed Supported Browsers and Operating Systems](#)
- Any computer capable of running a recently updated web browser should be sufficient to access your online course. However, bear in mind that processor speed, amount of RAM and Internet connection speed can **greatly** affect performance. Many locations offer free high-speed Internet access including [UNM’s Computer Pods](#).
- Microsoft Office products are available free for all UNM students (more information on the [UNM IT Software Distribution and Downloads page](#))

For UNM Canvas Technical Support: (505) 277-0857 (24/7) or visit the [Canvas Info Site](#)

Web Conferencing

For web conferencing, you will need:

- A headset with microphone, which are widely available at stores that sell electronics, at the UNM Bookstore or online.
- A high-speed internet connection is highly recommended for these sessions. Please test your wireless Internet connection for audio and/or video quality prior to *web conferencing*.
- For UNM Web Conference Technical Help: (505) 277-0857

Academic Integrity

- As a graduate student, you are expected to take considerable **responsibility** for the direction and quality of your own learning. You are expected to complete assignments on time, to speak up in class when you have questions and ideas, to contribute to a spirit of cooperative learning, and to demonstrate significant investment in your work. You should not miss classes, arrive late, or come unprepared for the class.
- Use **gender-free language** in your papers and class discussion. Unbiased language is as much a matter of accuracy as it is of fairness.
- **Academic Honesty:** All University policies regarding academic honesty apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating or copying, plagiarism (claiming credit for the words or works of another from any type of source such as print, Internet or electronic database, or failing to cite the source), fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession

of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students are expected to be familiar with the UNM's [Policy on Academic Dishonesty](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Credit-hour statement

This is a three credit-hour course. Class meets for once for two and a half-hour session of direct instruction for 15 weeks during the Fall 2025 semester. Please plan for a *minimum* of six hours of out-of-class work (or homework, study, assignment completion, and class preparation) each week.

Support: Resources to support study skills and time management are available through Student Learning Support at the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Accommodations

UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact Accessibility Resource Center at arcsrvs@unm.edu or by phone at 505-277-3506.

Support: Contact me at varma@unm.edu or in office/check-in hours and contact Accessibility Resource Center (<https://arc.unm.edu/>) at arcsrvs@unm.edu (505) 277-3506.

UAP 2720 and 2740. Our classroom and university should foster mutual respect, kindness, and support. If you have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or violence, please seek [support](#) and [report](#) incidents. Find confidential services at [LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center](#), the [Women's Resource Center](#), and the [LGBTQ Resource Center](#). UNM prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (including gender, sex stereotyping, gender expression, and gender identity). All instructors are "responsible employees" who must [communicate reports](#) of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence to [Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity](#). For more information, please see [UAP 2720](#) and [UAP 2740](#).

Religions and Faith Traditions: UNM promotes respect for all religions and faith traditions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or cultural observance, or due to related travel, is encouraged to speak with me before about an excused absence and opportunities to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed. .

Title IX

To meet obligations under Title IX, UNM faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants are considered "responsible employees." This designation requires that any report of gender discrimination, which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence, made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at the Office Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity (ceeo.unm.edu). For more information on the

campus policy regarding sexual misconduct and reporting, see: <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html>.

Land Acknowledgement: Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico sits on the traditional homelands of the Pueblo of Sandia. The original peoples of New Mexico Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache since time immemorial, have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations and also acknowledge our committed relationship to Indigenous peoples. We gratefully recognize our history.

Faculty Resource: Information provided by UNM's Division for Equity and Inclusion can support building an inclusive classroom, <https://diverse.unm.edu/education-and-resources/programs/index.html>.

Citizenship and/or Immigration Status: All students are welcome in this class regardless of citizenship, residency, or immigration status. Your professor will respect your privacy if you choose to disclose your status. As for all students in the class, family emergency-related absences are normally excused with reasonable notice to the professor, as noted in the attendance guidelines above. UNM as an institution has made a core commitment to the success of all our students, including members of our undocumented community. The Administration's welcome is found on our website: <http://undocumented.unm.edu/>.

Respectful and Responsible Learning: We all have shared responsibility for ensuring that learning occurs safely, honestly, and equitably. Submitting material as your own work that has been generated on a website, in a publication, by an artificial intelligence algorithm, by another person, or by breaking the rules of an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty. It is a student code of conduct violation that can lead to a disciplinary procedure. *Please ask me for help in finding the resources you need to be successful in this course. I can help you use study resources responsibly and effectively.* Off-campus paper writing services, problem-checkers and services, websites, and AIs can produce incorrect or misleading results. Learning the course material depends on completing and submitting your own work. UNM preserves and protects the integrity of the academic community through multiple policies including policies on student grievances (Faculty Handbook D175 and D176), academic dishonesty (FH D100), and respectful campus (FH CO9). These are in the *Student Pathfinder* (<https://pathfinder.unm.edu>) and the *Faculty Handbook* (<https://handbook.unm.edu>).

Support: Many students have found that time management workshops or work with peer tutors can help them meet their goals. These and are other resources are available through Student Learning Support at the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Respectful Conduct Expectations: I am committed to building with you a positive classroom environment in which everyone can learn. I reserve the right to intervene and enforce standards of respectful behavior when classroom conduct is inconsistent with University expectations [and/or classroom community agreements]. Interventions and enforcement may include but are not limited to required meetings to discuss classroom expectations, written notification of expectations, and/or removal from a class meeting. Removal from a class meeting will result in an unexcused absence. [Insert number] or more unexcused absences may result in permanent removal and a drop from the course (see attendance policy). UNM ensures freedom of academic inquiry, free expression and open debate, and a respectful campus through adherence to the following policies: [D75: Classroom Conduct](#), [Student Code of Conduct](#), [University Policy 2240 – Respectful Campus](#), [University Policy 2210 – Campus Violence](#)

Connecting to Campus and Finding Support: UNM has many resources and centers to help you thrive, including [opportunities to get involved](#), [mental health resources](#), [academic support such as tutoring](#), [resource centers](#) for people like you, free food at [Lobo Food Pantry](#), and [jobs on campus](#). Your advisor, staff at the [resource centers](#) and [Dean of Students](#), and I can help you find the right opportunities for you.

Copyright Issues

All materials in this course fall under copyright laws and should not be downloaded, distributed, or used by students for any purpose outside this course.

[The UNM Copyright Guide](#) has additional helpful information on this topic.

Course Drop Policy

This course falls under all UNM policies for last day to drop courses, etc. Please see or the UNM Course Catalog for information on UNM services and policies. Please see the UNM academic calendar for course dates, the last day to drop courses without penalty, and for financial disenrollment dates.

Virtual Meeting Recordings

- Technology will be used for virtual meetings in this course and our use of such technology is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the UNM Acceptable Computer Use Policy, UNM Computer Use Guidelines, and UNM's Student Code of Conduct.
- Sharing Electronic video and/or audio recording of the class with participants outside of the class is not permitted without written consent of the instructor and each participating student individually.
- The form to obtain written consent is available at <https://registrar.unm.edu/forms/ferpa-consent.pdf>. If a student in the course is uncomfortable with completing the FERPA consent waiver, then the student should talk with their advisor or instructor to determine whether successful participation in the class is still possible, or whether another course will meet the student's degree requirements.
- If permission for electronic video and/or audio recording is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. You may not share class recordings with anyone outside of this course and doing so may result in disciplinary action.
- Students with specific electronic recording accommodations authorized by the UNM Accessibility Resources Center do not require instructor permission; however, the instructor must be notified of any such accommodation prior to recording.

Readings

1. Paul A Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process*
2. Kevin B. Smith and Christopher W. Larimer, *The Public Policy Theory Primer*
3. There are many articles, pertaining to case studies, which will be circulated to the class
4. Regularly read a newspaper and follow issues about public policy that appear in the daily press (e.g. *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Albuquerque Journal*, etc.).

Some Websites

www.ipsonet.org/

www.publicagenda.org
www.csg.org
www.policyagendas.org
www.rff.org

Course Evaluation

- **Papers/Oral Communications (60 Points):**
You will pick one case study, draft legislation on your issue and present that legislation to the class. Find out (1) the history of the issue; (2) the current legislation on the issue; (3) the current debates surrounding the issue; (4) effects of your legislation on existing legislation; (5) justification of your legislation in the light of the current debate. Your paper should contain clearly stated points and should be well documented. Anticipate the opposition and genuinely try to take their interests into account. These briefs should be of sufficient merit to present to a Policy Client such as a City Council, a State Legislative Interim Study Committee, the staff of a U.S. Congressional Office, or the Board of Directors of a policy advocacy organization. Approximately 10 pages long. **Due December 9**
- **Mid-Term Exam (25 Points): October 14**
The examination is designed to test the student's ability to understand and critically evaluate the reading, lecture, and discussion materials covered during the semester.
- **Class Participation (15 Points):** Basic attendance, class discussion, completion of assigned readings before class, etc. You should share at least one newspaper item in each class for the discussion. If unexpected circumstances prevent you attending the class on a given day, let me know ahead of time. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed from a classmate.

Grades

- **A grade:** A+ (96–100); A (93–95); A- (90–92)
- **B grade:** B+ (86–89); B (83–85); B- (80–82)
- **C grade:** C+ (76–79); C (73–75); C- (70–72)

Course Outline

Week 1, August 19: Overview
Introduction, Syllabus.

Week 2, August 26: What is Public Policy? Who makes it? Why study it?
Readings: (i) Public Policy as a Concept and a Field (or Fields) of Study (ii) Does Politics Cause Policy? Does Policy Cause Politics?

Week 3, September 2: The Policy-Making
Readings: (i) Who Makes Decisions? How Do They Make Decisions? Actors and Institutions" (ii) Where Does Policy Come From? The Policy Process (iii) How Public Policy Is Made

Week 4, September 9: The Policy Analysis

Readings: (i) What Should We Do? The Field of Policy Analysis (ii) Innovation and Diffusion Models in Policy Research (iii) Issues and Agendas (iv) Agenda Setting

Week 5, September 16: Implementation

Readings: (i) Implementation; (ii) How Does It Work? Policy Implementation (ii) Governance, Networks and Intergovernmental Systems and Managing Implementation

Week 6, September 23: Policy Evaluation

Readings: (i) An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-oriented Learning Therein; (ii) Disagreement and Alternative Dispute Resolution in Policy Process; (iii) Six Models of Evaluation; (iv) Policy Feedback and Learning

Week 7, October 30: Public Policy Models

Readings: s; (i) The Need for Better Theories (ii) A Comparison of Theories of Policy Process

Week 8, October 7: Fall Break, No Class

Week 9, October 14: Guest Speaker, Mid-term

Week 10, October 21: Writing Policy Proposal

Readings: (i) How to Write a Case Study for Public Affair

Week 11, October 28: Policy Cases to be assigned

Week 12, November 4: Policy Cases to be assigned

Week 13, November 11: Policy Cases to be assigned

Week 14, November 18: Policy Cases to be assigned

Week 15, November 25: Thanksgiving, No Class

Week 16, December 2: Overview