THE ARCHER CENTER
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Syllabus:
The Policymaking Process

Course Information
PSCI 4370
The Policymaking Process

Fall 2025
Mondays 6:30-9:30 PM
Derek O'Leary

Faculty Contact Information

Lead Professor (Anacostia): **Derek O'Leary, Ph.D.**
Email Address: Derek.O'Leary@UTDallas.edu
Office hours: Monday—Friday, 9—5 PM and by appointment

Lecturer (Brookland): **Prof. Emmanual Guillory, Ed.D.**
Email Address Emmanual.Guillory@UTDallas.edu

Lecturer (Capitol Hill): **Prof. John Piazza, JD**
Email Address: John.Piazza@UTDallas.edu

Lecturer (DuPont): **Prof. Waverly Gordon, JD**
Email Address: Waverly.Gordon@UTDallas.edu

Note: Please use only your University of Texas at Dallas account to email Archer Center faculty.

Faculty will make themselves available for office hours by appointment, either individually or with a group of students, as requested. Please reach out to faculty via email to establish a time to do so if you wish.

Course Description

This course introduces you to the federal policymaking process from the perspective of the legislative branch of government in the United States. You will work closely with the class lecturers to identify stakeholders in the federal policy process and understand the various entry points for these stakeholders to influence policy outcomes. Through a policy simulation, you will act as members of Congress and learn to craft legislative policy through participation in simulated congressional hearings and a congressional committee bill mark-up.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Explain the structure of the federal government, policymaking process, and the influence of politics on the policy and procedures of the legislative branch.
- Conduct in-depth research on a policy issue and compile a cohesive policy analysis and proposal for revising an existing statute.
- Craft well-researched and effective policy memos.

Calendar of Classes and Assignments

All assigned course materials below are available free online. Links to the materials are provided and copies are posted to the class eLearning site.

SESSION	DATE	LOCATION and LECTURER	ASSIGNMENT
1. Foundations of Federal Policymaking			
Week 1: No class	September 1 is Labor Day, a federal holiday. If you are interested to learn more about the history of federal labor policy, consider visiting the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.		
Week 2: Constituting Government	Monday, September 8, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, all faculty	**Reading:** Jack Rakove's *The Annotated U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence* (2009), pgs. 114-217. 60-75 minutes. Use the "two-page view" option in Acrobat, which shows the Constitution on the right page and Professor Rakove's annotations on the left page. Please read the full Constitution and use the annotations as needed. Gordon Wood (yes, for fans of *Good Will Hunting*, *that* Gordon Wood), "The Federal Constitution" in *Power and Liberty* (2021), pgs. 74-87. 30 minutes.

Week 3: Balancing Power	Monday, September 15, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, all faculty	**Reading:** Gordon Wood, "The Federal Constitution" in *Power and Liberty* (2021), pgs. 87-99. 30 minutes. James Madison, Federalist no. 10 (November 1787). 15minutes. Alexander Hamilton/James Madison, Federalist no. 51 (February 1788). 15 minutes. Brutus no. 1 (Oct. 1787). 15 minutes.
Week 4: Past and Present Congress	Monday, September 22, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, all faculty and guest speakers	**Viewing/reading:** "History of the House of Representatives" (American Historical Association Congressional Briefing, January 2025). 60 minutes. The First Day of a New Congress: A Guide to Proceedings on the House Floor (Congressional Research Service, 2024). 20-30 minutes.

			"History of the Senate" (American Historical Association Congressional Briefing, July 2025). 60 minutes. The First Day of a New Congress: A Guide to Proceedings on the Senate Floor (Congressional Research Service, 2024). 10-15 minutes. *Optional:* The Legislative Process (videos by Congress.gov). 30 minutes. A Brief Overview of the Congressional Budget Process (Congressional Research Service, 2023). 15 minutes.
Founders and Us writing reflection due by 11:59 PM on September 28			

2. Building your Policy Skillset			
Week 5: Conducting legislative research	Monday, September 29, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, all faculty and guest speaker, Dr. Erica Lee (Congressional Research Service)	**Reading:** "Federal Legislative History: A Research Guide for Congressional Staff" (Congressional Research Service, 2025). 30 minutes. Compiling a Federal Legislative History (Library of Congress research guide): 30 minutes.
Week 6: Analyzing policy	Monday, October 6, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, guest speaker	**Reading:** Eugene Bardach and Eric Patashnik, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis* (2016), Part I, pgs. 1-82: 120 minutes.
Week 7: No class	Monday, October 13 is Columbus Day, a federal holiday that is recognized in D.C. as Indigenous Peoples' Day. To learn more about federal policy vis-à-vis American Indian Nations, consider visiting the Museum of the American Indian.		
Week 8: Crafting memos	Monday, October 20, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, all faculty	
Policy Background and Analysis Memo due by 11:59 PM on October 26			
3. Making Policy Change			

Week 9: Workshop Simulation Hearing Prep	Monday, October 27, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, all faculty	
Week 10: Workshop Simulation Hearing Prep	Monday, November 3, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, All faculty	
Staff Memo due by 11:59 PM on November 7			
Week 11: Workshop Simulation Hearing	Monday, November 10, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, All faculty	
Week 12: Workshop Simulation Markup preparation	Monday, November 17, 6:30-9:30 PM	Archer Center, All faculty	
Mark-up Memo due by 11:59 PM on November 21			
Week 13: Workshop Simulation Markup	Monday, November 24, 6:30-9:30 PM	Acher Center, All faculty	

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

Assignments

The Founders and Us Writing Reflection: 10 points

Please see instructions in eLearning.

Policy Simulation: 60 points total

Detailed instructions for each policy simulation assignment will be provided in class and on eLearning. You will complete these assignments in collaboration with your neighborhood group below:

Committee Assignments		
LECTURER	**Committee**	**Law**
Derek O'Leary (Anacostia)	House Judiciary	Violence against Women Act 2022 reauthorization (PL 117-103)

Emmanual Guillory (Brookland)	House Education and Workforce	Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act (PL 116-91)
John Piazza (Capitol Hill)	House Science	Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act enacted in the CHIPS and Science Act (P.L. 117-167).
Waverly Gordon (Dupont)	House Energy and Commerce	Dr. Lorna Breen Healthcare Provider Protection Act (PL 117-105)

October 26: Background and Analysis Memo (10 points)

November 7: Hearing Participation and Staff Memo (25 points)

November 21: Mark-up Participation and Memo (25 points)

Weekly preparation and engagement: 30 points total

Your active engagement each week will help make this course a meaningful learning experience for everyone. Please closely read the assigned readings prior to class and come to class ready to share your thoughts, listen actively and respectfully to your classmates, and generate new ideas.

We expect you to be in class by the posted start time. If you are unable to attend class or may be delayed due to personal or professional circumstances beyond your control, please inform Dr. O'Leary and your neighborhood lecturer soon as possible prior to class. Unexcused absences or lateness will diminish your grade.

Grading Policy

Total points	Requirement
60	Policy simulation • 10 for Background and Analysis Memo • 25 for Hearing Participation and Staff Memo • 25 for Mark-up Participation and Memo
30	Weekly preparation and engagement
10	Founders and Us writing reflection

Grade	Point range	Description
A+	98-100	Exemplary work that exceeds expectations
A	94-97	Impressive work that meets expectations
A-	90-93	Great work with only minor areas for improvement
B+	87-89	Strong work with at least one area for improvement

B	84-86	Work meets expectations with more than one area for improvement
B-	80-83	Work meets expectations but with ample room for improvement
C+	77-79	Below-expectations work that requires various improvements
C	74-76	Inadequate work that requires extensive improvements
C-	70-73	Unsatisfactory work that requires substantial improvements
D+	67-69	Work significantly below expectations with major deficiencies
D	64-66	Work significantly below expectations with major deficiencies
D-	60-63	Work significantly below expectations with major deficiencies
F	59 and below	Work largely or entirely incomplete

Dr. O'Leary is the instructor of record for this course. Your neighborhood lecturer will assess your work and report grades to Dr. O'Leary, who compiles and reviews the midterm and final grades for all students.

Midterm grades will be posted by **October 18**. Final grades will be reported to your home UT System institution by **December 19, 2025,** and posted in accordance with their respective grade submission deadlines.
Note: UT System campuses vary in their use of the +/- grading scale. Grades for students enrolled at campuses that do not follow this system will be reported as follows: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (59 or lower).

Course Policies

Attendance

You are expected to attend and actively participate in every session. If you are unable to attend a session, it is your professional responsibility to inform the Lecturer in charge of their Neighborhood Group at least 24 hours before the expected absence. Exceptions will be allowed in the case of documented emergencies.

Classroom Citizenship

All students and faculty must adhere to the Guiding Principles for Archer Fellows.

1. Archer Fellows represent not only themselves, but their home institutions, the Archer Center, the UT System, and the State of Texas.

2. The Archer Center expects all Archer Fellows to abide by the highest standards of conduct, demonstrating the utmost integrity, character, respect, and professionalism.

3. The Archer Center is committed to ensuring an enriching cohort and learning environment by selecting students with varying interests, fields of study, and political perspectives.

4. The Archer Center is committed to bringing together students who value constructive and respectful dialogue among individuals and groups with varying ideas.

5. Archer Fellows are expected to respect varying political, personal, and religious beliefs within the cohort and throughout the program.

6. As an educational program, the Archer Center sees all aspects of the Archer Fellowship experience as an opportunity for learning, from the application and internship search process to the academic, networking, professional, and fellowship opportunities provided throughout the semester.

7. The Archer Center and Archer Fellows have a shared commitment to open, honest, and timely communication.

Class Recordings

Unless the AccessAbility Resource Center has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Reporting Sexual Misconduct and Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email or in person should be aware that all University staff, faculty, teaching assistants/associates, and graduate/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy - UTDBP3102, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the following confidential resources, including, but not limited to:

1. the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2575 or the 24/7 Crisis Hotline at 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255),
2. a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747),
3. a clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or
4. an off-campus resource (e.g., a rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist).

Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or are victims of sexual misconduct,

domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the Title IX Coordinator by making a report online or by calling the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2306. Students may also contact the UTD Police Department (UTDPD) for emergency assistance; criminal reporting and investigation; information or assistance regarding protective orders or forensic sexual assault exams; or to request a police escort. In case of emergency, call 911. For non-emergency situations, students can reach the UT Dallas Police Department by calling 972-883-2222. For more information about available support and resources, students can visit the Office of Institutional Compliance (Support Services & Resources) webpage.

Pregnancy and Parenting

UT Dallas is committed to providing support and resources for pregnant and parenting students, faculty, and staff in accordance with Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Texas Education Code Section 51.982, and other applicable federal and state laws. Pregnant and parenting students are encouraged to complete the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Identification Form located on the Office of Institutional Compliance's website. Submitting this form allows for a coordinated University effort to help facilitate support for pregnant and parenting students, such as early registration for parenting students and accommodations for pregnant students. For more information about the services and resources available to pregnant and parenting students, visit the Pregnant & Parenting Resources page and the Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy.

Nondiscrimination

UT Dallas prohibits all forms of discrimination (including harassment) based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. UT Dallas further prohibits all forms of sex-based discrimination (including sex-based harassment). Students who believe they have been discriminated against or harassed in violation of University policy, or who believe that someone else has been discriminated against or harassed, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the Office of Institution Compliance by making a report online or by calling the Office of Institution Compliance at 972-883-2306. For more information, see the University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy. For additional information about available support and resources, see the Office of Institutional Compliance (Support Services & Resources) webpage.

Technical Support

If you experience any issues with your UT Dallas account, contact the UT Dallas Office of Information Technology Help Desk or call 972-883-2911.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through UTD eLearning Helpdesk. The services include a toll-free telephone number, 1-866-588-3192, for immediate assistance, Educational Technology Services (eLearning)

is available by email to request services. They also have an online chat service.

Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas System Regents' Rule 50101 and UT Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the Student Complaints Resources within the online UT Dallas Undergraduate Catalog, and the Graduate Catalog.

UT Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the (Student Code of Conduct, UTDSP5003). Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of Community Standards and Conduct, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SSB 4.400, 972-883-6330) and online at their webpage.

A student at the University neither loses their rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating its standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Social Media Use

The Student Code of Conduct includes behaviors conducted via any digital platform. Students may not use any digital platform to seek or provide unauthorized assistance for any assignment done for academic credit. Students may not use any digital platform to impersonate or represent any person other than themselves. Please consult with your instructor regarding authorized assistance.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high-level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. Additional information is provided within their website.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best

accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found on their website.

Military-Affiliated Students

At the University of Texas at Dallas, we are committed to supporting our military and veteran students and their spouses and dependents as they pursue their academic goals. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by those who have served, we strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment. Please contact your instructor if you are on active duty, called to serve, or if any aspect of your current or past military service, or your family situation, makes it challenging to meet the course requirements or affects your academic progress. Your instructor is committed to supporting you and will work with you to address any complications.

The Military and Veteran Center (MVC) offers a range of resources and referrals to campus and community partners, ensuring that our military and veteran students can access the assistance they need. Whether it is academic advising, financial aid, or personal support, the MVC is dedicated to helping our students succeed and thrive in their educational journey.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in the university policy UTDSP5005. In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding disputes over grades, application of degree plan, graduation/degree program requirements, and thesis/and dissertation committee, adviser actions and/or decisions, evaluations, and/or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originated.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008), you are required to register with the AccessAbility Resource Center (ARC), located in the Administration Building, Suite 2.224. They can be reached by email, calling 972-883-2098, or at their website. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please register and request services by completing the Request for Services form with the proper documentation and meeting with the Director of ARC at the beginning of the semester.

Religious Holy Days

UT Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities, including examinations and travel time, for the observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, of the *Texas Tax Code*.

Students are encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment.

Excused students will be allowed to take missed exams or complete assignments within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the school's vice or associate dean, who serve as the President's designees for these rules. The vice or associate deans must take into account the legislative intent of *Texas Education Code* 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the vice or associate dean.

This information is also included in the online UT Dallas Undergraduate Catalog, and the Graduate Catalog.