

Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Introduction to Public Policy
Course Code	27168
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-02/A
Language	English
Degree Course	Bachelor in Economics, Politics and Ethics
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	dr. Benedetta Carlotti, Benedetta.Carlotti@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/45699
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
Course Year/s	2
CP	6
Teaching Hours	36
Lab Hours	-
Individual Study Hours	-
Planned Office Hours	18
Contents Summary	The course explores how policies are shaped, implemented, and evaluated across different contexts. Students will engage with key theories of the policy process and apply them through hands-on experiences, including fieldwork and collaboration with local stakeholders. The course emphasizes critical thinking and equips students with tools to analyze decision-making dynamics and evaluate public policies. Through interactive lectures and practical exercises, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the actors, institutions, and mechanisms that drive policy-making.
Course Topics	This is a free choice course of the BA in EPE (Economics, Politics

and Ethics), in the disciplinary sector of Political Science. The course explores public policy processes involving a variety of actors from policy makers to grassroots movements and civil society associations.

Besides providing an overview of the main theoretical approaches and their application to the study of the policy process, the course offers its students an applied experience of public policy evaluation engaging them actively in dialogue with local stakeholders (like local policy makers, practitioners and civil society associations). Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

- Have a strong knowledge of the major theories developed to study the public policy process
- Apply these theories to study different aspects of how policy decisions are made and how policies are shaped in action
- Understand the central components of the policy-making process, from policies' emergence to formulation and implementation
- Identify the role of key political actors and organized interests in driving the policy-making process
- Recognize the institutions' role in enabling and constraining the policy-making process
- Understand and critically analyze public policies
- Adopt and actively use methods of policy evaluation (e.g.: interviews, participant observation, focus groups)

During this course, you will learn the analytical tools fundamental to understand how local national and international policy-making works. The course is mainly structured around the following three subsections:

1. The study of public policy and its context: this first part of the course will explain to you the meaning of "public policy", the main theoretical approaches used, and its contextual endeavors.
2. How policies see the light: this part of the course will provide you with a review of the core stages of the policy cycle from its definition to the identification, and the selection of policy alternatives, and the consequent implementation.
3. Evaluation, feedback and change: this section will focus on the evaluation of public policies and on the potentiality of public policy change. This part of the course will provide the student with the

	possibility to empirically apply the learnt theoretical and methodological guidelines.
Keywords	public policy, policy-making, field research
Recommended Prerequisites	
Propaedeutic Courses	None
Teaching Format	The course includes lectures, seminars with experts, and active student involvement in policy evaluation tasks based on real local case studies.
Mandatory Attendance	Recommended, but not required
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	<p>ILO (Intended Learning Outcomes)</p> <p>ILO 1 Knowledge and understanding ILO 1.1 political parties, interest groups, movements</p> <p>ILO 2 Ability to apply knowledge and understanding ILO 2.1 ability to understand, analyse and identify political decision-making processes ILO 2.2 ability to analyse a technical text using appropriate theoretical tools ILO 2.3 ability to produce a reasoned text on a political science topic</p> <p>ILO 3 Making judgements ILO 3.1 Acquisition of the capacity for judgement and methodological tools useful for the critical analysis of data, sources, assumptions and implications of scientific practice, and of the political, ethical and legal context within which economic phenomena are set and with which they interact</p> <p>ILO 4 Communication skills ILO 4.1 Proficiency (oral and written) in Italian, German and English, including translation between these languages. Intercultural competence. Conceptual awareness, synthesis and written expression, particularly in the drafting of scientific or science-based documents</p>

	<p>ILO 5 Learning skills</p> <p>ILO 5.1 Promotion of critical thinking and analytical skills to focus on complex problems in their long-term dynamics and the variety of their implications, including ethical ones</p>
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	<p>This course is intended to provide you with the needed knowledge and understanding of patterns of decision-making applied to local, national and international contexts. This will allow you to understand which are the drivers of public decisions and how they are different or similar within various decision-making contexts.</p> <p>The course will provide you with the tools to understand and critically analyze policy positions and preferences concerning policy. During the course, you will be confronted with processes of policy formation and negotiations, and you will be able to understand how they are influenced.</p> <p>One of the core objectives of the course is to make you skilled to understand and critically analyze the public policy process and the eventual connection between policy actors and institutions.</p> <p>You will learn how to critically evaluate the policy-making's dynamics expressing yourself appropriately and professionally. You will be confronted with original research text that you will be able to understand and summarize professionally. Lastly, you will be confronted with hands-on experience of public policy evaluation (see assessment section for further information)</p>
Assessment	<p>Please note that even if course attendance is not mandatory, it will determine different exam modalities.</p> <p>This course defines students upon attendance as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attending students: all those students who take part in both the class project and the organized class excursion (see below) - Non-attending students: all those students who NEITHER participate in the class project, NOR will take part to the organized excursion <p>This distinction is mirrored in the exam modalities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attending students' final evaluation: - 60% course project (ILOs Assessed: 2.1; 2.3; 3.1; 4.1; 5.1) - 40% written exam (ILOs Assessed: 1.1; 2.2; 4.1)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Non-attending students:- 100% written exam (ILOs Assessed: 1.1; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1; 4.1; 5.1) <p>Further details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Course project: the course offers students with the possibility to take part to a policy evaluation experiment done in collaboration between local stakeholders (policy makers, practitioners and civil society associations). Students who take part to the course project will be expected to:- Participate in an organized local excursion (expenses fully covered) organized during the regular course timetable- Participate in guest lectures and seminars organized during the regular course timetable- Participate in empirical policy evaluation sessions organized during the regular course timetable- Participate to the realization of a report (written individual contribution expected) to be shared with local stakeholders concerning the obtained results- Written exam (attending students): for all attending students (see above) the written exam is constituted of 2 written questions regarding the aspects treated during the course project and the course itself- Written exam (non-attending students): for non-attending students (see above) the assessment consists of a written exam covering the topics treated during the course. Please note that a list of arguments that will be part of the non-attending exam format will be shared in due time during the lectures. Please note that this exam modality will have the following structure (duration 2hrs):<ul style="list-style-type: none">o 20 quick answer questions (0.5 points each)o 4 Analytical questions with a maximum of 8 lines answer (2.5 points each)o 2 Analytical questions with a maximum of 15 lines answer (5 points each)
Evaluation Criteria	The evaluation criteria apply to both attending and non-attending students (please note that non-attending students will be exclusively judged through the written exam) and are to be intended as such:

	<p>- Written exam (both attending and non-attending students): Students will be judged on their ability to recall and apply the content of the readings. Particular attention will be given to the precision and appropriateness of written production, alongside with their ability to reason critically about political concepts (public-policy related) and phenomena.</p> <p>-Course project (only for attending students): Students will be judged on the basis of the following criteria:</p> <p>Methodological preparation: clarity and appropriateness of the research design</p> <p>Data collection and facilitation: ability to manage qualitative data collection respectfully and effectively, including preparation, moderation, note-taking, and adherence to basic ethical principles.</p> <p>Analysis and interpretation: capacity to identify relevant patterns, critically discuss findings, and relate empirical insights to public-policy concepts covered in class.</p> <p>Group collaboration: quality of teamwork, division of tasks, and contribution to the collective project outcome.</p> <p>Written output: clarity, structure, and coherence of the final project report, including appropriate use of course concepts, accurate referencing, and professional presentation.</p>
Required Readings	M. HOWLETT, M. RAMESH, A. PERL, <i>Studying Public Policy</i> , Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.
Supplementary Readings	
Further Information	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Sustainable cities and communities, Reduced inequalities