



Inside Washington: Federal Policy Making from The Ground Up

Course Information

PA 8330

Inside Washington: Federal Policy Making from The Ground Up

Summer 2025

Tuesday/Thursday 6-9 p.m. ET

Class meets in person at the Archer Center except where noted

Professor Contact Information

Professor	Bill Shute
Phone	202-669-5176
Email	william.shute@utdallas.edu
Office Location	Virtual, or Archer Center by appointment
Office Hours	By appointment

Class Materials

The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, nor uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The majority of reading material will be available electronically. Selections highlighted in **bold are required readings and will be discussed during class**. Other listings are encouraged for further expansion of the topics.

In addition, students will be required to read ***Helping the Good Do Better: How a White Hat Lobbyist Advocates for Social Change*** by Thomas Sheridan (TwelveBooks, 2019).

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

Admission to Graduate Archer Fellowship Program

Course Overview

The course will focus on the three key elements of federal policymaking utilizing assigned readings, classroom discussion, multimedia, case studies, external speakers, written assignments, and a final group exercise.

Analysis of the three key elements will reinforce previously acquired theoretical underpinnings by examining contemporary and historical practical implementations. After an initial review of the nature of separation of powers and original constitutional intent, the course will delve into a practical examination of how current operations of federal processes are influenced by governmental and external factors.

Readings will pre-populate classroom discussions and provide a foundation for writing assignments, supplemented by the classroom experience. Case studies and policy simulations will be utilized to illustrate practical applications of the elements covered throughout the semester.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

With a thorough understanding of separation of powers and the influence of external pressures as a backdrop, the next section of the course will explore the elements of advocacy, how the various factions of influencers invoke and apply advocacy techniques, how to deconstruct advocacy messages, and how to prepare an advocacy strategy.

Following the conclusion of these studies, students will acquire an appreciation for the difficulties of navigating the complexities of Washington by exploring the influence of money, the tools and techniques used by various groups, and the practical limitations imposed by overarching budget considerations.

During the final sessions of the course, students will learn about how ethical considerations influence advocacy and policy implementations by focusing on legislative and executive rules, re-election pressures, and operating within the bubble of a 24/7 news cycle. These considerations will provide an editorial filter in preparation for the final assessment of the semester-long exercise.

Required Textbook and Materials

eLearning

All course materials are available on [eLearning](#). All assignments, except where noted, should be submitted to eLearning. Login to your eLearning account [here](#).

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Course Policies

Course Details

Each class meets weekly for three hours at the Archer Center, or other locations as noted. You have been assigned to one of two sections for the class. Please meet with your section at the time/date listed below:

Tuesday, 6-9 p.m. – [Farragut section](#)

Thursday, 6-9 p.m. – [Georgetown section](#)

Class Participation

Students must prepare for class, arrive on time, and actively participate during class. In particular, students will be expected to report on assigned readings and ask questions of external speakers. Missing class can have implications for an individual's success in this course. Therefore, overall class participation will be a significant part of our class environment. After each class, I will assess each student's participation. Because of the weight given to class participation, advance notice must be given if a student will miss a class and supplemental work may be assigned.

Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Assignments

Reading assignments will be comprised of texts, excerpts of public domain documents, online resources, and excerpts of published material copied in accordance with published fair use policies as delineated by the University of Texas Libraries *Copyright Crash Course* (<http://copyright.lib.utexas.edu/copypol2.html>). Students are expected to read the assigned material in advance of class in order to facilitate informed discussion.

Writing assignments will consist of critical analyses, a talking-points memo, and material prepared for a class simulation. Papers are to be single-spaced, 12-point font on single-sided paper with one-inch margins. The final presentation materials are to be coordinated in advance with the professor. **Writing assignments are to be emailed to the professor by midnight on the due date.**

Grade Allocations

Class Participation	20%
Readings Discussion	10%
Advocacy Campaign Visuals [due Sunday, June 1]	10%
Talking Points memo [due Friday, June 13 / Sunday, June 15]	20%
Appropriations Committee Member Profile [due Sunday, July 20]	20%

Make-up Policy

Writing assignments must be submitted by midnight of the posted deadline. Late submissions will be subject to grade reduction. A one-time exception may be permitted at the professor's discretion, if coordinated in advance of the deadline and submitted shortly thereafter.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity and professional ethics are basic in developing the character, and instilling the values, of policy professionals. I expect students to abide by the academic rules and regulations established by the University of Texas at Dallas, which is the academic home for the Archer Center (see <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/students/academic-integrity/> for a guide to ensuring academic integrity).

Harassment Reporting Requirements

[Senate Bill 212 \(SB 212\)](#), which took effect as of January 1, 2020, is a Texas State Law that requires all employees (both faculty and staff) at a public or private post-secondary institution to promptly report any knowledge of any incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking "committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the institution at the time of the incident". Please note that both the instructor and the TA for this class are mandatory reporters and MUST share with the Title IX office any information about sexual harassment/assault shared with us by a student whether in-person or as part of a journal or other class assignment. Note that a report to the Title IX office does not obligate a victim to take any action, but this type of information CANNOT be kept strictly confidential except when shared with designated confidential employees. A confidential employee is someone a student can go to and talk about a Title IX matter without triggering that employee to have to report the situation to have it automatically investigated. A list of confidential employees is available on the [Title IX website](#).

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students.

Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor or as scheduling conflicts dictate.

Class 1

[COMBINED]

Tuesday, May 27 at 7:30 a.m.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, Tidal Basin

Meet at the MLK Memorial for our first class.

Tuesday, May 27 at 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Archer Center

Orientation

Class 2

Tuesday, May 27 at 1:30 p.m.

Archer Center

Guest Speaker:

Arushi Sharma Frank

Course overview and expectations

The Problem/Solution/Political Will approach to policy development

Review of the Constitutional Entities

Constitutional entities

Congress (Article I)

The Executive (Article II)

Federal Agencies (Article II, sec. 2)

Judiciary (Article III)

How Congress “works”

- Organizational structure
- Leadership
- Committee process
- How a bill becomes a law
- How to read legislation

The role of staff and directors

Policy creation within the Executive Branch

- Presidential transitions
- Bully pulpit
- Role of executive orders

Policy creation during agency rule making

Policy creation during judicial review

Separation of Powers (from conceptual origins to modern practice)

- Historical underpinnings

Reading:

- Kingdon, John. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. New York: Longman, 1994. Chapter 4, pp. 83-89.
- US Constitution, Articles I-III.
- *How Congress Works*, <http://www.aacom.org/advocacy/advocacy-resources/how-congress-works>.
- Various Fact Sheets found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/>
- Furlong, Scott R. and Kerwin. Cornelius M. *Interest Group Participation in Rule Making: A Decade of Change*. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, July 2005.
- James Madison. *Federalist Paper No. 51*, (Feb 6, 1788).

Supplemental Reading:

- Smith, Hedrick. *The Power Game: How Washington Works*. New York: Random House, 1988. Chapter 6.
- Kessler, Charles R. *What Separation of Powers Means for Constitutional Government*. Heritage Foundation First Principles Series. 2007.

Class 3

[COMBINED]

Wednesday, May 28 at 8:45 a.m.

National Archives

Review of the Founding Documents

Visit with Senior Archivist

Wednesday, May 28 at 11:00 a.m.

Navy Memorial

Visit and Explore the Navy Memorial

Class 4

[COMBINED]

Wednesday, May 28 at 1:00 p.m.

FDR Memorial at the Tidal Basin

[NOTE: bring phone and headphones/buds]

Case Study:

Judicial Procedures Reform Bill of 1937

Group Exercise at The Jefferson Memorial

Civil Rights as a Global Standard

Reading:

- Kessler, Charles R. *What Separation of Powers Means for Constitutional Government*. Heritage Foundation First Principles Series. 2007.
- Fred Kaplan: *In Paris, Thomas Jefferson Revealed His Real Beliefs About Slavery*, Time, November 25, 2022.

Supplemental Reading:

- Rehnquist, William H. *Judicial Independence Dedicated to Chief Justice Harry L. Carrico: Symposium Remarks*. University of Richmond Law Review. 2004. 38: 579–596.
- Barnes, Robert. *Roberts Recalls Another Chief Justice and Reveals a Little About Himself*. The Washington Post. November 23, 2015.
- Caldeira, Gregory A. *Public Opinion and The U.S. Supreme Court: FDR's Court-Packing Plan*. The American Political Science Review. Vol. 81, No. 4 (Dec. 1987), pp. 1139-1153.

Class 5

[COMBINED]

Thursday, May 29 at 8:00 a.m.

Supreme Court Plaza

Thursday, May 29 at 9:30 a.m.

Capitol Visitors Center

Class Discussion of Policy Interests. A tour of the Capitol begins promptly at 10 a.m.

Thursday, May 29 at 11:15 a.m.

CVC

11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: A quick lunch with Archer Alumni working in Congress

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Coffee and Conversation with Archer Alumni working in Congress

Class 6

Thursday, May 29 at 1:30 p.m.

CVC

Policy creation from the outside

- Non-Government Influencers

 - Special interest organizations

 - Trade associations

 - Professional societies

 - Non-profit organizations

 - Corporate federal relations

 - Lobby/law firms

 - Federal contractors

 - Diplomats

 - Foreign agents

 - Think tanks

 - NGOs

Deconstructing the message

- Deconstructionist analysis of advocacy materials

Advocacy advertising

Assignment: Advocacy Campaign Visuals
(due Sunday, June 1)

Find one advocacy campaign visual related your policy topic. Submit it by Sunday the 1st so it can be shared at the start of the next week's class.

Reading:

- Igan, Deniz, Mishra, Prachi, and Tressel, Thierry. *A Fistful of Dollars: Lobbying and the Financial Crisis*. NBER Macroeconomics Annual, 2012.

Class 7

[COMBINED]

Friday, May 30 at 9:00 a.m.
Archer Center

Case Study:

Keystone XL Pipeline
Class Discussion: the two Keystone articles

Class Exercise:

Policy Mini-Simulations

- **Tariffs on Foreign Automobiles**
- **Cannabis Regulation**

Class Exercise:

The hinderance of labels

Reading:

- Parfomak, Paul W., et. al. *Keystone XL Pipeline Project: Key Issues*. Congressional Research Service. December 2, 2013.
- Manga, Vipal. *What is the Keystone XL Pipeline and Why Did President Biden Issue an Executive Order to Block It?* The Wall Street Journal. January 21, 2021.

Class 8

Tuesday, June 3 / Thursday, June 5

Class Review of Advocacy Campaign Visuals

Labor union advocacy

Healthcare policy advocacy

Case Study:

The passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and subsequent attempts to scuttle it.

Reading:

- DiSalvo, Daniel, *The Trouble with Public Sector Unions*. National Affairs, Winter 2022.
- *History and Timeline of the Affordable Care Act*. Ehealthinsurance.com. October 24, 2020.

Supplemental Reading:

- Milroy, Jack, *Advocacy campaigns for labour unions: how to choose a winning issue*. The Digital Dispatch, April 15, 2019.
- Eaton, Joe. *Lobbyists Swarm Capitol to Influence Health Reform*. Public Integrity. May 19, 2014.
- Reynolds, Molly E. *On the ACA, Don't Just Watch Congress – Watch Interest Groups, Too*. Brookings Institution. March 8, 2017.

Class 9

[COMBINED]

[NOTE: No Tuesday class]

Thursday, June 12

Class Discussion of Readings

Think Tank policy development

The impact of the ever-shifting electorate on policy development

How the campaign process impacts policy creation

Evolution of campaigning

Campaign advertising

Assignment: Talking Points memo

[due Friday, June 13 / Sunday, June 15]

Students will assume the role of a junior policy analyst working on a policy topic of the student's choosing. The analyst's supervisor is scheduled to deliver a brief speech to a 3d party group explaining the policy topic and calling the group to take some form of action, BUT the supervisor is not familiar with the topic. The student/analyst must draft a short, bulleted memo explaining the topic and call-to-action so that the supervisor appears to be an expert on the topic when speaking.

Reading:

- The role of Think Tanks. <https://www.cipe.org/reports/how-to-guide-for-economic-think-tanks/the-role-of-think-tanks/> The Center for International Private Enterprise.
- Talking Points memo, Example 1.
- Talking Points memo, Example 2.

Supplemental Reading:

Class 10

[COMBINED]

[NOTE: No Thursday class]

Tuesday, June 17

Class Review of Talking Points Memo

The role of scientific and policy reports

Media and the evolution of political reporting

The role of social media

The art of leaking

Fake news and alternative facts

Fake news and alternative facts

Reading:

- Jay Rosen, *Why Political Coverage Is Broken*. Jay Rosen's Press Think, August 26, 2011.
- Schultz, David. *What Is a Fact? The Scientific versus Political Definition*. The Hill. March 11, 2017.

Supplemental Reading:

- *Elections 101 - The Role of Social Media in U.S. Elections*. A moderated conversation with Professor Patrick Egan, NYU. February 28, 2020.
- Obar, Jonathan A., Zube, Paul, and Lampe, Clifford. *Advocacy 2.0: An Analysis of How Advocacy Groups in the United States Perceive and Use Social Media as Tools for Facilitating Civic Engagement and Collective Action*. Journal of Information Policy, 2012.

Class 11

Tuesday, June 24 / Thursday, June 26

Grassroots: definition and origins

Social Cause Policy Advocacy

Coalition Building

Class Exercise:

Discuss Sheridan book chapters in detail

Reading:

- **Sheridan, Thomas F. *Helping the Good Do Better: How a White Hat Lobbyist Advocates for Social Change*. TwelveBooks, 2019.**
- **Listen to episode 1.7 of the podcast, *80-Proof Politics*, “Helping the Good Do Better through social advocacy with Tom Sheridan...”**

Supplemental Reading:

- Franco, Joseph and Habursky, Joshua. *Old School Grassroots Activism is Back in Action in American Politics*. The Hill, June 13, 2017.
- Weigel, David and Tumulty, Karen. *A Gift and a Challenge for Democrats: A Restive, Active, and Aggressive Base*. The Washington Post. February 11, 2017.

Class 12

Tuesday, July 1 / Thursday, July 3

Class Discussion of Readings

Measuring the effectiveness of advocacy

The Cardinal Rules

Reading:

- ***7 Ways to Modernize Your Government and Public Affairs Teams*. FiscalNote, January 29, 2020.**

Supplemental Reading:

- de Figueiredo, John M. and Silverman, Brian S., *Academic Earmarks and the Returns to Lobbying*. The Journal of Law & Economics, October 2006.

Class 13

Tuesday, July 8 / Thursday, July 10

Inveterate Antipathies

Grand Strategy

What Are America's National Interests?

Group Exercise:

Class Prioritization of National Interest Topics

Reading:

- **Washington's Farewell Address**
- **Josh Shiffrin and John Schuessler: *Making Grand Strategy Grand Again*, The National Interest, July 25, 2018.**

Supplemental Reading:

- Theresa Cross, Aaron Bazin, and Montgomery Erfourth: *Starting With "Why": The National Security Strategy and America's National Interests*, Small Wars Journal, December 18, 2019.

Class 14

Tuesday, July 15 / Thursday, July 17

Class Discussion of Readings

Advocacy during the budget process

Advocacy during Congressional authorizations and appropriations

Impact of polarization and shifting majorities on modern budget process

TARP and Stimulus Act

Tea Party mentality

Comparison with New Progressives

Assignment: Preparation for In-class Appropriations Committee Markup

[due Sunday, July 20]

Study assigned Congressional profile. Become familiar with Member's district, supporters, professional background, various policy positions, speeches/comments/posts related to federal spending on social programs, defense, international assistance, etc. Create a two-page summary profile for you to use during the in-class budget markup during our final class.

Reading:

- ***Policy Basics: Introduction to the Federal Budget Process.* Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Updated October 24, 2022.**

Supplemental Reading:

- Rosenthal, Lawrence. *Approach-Avoid: Understanding the Tea Party and the Presidential Election of 2012.* The Huffington Post. September 26, 2012.
- Lang, Marissa, and Kindy, Kimberly. *Destructive protests by anarchists and extremists signal divided left as Biden administration begins.* The Washington Post. January 23, 2021.
- Ackley, Kate and McMinn, Sean. *K Street Reinvents Itself in the Era of Trump.* Roll Call. February 15, 2018.
- Marcus, David. *From Occupy To AOC: The Rise Of The New Progressives.* Forbes, June 2019.
 - Part 1
 - Part 2
 - Part 3

Class 15

[COMBINED]

Tuesday, July 22

Class Exercise: Congressional Budget Committee Markup

Students will portray the Member of Congress previously assigned to them during a simulated markup of budget legislation.