Syllabus
Course description

Course title	**Introduction to public policy**
Course code	**27168**
Scientific sector	SPS/04
Degree	L33 – Economics and Social Sciences
Semester and academic year	1st semester, 2016/2017
Year	Optional
Credits	6
Modular	No

Total lecturing hours	36
Total lab hours	-
Total exercise hours	-
Attendance	Recommended, but not required
Prerequisites	Successful completion of Political Science 1 is suggested in order to properly follow these lectures
Course page	http://www.unibz.it/en/economics/progs/bacs/economics_social/courses/default.html

Specific educational objectives	This course aims at introducing students to the process of public decision-making in liberal democracies, and explains how actors, institutions and ideas influence public decisions, which affect the everyday lives of citizens. The main objectives are to: - Understand what 'public policy' means - Provide a conceptual and theoretical framework of analysis - Develop the understanding of public problems and the rationales for government action, with emphasis on the process and outcomes of policymaking.

	- Grasp how the public policy process works, and, to understand in which way the policy process influences public policy, e. g., why some problems reach the public agenda and others not - Provide foundational knowledge of public and private institutions in the public process and the role of actors seeking to influence public policy - Apply the knowledge of the policy process to any issue or topic of the student's interest - Analyse policies critically - Examine case studies

Lecturer	Tanja Mayrgündter, Room 3.10, TMayrguendter@unibz.it
Scientific sector of the lecturer	SPS/04
Teaching language	English
Office hours	Weekly, after the lecture.
Lecturing assistant	-
Teaching assistant	-
Office hours	-

List of topics covered	In simple words, Thomas Dye defines 'public policy' as "anything a government chooses to do or not to do". Hereby, governments respond to public problems within their framework of action, which is the policy-making process. Structure matters, but also context and ideology. To give an insight into the governments' actions and their determinants, the course covers the following topics:
	
	* Public policy studies: **Why** governments do what they do – basic concepts of public policy, underlying normative and positive theoretical approaches, policy determinants and contextual influences
	
	    - Origins of the public policy
	    - Main concepts and approaches to the study of public policy-making
	    - The context of public policy-making: policy actors, institutions and ideas
	    - International dimensions of policy-making
	
	* Public policy process: **How** do governments what they do?
	
	    - Problem identification and definition & policy formulation
	    - Agenda setting: goal setting and policy planning

	- Decision-making - Policy implementation - Evaluation * Public policy analysis: **What** governments do – case studies of policy making within policy areas, such as: - Environmental Policy - Economic and Trade Policy - Security and Defence Policy - Public Policy Process in the EU - Policy field of the student's own choice
Teaching format	Introduction to Public Policy is mainly a lecture class. However, any lecture is open for discussion on the weekly topics. Additionally, students will present their own case study of public policy.

Learning outcomes	**Knowledge and understanding** • Ability to understand the complexity of the policy cycle, with a particular focus on its constraints and its weaknesses **Applying knowledge and understanding** • Ability to apply policy models to selected case studies of public policy • Ability to identify actors and institutions involved in the political process **Making judgments** • Ability to autonomously evaluate causes and consequences of political decisions • Ability to judge the relevance of political actors in the political process **Communication skills** • Ability to critically discuss the way political decisions are taken **Learning skills** • Ability to apply the knowledge acquired during the study course to current domestic and international political decisions

Assessment	The assessment of the course consists of two parts: • Power point presentation of a case study chosen by the student (30%)

	• Written exam (70%): It covers the topics discussed in class and of the indicated chapters/articles of the handbooks. Format: open questions within a limit of choice. For attendant students, the power point presentation is a pre-requisite to do the written exam. Both parts must be positive to pass the exam. Non-attendant students are asked to contact the lecturer **at the beginning of the course, to substantiate the reason for their absence.** In case of excused permanent absences, the assessment of the course consists of the written exam only (100%). (Single absences instead do not have to be justified).
Assessment language	English
Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks	Criteria for the evaluation of the power point presentation: originality and relevance of the case study, clarity and lucidity of the presentation, ability to apply instruments and concepts acquired during the course. Criteria for the evaluation of the written exam: clarity and preciseness of the answers, correctness of terms and definitions, ability to apply theoretical models, construction of valid arguments, analytical ability to evaluate.

Required readings	Howlett, Michael; Ramesh M., Studying Public Policy, Oxford University Press 2003. Araral, Eduardo; Fritzen, S.; Howlett, M.; Ramesh, M.; Wu, X., Handbook of Public Policy, Taylor and Francis 2012 (e-book).
Supplementary readings	Further readings will be uploaded to the Reserve Collections website.