

Syllabus

Course description

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| Course title | Introduction to Public Policy |
| Course code | 27168 |
| Scientific sector | GSPS-02/A (ex SPS/04) |
| Degree | Bachelor in Economics, Politics and Ethics |
| Semester and academic year | 1 semester a.y. 2025/2026 |
| Year | Free choice |
| Credits | 6 |
| Modular | No |

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| Total lecturing hours | 36 |
| Total lab hours | -- |
| Total exercise hours | -- |
| Attendance | recommended, but not required |
| Prerequisites | none |
| Course page | https://www.unibz.it/it/faculties/economics-management/bachelor-economics-politics-ethics/ |

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| Specific educational objectives | <p>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).</p> <p>Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) |
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| Lecturer | Benedetta Carlotti Office 2.01 E-mail benedetta.carlotti@unibz.it Lecturer's page https://www.unibz.it/it/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/45699-benedetta-carlotti |
| Scientific sector of the lecturer | GPS-02/A (ex SPS/04) |
| Teaching language | English |
| Office hours | 18 hours Cockpit – students' zone – individual timetable Webpage: https://www.unibz.it/en/timetable/?sourceId=unibz&department=26&degree=13182%2C13324 |
| Lecturing assistant | -- |
| Teaching assistant | -- |
| List of topics covered | <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>The study of public policy and its context</u>: 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. <u>How policies see the light</u>: 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. <u>Evaluation, feedback and change</u>: 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. |
| Teaching format | Frontal lectures, individual or group presentations, seminar discussions, participation to organized excursion, guest lectures |
| Learning outcomes | <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> |

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| | <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. 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60% course project - 40% written exam - Non-attending students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% written exam <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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 foresees a written exam covering the thematic 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 |

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| | <p>due time during the lectures. Please note that this exam modality will have the following structure (duration 2hrs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20 quick answer questions (0.5 points each) ○ 4 Analytical questions with a maximum of 8 lines answer (2.5 points each) ○ 2 Analytical questions with a maximum of 15 lines answer (5 points each) |
| Assessment language | English |
| Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks | The evaluation will be based on your ability to recall and apply the content of the reading. Attention will be given to your ability to express yourself in a precise and appropriate fashion and to your critical approach to the discipline (i.e.: critical reasoning of the studied political concepts and phenomena). |
| Required readings | <p>Textbook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. HOWLETT, M. RAMESH, A. PERL, Studying Public Policy, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009. <p>Original research or book chapters will be made available to you online or in class.</p> |
| Supplementary readings | Further readings will be provided during the course and made available to you online. |