

**POL 113, Introduction to American Politics
Fall 2019**

Name: _____

Due Date:

- **Paper** (6-8 pages) due December 4 at noon on Sakai
- Worth 20% of the final class grade.

Specific Details:

- Number the pages (do not put your name on any other pages).
- Include complete citations for every source used.
- **Ten points will be deducted for each day late.**

Longer Paper

The major focus for the remainder of the course is on political institutions and forces both within and outside of government that push for policy and policy change. On that end, your longer paper prompt focuses on public policy from the perspective of those within and outside of political institutions. Pick a policy area from the list below, and explore how government (presidency/executive branch, Congress, bureaucracy, if appropriate the Supreme Court) and outside actors (interest groups and media in particular, but also individuals outside of government who may be affected by policy) encounter and work within that area of government. You can also work state governments in as well (but this is not a state & local politics class so it's not required or necessary).

The main question for analysis is: what groups have control of policy, and why? The focus here is on power and how power is used, so do not worry about explaining public policy details unless you want to make a case related to how they contribute to your argument on power. You can talk about the ramifications of this control in the conclusion, but as this is also not a public policy course I'm not expecting fully-developed connections here, just a sense of who has power under what you are seeing. As we will discuss throughout the rest of the course, many of these bodies have ways to influence and construct policy, and influence the actors who actually make policy. Who really controls the process and why?

Here's a list of potential policy areas you can focus on that regularly involve federal government activities. If there's something outside of this that you want to do, I'm happy to talk to you about that.

- Agriculture
- Banking
- Commerce
- Criminal Justice (federal level)
- District of Columbia affairs (including questions of statehood)
- Education
- Energy
- Environmental
- Foreign Policy
- Health Care (can also go the Medicare or Medicaid route)
- Infrastructure
- Military and Armed Services (this one can be boiled down further to Veterans' Affairs, Veterans' Health, Veterans' Housing, Military Bases and Base Construction, Procurement (buying new military vehicles and hardware), and Nuclear Weapons, among many other things).
- National Parks
- National Security
- Science
- Space Exploration (NASA)
- Taxation
- Territorial (you can go down further and talk about Puerto Rico or one of the other territories by itself as well)

General guidelines for writing: 12 point font, Times New Roman preferred (but Calibri is also fine... just don't write in Comic Sans.), 1 inch margins (this is a default from Word, so don't worry), double-spaced, 6-8 pages (you can go on to page 9, but don't go further than halfway down the page... I want you to be concise and succinct in your arguments).

Citation: I have no preference on citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago), just be consistent. In-text citation is fine as well. Footnotes or endnotes are fine, just pick one.

Thesis Statements/Draft Policy: Due to the number of students and time constraints I cannot read drafts. However, if you want to send me a thesis statement, you can do so and I'll reply with comments.

Expectations: My expectation in this assignment are that you will write a clean, concise piece where you make an argument in some direction and then back that argument up with evidence. You will want to make sure your evidence is both strong and illuminates your larger point. Excellent papers will do all of these things and will illuminate evidence to show how the evidence fits into the larger argument.