

COURSE SYLLABUS

Public Policies: Decision and Implementation

2526-2-E1601N067-E1601N055M

Learning objectives

The first module 'Public Policies: Decision and Implementation' introduces the main topics and concepts of political science, with particular attention to policy-making processes. After an introduction to the discipline and its objects of study (politics vs policy), the module covers the problems of collective action and decision-making processes within groups, the actors (parties, interest groups and experts) and the institutions (parliaments, governments and public administration) of the representative process. Finally, the module focuses on the chain of responsiveness in the realms of fiscal and welfare policies, from parties' electoral promises to national governments' budgetary choices, to verify whether and to what extent the former translate into coherent policy choices.

As a result, the first module, "Public Policies: Decision-Making and Implementation", will enable students to develop all the Dublin Descriptors (DdD). In particular:

- DdD 1 – Knowledge and understanding: theoretical knowledge related to policy-making processes.
- DdD 2 – Applying knowledge and understanding: developed through exercises and case study analyses concerning policy-making processes.
- DdD 3 – Making judgements and DdD 4 – Communication skills: both fostered through the completion of a group project.
- DdD 5 – Learning skills: supported by the availability of bibliographic references and online materials, which allow students to independently deepen their understanding of the course topics.

Contents

The first module 'Public Policies: Decision and Implementation' addresses the following topics:

- What is political science?
- Political science and study of public policies
- Policy types and tools

- The problems of collective decision-making processes
- Policy-making
- The actors of public policies
 - Parties
 - Parliament
 - Government
 - Public administration
 - Interest groups and the theory of collective action
 - Experts
- Politics determines policy or vice versa? The case of fiscal and welfare policies.

Detailed program

The first module "Public Policies: Decision and Implementation" is divided into three parts.

The first part introduces students to the discipline of political science, clarifying the objects of study and the methodological approaches. It then focuses on public policy analysis as an applied science to identify solutions to problems perceived as relevant by the community.

In the second, more extensive part of the module, students are introduced to the theories and models of the policy process. Great attention is devoted to the actors (parties, interest groups and experts) and institutions (parliaments, governments and the public administration) of the representative process.

Finally, the third and last part of the module focuses on the chain of responsiveness in the field of fiscal and welfare policies, from parties' electoral promises to national governments' budgetary choices, to verify whether and to what extent the former translate into consistent policy choices.

Prerequisites

The requirements for the first module "Public Policies: Decision and Implementation" are minimal. It assumes only a decent knowledge of English, algebra and a basic understanding of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Teaching methods

The course will employ the following teaching methods:

- In-person lectures in an expository mode, aimed at presenting theoretical concepts and content;
- In-person lectures in an interactive mode, characterized by active student participation through guided discussions.

Most in-person lessons will be structured in two parts: a first expository session introducing new concepts and content, followed by a second interactive session allowing students to test their understanding in real time.

- At least three sessions (the exact number may vary depending on student participation in group work) will be organized in workshop mode, allowing students to work collaboratively on a project and engage directly with the instructor.

Up to a maximum of three lessons (equivalent to 6 hours, or 14.2% of the total course time) may be delivered remotely in asynchronous online mode, via pre-recorded videos made available by the instructor in advance on the course's e-learning platform. These lessons will be expository only, with no real-time interaction.

A detailed course schedule, specifying for each session the date, topics covered, teaching method, and delivery mode (in-person or asynchronous online), will be made available by the instructor on the course's e-learning platform before the start of classes.

Assessment methods

The program is the same for attending and non-attending students. Attendance is not compulsory, but it is warmly suggested.

All students, both attending and non-attending, will be given the opportunity to do a teamwork. Non-attending students wishing to join the teamwork have to contact the instructor by email (fedra.negri@unimib.it) within one month from the start date of the course.

The **exam for students with teamwork** includes:

- A team work. In small groups (max 6 people), students must answer a research question formulated by the instructor. To do this, they must personally and critically rework the content of scientific papers and refer to data and empirical evidences. The group project allows the instructor to assess the students' ability to independently explore and reflect on the course content, as well as their teamwork, problem-solving, and communication skills. Evaluation: up to +3 points to be added to the final exam.
- Final written exam (2 hours): The exam consists of 10 questions, including closed-ended questions (true/false, matching, multiple choice), short open-ended questions (max 5 lines), and one medium-length open-ended question (max 15 lines). Important: The medium-length question, worth 4 points, will focus on the group project. This written exam allows the instructor to evaluate the student's knowledge of the course content. Grading scale: 0–31.

The **assessment for students who do not participate in the group project** consists of a final written exam lasting two hours, composed of 10 questions. The syllabus and questions 1–9 will be identical to those for students who completed the group project. However, question 10 (medium-length open-ended question) will be different: it will not concern the group project, but rather address general course content, like the previous questions. This written exam allows the instructor to evaluate the student's knowledge of the course content. Grading scale: 0–31.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The program is the same for attending and non-attending students. Lessons are prepared by integrating and reworking the contents of scientific articles and selected chapters selected from the following three handbooks:

Clark W. R., Golder M. e Golder S. N. (2022, 2° edizione in italiano a cura di Franchino F., Curini L., Giannetti D., Vignoli V. e Zucchini F.), *Principi di Scienza Politica*, McGrawHill

- The 2022 edition is recommended. However, the 2011 edition, edited by Carbone G., Curini L., Fasano L. and Zucchini F. is fine too.
- Of this manual, chapters 1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16 will be used.
- A shorter version of this manual, entitled "Principi di scienza politica. Selezione per il corso Politiche Pubbliche", has been produced. This version contains only the chapters of interest for the course and therefore is cheaper. It can be purchased communicating the ISBN 9781307851441 to the bookshop.

Caramani D. (2021, 3° edizione), Scienza Politica, Egea.

- The 2021 edition is recommended. However, previous editions are fine too.
- Of this manual, chapters 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 will be used.

Cotta M., Della Porta D. e Morlino L. (2008), Scienza Politica, Il Mulino.

- The 2008 edition is recommended. However, the 2001 edition is fine too.
- Of this manual, chapters 12, 15 and 17 will be used.
- This manual is available in the university library.

The document PP_Decision_Implementation_Argomenti_Bibliografia.pdf available on the E-learning platform contains a table that specifies, for each topic, which chapters and which scientific articles have been used by the professor to prepare the corresponding lesson. Several teaching materials are available online on the E-learning page.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
