

TO: GOVT 350 Students

FR: Larry Evans

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RE: Course Overview

The purpose of this memo is to provide background information about GOVT 350, Introduction to Public Policy, for fall 2002. GOVT 350 is a comprehensive introduction to domestic public policy making in the U.S. It is a fairly popular elective course within the government concentration, but my hope is that any student interested in politics and policy making will find the class enjoyable and informative. There are no prerequisites beyond an interest in public affairs. Our focus this semester will be on developing precise generalizations about the processes through which domestic public policy is formulated in American government and the forces that shape the contents of policy outcomes. Although we will learn a lot about the details of pressing issues such as health care reform, tax policy, and education, our main goal will be to develop the conceptual tools necessary to understand the policy making process. You can find detailed information about the course on the course web site.

Course Site Registration. If you registered for GOVT 350 prior to mid-August, you should already be enrolled on the course site. Be sure to check on this as soon as possible by accessing <http://blackboard.wm.edu>. Click on the "login" button. Your user name is the same as your e-mail ID, and your password is p and the last six digits of your SSN. A page should appear that includes the course sites that exist for your fall 2002 classes, including GOVT 350. Notice that both sections of this class share the same course site. If a link to the site for GOVT 350 does not appear on your "my blackboard" page, you should enroll yourself in the course site as soon as possible. It is critical that every member of both sections of GOVT 350 be registered on the course site because I will regularly use the e-mail and other features to communicate with you.

Personal. My office hours are Wednesdays from 10-12. However, I will be in my office most days that I am not in Washington throughout the fall semester. If you want to meet with me outside of normal office hours, just drop by or contact me by telephone (1-3030) or e-mail (clevan@wm.edu) to set up an appointment. My office is in Morton 137-B. And please contact me over the semester by e-mail with any questions you might have. I routinely monitor my e-mail even when I am out of the office.

Structure and Grading. GOVT 350 will include readings, discussion, a midterm and final, the writing and presentation of an issue memo, and participation in an elaborate simulation exercise in which students will be assigned roles as members of a congressional committee. The midterm will count for 25 percent of the grade and the final will count for 35 percent. The issue memo (2 pages, single-spaced) will count for 15 percent, and will include a brief (no more than three minutes) verbal presentation to your section of GOVT 350. Among other components, the simulation exercise will include the writing of a co-authored position memo (3 pages, single-spaced) and a sole-authored simulation memo (2 pages, single-spaced). Taken together, the various components of the simulation exercise will count for 15 percent of the course grade. The remaining 10 percent will derive from class participation throughout the semester. Detailed information about the memos and other assignments will be available on the course site.

Reading and Assignment Schedule. Although I have taught this class regularly for over a decade, I have yet to find an adequate textbook for it. As a result, I have pieced together the readings from diverse sources -- major academic books, chapters in edited volumes, and journal articles. These materials are available for purchase at Staples. The cost of the readings packet will be substantially less than the cost of purchasing four or five books.

8/28 No assignment
8/30 Cochran and Maline

9/2 Shively, Conceptual Outline
9/4 Luker
9/6 Stone
9/9 Schattschneider
9/11 Downs
9/13 Nelson
9/16 P. Peterson (Chapter 2-3)
9/18 P. Peterson (Chapter 5)
9/20 Volden
9/23 Page and Shapiro
9/25 Jacobs and Shapiro
9/27 Loomis and Cigler
9/30 Leech and Baumgartner

10/2 M. Peterson
10/4 Arnold (Chapter 2)
10/7 Arnold (Chapter 3)
10/9 No assignment
10/11 **Midterm Exam**
10/16 Arnold (Chapter 4)
10/18 Arnold (Chapter 6)
10/21 Evans
10/23 Readings on homeland defense
10/25 Simulation (member meetings)
10/28 Simulation (caucus meetings)
Position memos due
10/30 Simulation (first markup)

11/1 Simulation (second markup)
11/4 Simulation (third markup)
11/6 Moe (a)
11/8 Moe (b)
Simulation memos due
11/11 Brady and Volden
11/13 Rosenberg (Chapter 1)
11/15 Rosenberg (Chapter 6)
11/18 No assignment

11/20 Issue memo presentations 1*
11/22 Issue memo presentations 2
11/25 Issue memo presentations 3

12/2 Issue memo presentations 4
12/4 Issue memo presentations 5
12/6 No assignment
TBA **Final Exam**

***Issue memos due on relevant presentation day**