

PPOL 5110/SOSC5780 Foundation in Public Policy

L2 Fall 2025

SYLLABUS

Time and Venue

Monday, 6:30PM-7:50PM @LSK1009

Tuesday, 6:30PM-7:50PM @LSK1014

Instructor

[Professor HE Jingwei Alex](#), Division of Public Policy

E-mail: ajwhe@ust.hk; Telephone: 3469-2282

Office hour: Wednesday 2:00PM-3:30PM@Room4616A

Teaching Assistant

Mr Prithish Anand (E-mail: panand@connect.ust.hk)

Course Description

This course introduces students to the study of public policy. We will explore key theories and analytical frameworks for public policy and how they can be applied to approach contemporary public policy issues. The first part of the course will deal with the roles of key building blocks of the policy systems, such as approaches, values, policy actors, policy instruments, and policy context, in shaping policymaking. The second part of the course will examine key stages in the policy process, such as agenda setting, policy formation, decision-making, policy implementation and policy evaluation.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- ✓ Be familiar with key terms, concepts, approaches, and frameworks concerning public policy.
- ✓ Describe important structures and interactions among key components of policy systems, such as policy actors, policy environment and policy instruments.
- ✓ Understand key theories and frameworks of the policy process and identify areas of potential improvement in a given context.
- ✓ Improve analytical, writing, group work, and presentation skills.

Textbooks

- Wu, X., Ramesh, M., and Fritzen, S. (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London: Routledge.
- Hassel, A., and Wegrich, K. (2022). *How to Do Public Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Assessment

Class participation	10%	Continuous
Policy memo (individual)	25%	Due on October 17
Group presentation	25%	November 18, 24, 25
Peer evaluation	10%	Due on presentation days
Policy evaluation exercise	30%	December 1

Code of Academic Integrity

All work must be entirely your own. Please cite the relevant work whenever you borrow ideas from others, using the proper reference format (e.g., APA, MLA). Examples of violations of the academic integrity code include but are not limited to: 1) failure to use quotation marks when quoting, 2) failure to give full credit when paraphrasing, 3) use of others' ideas or work products, 4) submission of work prepared through impermissible collaboration, and 5) submission of work prepared by you for another class. (Your work in this class may be related to your work in another class, but the work you submit for this class should not duplicate that submitted for another class.) Violation of the Academic Integrity Code may result in failure in the course, as well as more serious academic sanctions. For details about the academic integrity code, please refer to <https://acadreg.ust.hk/generalreg.html>.

Please check for plagiarism before you turn in each homework, for example using the anti-plagiarism software Turnitin available on Canvas. A rule of thumb is that the similarity score should not exceed **15%**, excluding references. Any use of **generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and DeepSeek** must be declared in written works.

Late Submission Policy

Late assignments will incur a penalty for each day they are late, except in cases where extensions have been granted by the instructor. Except for emergencies, extensions are much more likely to be granted when they are requested well in advance, with strong justification. If you are struggling to complete your coursework, please discuss with the instructor sooner rather than later.

Class #1 & Class #2 Course Overview: What is Public Policy?

September 1 & September 2

Readings:

- Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., Perl, A. (2009). *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems* (3rd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 1: Why study public policy?).
- Wu, X., Ramesh, M., and Fritzen, S. (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London: Routledge (Chapter 1: Public managers and the policy process).
- Hassel, A., and Wegrich, K. (2022). *How to Do Public Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 1: Public policy).

Class #3 & Class #4 Idea, Power, and Institutions

September 8 & September 9

Readings:

- Heywood, A. (2007). *Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan (Chapter 1: What is politics? Chapter 12: Governments, systems, and regimes).
- Cairney, P. (2020). *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues* (2nd edition). London: Bloomsbury (Chapter 3: Power and public policy).

Class #5 Policy Context

September 15

Case #1: Controversies of social welfare program in Taiwan

Class #6 & Class #8 Policy Actors

September 16 & **September 23**

Readings:

- Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., Perl, A. (2009). *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems* (3rd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 3: The policy context).

Case #2: The Belt & Road Initiative in Sri Lanka

Class #7 Special Workshop: Ethical and Creative Use of Generative AI by Mr Pritish Anand

September 22

Class #9 & Class #10 Values and Ethics in Public Policy

September 29 & September 30

Readings:

- Stone, D. (2022). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. New York: WW Norton (Chapter 2: Equity; Chapter 3: Efficiency; Chapter 5: Liberty; Chapter 6: Security).
- Rosenthal, D., and Perlman, B. (1986). Ethical dimensions of public policy and administration. *Polity*, 19(1), 56-73.

Case #3: Legalizing casino gambling in Singapore

No class on October 7; public holiday

Class #11, Class #12 & Class #13 Agenda Setting

October 6, October 13 & October 14

Readings:

- Wu, X., Ramesh, M., and Fritzen, S. (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London: Routledge (Chapter 2: Agenda setting).
- Hassel, A., and Wegrich, K. (2022). *How to Do Public Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 3: How to set the agenda?).

Case #4: How was the Individual Visit Scheme launched in Hong Kong?

Case #5: Rural health care reforms in China

Policy memo due on October 17 (6PM)

Class #14 & Class #15 Policy Formulation

October 21 & October 27

Readings:

- Wu, X., Ramesh, M., and Fritzen, S. (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London: Routledge (Chapter 3: Policy formulation).

- Hassel, A., and Wegrich, K. (2022). *How to Do Public Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 4: How to choose and design policy instruments?)
- John, P. (2016). Behavioural approaches: how nudges lead to more intelligent policy design? In: Peters, B.G., and Zittoun, P. (eds), *Contemporary Approaches to Public Policy*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 113-132.

Class #16 & Class #17 Decision Making

October 28 & November 3

Readings:

- Wu, X., Ramesh, M., and Fritzen, S. (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London: Routledge (Chapter 4: Decision making).
- Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., Perl, A. (2009). *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems* (3rd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 6: Public policy decision-making).

Case #6: The ocean discharge of nuclear wastewater in Japan

Class #18 & Class 19 Policy Implementation

November 4 & November 10

Readings:

- Wu, X., Ramesh, M., and Fritzen, S. (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London: Routledge (Chapter 5: Policy implementation).
- Hassel, A., and Wegrich, K. (2022). *How to Do Public Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 5: How to implement public policy?)

Case #7: “Think of a Pig”: Shanghai’s waste sorting policy

Class #20 & Class #21 Policy Evaluation

November 11 & November 17

Readings:

- Wu, X., Ramesh, M., and Fritzen, S. (2018). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London: Routledge (Chapter 6: Policy evaluation).
- Hassel, A., and Wegrich, K. (2022). *How to Do Public Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 6: How to evaluate policies?)

Classes #22-24 Workshop: Student Presentations (I, II, III)

November 18, 24, 25

Policy evaluation exercise due on December 1 (6PM)