

Please submit your completed forms and supporting documents to wqb_cert@sfu.ca

**REQUEST FOR *CERTIFICATION*
AS A DESIGNATED BREADTH-SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSE**

Thank you for your interest in offering a designated breadth-social science (B-SOC) course. B-SOC courses will help to meet Simon Fraser University's commitment to General Education, which enhances undergraduate degrees by informing and complementing students' programs of study, encouraging students to develop understandings and skills that equip them for life-long learning, and preparing them to appreciate, critique and contribute ideas and values of diverse, complex, and interdependent local and global communities in an ethical and comprehensive manner.

Completing this form will provide information for assessment by a faculty committee regarding whether your course meets the criteria for B-SOC. Please contact the Director, University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison, at ucildir@sfu.ca if you have any questions about completing this form.

BREADTH CRITERIA

A **BREADTH** course provides the opportunity for students to enrich the subject matter knowledge in their program(s) of study by exposing them to new theoretical perspectives, forms of thought, and modes of inquiry. Breadth courses encourage students to reflect on their values, beliefs, and commitments and allow them to improve their ability to engage in conversations, debates, and actions that comprise our globally interconnected society.

Additionally, a Breadth course must substantially fulfill AT LEAST ONE of the following conditions:

1. Articulates a framework for organizing and acquiring knowledge in a particular field of study; raises overarching questions and problems within a field of study and investigates how the field generates and validates workable solutions to problems.
2. Develops students' systematic understandings of the historical development and/or the contemporary dynamics of the physical, natural, social, and/or cultural environments that comprise the program of study.

BREADTH SOCIAL SCIENCE PURPOSE

- To build cross-cultural understandings and knowledge of the complexities of social systems and diverse world views; to help students navigate and influence societal challenges in the world.
- To develop an understanding of how social scientists think, analyze issues, interpret evidence, and draw conclusions, enabling students to recognize and critique the issues that define contemporary society.
- To prepare students to make connections between their field of study and the broader contexts of human society. To equip students with transferable skills in social critique, evaluation, and the synthesis of knowledge and understanding.

EXAMPLES

Examples of B-SOC courses can be found on the General Education Curriculum page [here](#).

Please note, you can answer any of the following questions with screenshots, copying and pasting from Canvas, or by attaching documents. The attached documents can be in any format (ie PDF, word document). A short paragraph is normally sufficient to answer the questions on this form.

COURSE TITLE, NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION:

Course #: PLCY 200

Course Title: Introduction to Public Policy

Frequency of offering (# / year) 2

Average enrollment per offering: 28

OTHER INFORMATION:

Please indicate if this course currently has or will have another WQB designation: __NO__

Instructor(s) responsible for teaching the course: _____ Ali Bhagat, William Scott _____

**If multiple instructors are responsible for teaching this course, please list them all and include a course syllabus for each one.

List course pre-requisites: _____ n/a _____

Please give a one-paragraph description of the content and overall format (lecture, seminar, tutorial, etc.) of the course, listing any prerequisites (maximum 200 words).

This course focuses on providing an understanding of how public policy gets made. We begin the course with understanding what public policy is and the three framework. We then delve into understanding three theories of the policy process: the policy cycle, the Multiple Streams Framework, and the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory. We then cover how to write a briefing note, what policy tools are, and evidence-based policy. We put our foundational knowledge to the test and write a briefing note individually and present a policy pitch in a group. By the end of this course, students should be able to explain how policy gets made through the policy cycle and other theories and effectively communicate ideas about public policy in oral and written form.

BREADTH RATIONALE:

1. A breadth course exposes students to new theoretical perspectives, forms of thought, and modes of inquiry, and encourages them to reflect on their values, beliefs, and commitments and allow them to improve their ability to engage in conversations, debates, and actions that comprise our globally interconnected society. In approximately one paragraph, please explain how your course does this.

This introduction to public policy course introduces students to what public policy is. We cover various definitions of public policy, the structure of government, theories of policymaking, and tools for policy. The course promotes critical thinking to carefully consider the various factors that interplay to influence public policy. Assignments are focused on identifying important policy issues and tackling them with policy solutions. Public policy is a social science discipline. Beyond the foundations of public policy—which are interconnected to disciplines such as political science, sociology, geography, criminology, public health, and environmental studies—the course also provides students with overviews on topics related to major global challenges. These include climate change, migration and refugee policy, labour issues, gender and sexuality among other urgent global issues. The course provides a pluralistic and multi-theoretical way to address these from the perspective of grounded and practical solutions. Students engage with various policy actors that are relevant to all disciplines including government, private sector, and NGOs. The course is about grounding theory in a practical context.

2. A breadth course must fulfill one of the two following conditions. Please explain how your course does this.
 - a. Articulates a framework for organizing and acquiring knowledge in a particular field of study; raises overarching questions and problems within a field of study and investigates how the field generates and validates workable solutions to problems.
 - b. Develops students' systematic understandings of the historical development and/or the contemporary dynamics of the physical, natural, social, and/or cultural environments that comprise the program of study.

This is an introductory course so it covers the basics around definitions and the structure of government, but it also covers four theories/frameworks to understand policymaking. Students are also engaged on evidence-based/-informed policymaking to critique the concept by considering the practicalities of this, normative nature, and so forth. Without a doubt, a) is covered as we will discuss and study the main frameworks of understanding public policy and these frameworks in turn inform grounded real world solutions to major global challenges. With respect to b) students will understand the context of public policy and its historical development through an in-depth overview of the policy cycle. We explore contemporary dynamics in socio-cultural environments: climate change, migration, health policy and so forth.

BREADTH SOCIAL SCIENCE RATIONALE

1. A B-SOC course builds cross-cultural understandings and knowledge of the complexities of social systems and diverse world views; to help students navigate and influence societal challenges in the world. In approximately one paragraph, please explain how your course does this.

This course brings together students from a range of disciplines, including political science, health studies, environmental studies, economics, and international studies, to challenge the status quo and explore policy options. Students are engaged to understand the complexities of social systems through learning about the various components that contribute to policymaking through studying theories of policymaking. For example, understanding the differing interests, ideas, and institutions at play. Or similarly, the problems, politics, and solutions in the sphere of the policy issue at hand. Students are also engaged to understand diverse world views through reading news articles, think tank reports, academic articles, and other sources to position their understandings across differing perspectives and worldviews.

2. A B-SOC course develops an understanding of how social scientists think, analyze issues, interpret evidence, and draw conclusions, enabling students to recognize and critique the issues that define contemporary society. In approximately one paragraph, please explain how your course

does this.

First, we explore various definitions of public policy and discuss the inherent nuances. Students are asked to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each. Second, students are introduced to various theories that help them understand the social environment and the factors that influence public policy. For instance, the 3Is framework covers the institutions, ideas, and interests that influence public policy, which allows students to apply real-world examples to further their understanding. Similarly, students are also taught the policy cycle, multiple streams theory, and the punctuated equilibrium theory, and we compare and contrast across all of these theories to highlight strengths and weaknesses. And lastly, in both the briefing note and policy pitch assignments, students are engaged to consider the issue or issues at hand, interpret a range of evidence, and draw conclusions in the form of a recommendation. In addition, students learn to apply the theories they have understood in various contemporary contexts that would translate to other social science courses.

3. A B-SOC course prepares students to make connections between their field of study and the broader contexts of human society. To equip students with transferable skills in social critique, evaluation, and the synthesis of knowledge and understanding.

This course aims to help students gain transferrable skills through the assignments and readings. The course emphasizes critical thinking, in-depth reading, and keeping an eye on the contemporary social world. This means that students are consuming both academic and mainstream texts such as policy reports, opinion pieces, briefing notes and news media. The idea is that students understand how policy undergirds major global challenges. Moreover, student assignments such as briefing notes and opinion pieces assist them in developing their analytical writing skills. Beyond essay writing, this course pushes students to synthesize information for a government audience—a skill they can carry with them to work world upon graduation.

4. Other ways in which this course meets the goals and criteria of a Breadth-Social Science course are:

Because breadth courses encourage students to reflect on their values, beliefs, and commitments, this aligns very well with PLCY 200. Students are encouraged to think about the framing of policy issues and how this aligns with different beliefs. Students are introduced to a variety of perspectives that guide their thinking. The key to this course is grounding their diverse beliefs and ideas in a concrete policy framework. What sets this course apart from other intro-level social science courses is the emphasis on the workable, practical, and real-world of policy and government. Students are encouraged to bring their ideas learned in other courses in order to sharpen their policy recommendations. Conversely, students will leave the course with an eye to public policy and the inner workings of society outside of academia.

PLEASE SUBMIT A CURRENT OR RECENT COURSE SYLLABUS,

INCLUDING A CLASS SCHEDULE AND GRADING SCHEME WITH THIS FORM.

PLCY 200: Introduction to Public Policy

Dr Ali Bhagat

Draft Syllabus

Mode of Delivery: In-person and Online (Asynchronous)

Office Hours: By Appointment

Acknowledgement and Teaching Philosophy (adapted from Genevieve LeBaron)

At SFU, we learn, teach, work, and live on the unceded and stolen traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples including the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səl̓ílwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh), and Kwikwəλəm (Kwkwetlem) Nations. I was born in India and have grown up as an immigrant-settler in the Greater Toronto Area (on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples). The impacts of colonialism are devastating and far reaching, and it is important for me (and us in this class) to recognize these ongoing legacies felt by Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups. As privileged immigrants to Canada my family and I have benefitted from living on stolen and re-appropriated land. At the same time, immigrants to Canada cannot escape the discursive and material violence of colonialism particularly at the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. I am sharing this acknowledgement as a way to invite discussion and recognize our collective commitment to reconciliation and justice in line with SFU's commitments to truth and reconciliation. Public policy research should foreground the experiences of Indigenous peoples—a perspective often ignored by various actors who hold power and shape policy in Canada and beyond. As such, I share this acknowledgement as an invitation to Indigenous students and other members within our School to use traditional ways of knowing and being and to embrace these as important and viable research and learning methods in our course.

Course Description

This course asks two key questions: 'how is public policy made?' and 'who benefits and why from particular policies?'. In asking these questions we aim to understand the various ideas, institutions, and actors who drive public policy in Canada and the world and the various power relations that underpin these. This course is divided in two main sections. In the first half of the course we will learn various policy frameworks that explain to us how public policy is made. These include the policy cycle, the Multiple Streams Framework, and the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory. In the second half of the course, students will explore various policy issues including migration and refugee policy, policies of race, Indigeneity, and equity, and housing policy, and global labour policy. By the end of this course, students will be able to explain how policy gets made, understand the various theoretical frameworks of public policy, and think critically about these concepts in applied and real-world scenarios concerning global and Canadian public policy.

Course Evaluation

Item	Due Date	Weight
Mid-term Exam	February 14, 2025	25
Opinion Piece	March 1 - April 7, 2025	25
Briefing Note	April 20, 2025	40
Group Discussion Boards	Ongoing	10

Midterm Exam (25%)

The midterm exam will cover the first half of the course (Weeks 1-5). The format will be solely multiple choice and will be based on the lecture materials and course readings. You will be able to access the 2-hour exam (25 questions) at your convenience between February 7-14. Please note that the exam will have to be conducted in one sitting within the allocated time.

Opinion Piece (25%) –800 words

You will replicate [an opinion piece](#) found in major Canadian newspapers such as the *Toronto Star* or *The Globe and Mail*. You may submit an opinion piece on any topic from part 2 of the course. The aim of this assignment is to pick something from the real world as it relates to the policy topics in the course. This is not a space to review reading materials or summarize information. The key to success in this assignment is to have a point of view/argument and make an incisive critique of public policy. You may also provide a new way forward in thinking about public policy or have a policy recommendation on a topic.

Briefing Note (40%) –1500 words

Instead of the usual term paper, this course asks students to write a briefing note for a high-level official or Minister. Students are allowed to pick any topic from the second half of the course and use any of the frameworks learned in the course. The key for this assignment is to be specific. What is the specific policy area you are recommending action or inaction on? Who is the note directed to and what is it that you are recommending under their purview? Keep in mind that the briefing note is designed to provide a snapshot of information so that a minister or other official can make an executive decision. The point is to convince them that your position is correct. You may choose Canadian (Municipal, Provincial, Federal) or Global policy actors (UN, IMF, World Bank and other institutions).

Please include the following in your note:

Issue statement: /10

- Issue statement is one or two sentences long (no longer!)
- Problem clearly defined
- Intended audience is clear

- Why this is an issue that needs to be considered now is evident
- Clear purpose of briefing note

Background: /20

- Concisely covers the necessary, relevant history, and context for the intended audience
- Addresses:
 - Who is affected
 - Which institutions are involved (legislations, regulations, programs, decision-makers)
 - Whose interests are at play and what are their views

Key considerations: /15

- Highlights necessary and pertinent information, which may include:
 - cost of action or in-action (such as financial or health),
 - impact on groups, and
 - potential public backlash.
- If the topic is contentious, be sure to explain this.

Options: /30

- Presents three to four options (typically, you should aim for three options). Keep in mind, the “status quo” should be one option.
- Pros and cons concisely presented for every option
- Thorough and balanced, clear, and concise
- Students bring their own insight

Recommendation: /10

- A clear recommendation is made from one of the aforementioned options
- Rationale presents a coherent argument
- Students bring their own insight

Writing: /15

- Conforms to required structure and length: one to two single-spaced pages (not including the reference list)
- Uses plain language writing, designed for readability (well-organized, easy to read and remember key points)
- Considers intended audience
- Correct citation and referencing. Any style is acceptable as long as it is consistent (e.g. APA, Vancouver, Harvard)
- Choices of sources are appropriate – both in quantity and quality
- Proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling employed

Group Discussion Board Reflections (10%)

Each group must complete 5 reading reflections over the course of the term. The groups will use a 3-2-1 method in submitting their discussion boards on Canvas. This method means, summarizing each reading by providing **3 sentences**, reflection on **2 key points** of the reading materials, and asking **1 critical question** of each reading. You will submit these directly on Canvas. Please note that these assignments will only be graded at the end of the term. Each discussion board is worth 2 percent of your overall grade and you will be graded as a group. Please ensure amongst yourselves how you will organise the submit before **Thursday** of each week of the class. For example, if I want to submit a discussion board for week 3 starting Monday January 20th, I must submit the reflection by Thursday January 23rd.

Required Readings

Part I: The Power and Politics of Public Policy

Week 1: Course Overview, Introduction to Public Policy

Smith, K., & Larimer, C. (2017). *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. Routledge: London.
Read Chapter 1: 'Public Policy as a Concept and a Field (or Fields) of Study.'

Ahmed, B. (2024). Decolonizing Policy Research as Restorative Research Justice: Applying an Indigenous Policy Research Framework (IPRF). *Critical Policy Studies* 18.2: 271-298.

Week 2: The Policy Cycle

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2020). *Studying Public Policy: Principles and Processes*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Read Chapter 4: 100-119

Turnbull, N. (2006). How Should We Theorise Public Policy? Problem Solving and Problematicity. *Policy and Society*, 25(2), 3-22.

Week 3: Ideas, Institutions, Interests

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2020). *Studying Public Policy: Principles and Processes*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Read Chapter 2 pp 35-51 and Chapter 3.

Lodhi, I. (2021). Globalisation and Public Policy: Bridging the Disciplinary and Epistemological Boundaries. *Policy & Society* 40 (4): 522-44.

Week 4: Frameworks of Public Policy Analysis

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2020). *Studying Public Policy: Principles and Processes*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Read Chapter 4 pp 125 -130

Jenkins-Smith, C. et al. (2018). The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Overview of the Research Program. In *Theories of the Policy Process*, 4th edition. Routledge: New York: 135-171.

King, D., & Smith R. (2005). Racial Orders in American Political Development. *American Political Science Review*, 99 (1): 75-92.

Week 5: Identity, Power, and Public Policy

True, J. (2003). Mainstreaming Gender in Global Public Policy. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 5 (3): 368-396.

Brief: *Why are we so afraid of gender-based analysis?*. Policy Options:

<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2018/afraid-gender-based-analysis/>

Banting K., & Thompson, D. (2021). The Puzzling Persistence of Racial Inequality in Canada". *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 54 (4): 870-891.

Fraser, N. (2014). Can society be commodities all the way down? Post-Polanyian reflections on Capitalist Crisis. *Economy and Society*, 43(4): 541-558.

Week 6: Mid-Term

Review materials and answer the mid-term within the allotted time and before the deadline.

Week 7: Reding Week

Part II: Analysing Public Policy

Week 8: Briefing Notes and Opinion Pieces

Opinion pieces

https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/new_seglin_how_to_write_an_oped_1_25_17_7.pdf

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/op-ed-writing-guide-washington-post-examples/>

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/communications/media-relations/how-write-opinion-pieces-get-published>

Briefing Notes

https://www.queensu.ca/sps/sites/spswww/files/uploaded_files/GovTalk/2_%20BN_INTRO_2021.pdf

<https://www.publicsectorwriting.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Options-Recommendation-Briefing-Note.pdf>

<https://www.publicsectorwriting.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Example-Information-Briefing-Note.pdf>

Week 9: Corporate Power and Public Policy

Babic, M., Heemskerk, E., & Fichtner, J. (2018). *Who is more powerful – states or corporations?* The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/who-is-more-powerful-states-or-corporations-99616>

Darcy, S. (2017). The elephant in the room: corporate tax avoidance & business and human rights. *Business and Human Rights Journal*, 2 (1), 1-30.

Soederberg, S (2007). Taming corporations or buttressing market-led development? A critical assessment of the global compact. *Globalizations* 4(4): 500-513.

Week 10: Housing Policy

Policy Options Special Dossier. *How Can Canada Fix the Housing Crisis?*
Read at least 5 opinions pieces (2-3 pages each)

Agarwal, S., & Zoe, C. Housing and homelessness in Indigenous Communities of Canada's North. *Housing Policy Debate* 34 (1): 39-69.

Soederberg, S. (2018). Evictions: A Capitalist and Global Phenomena. *Development & Change*, 49 (2).

Week 11: Migration Policy

Omidvar, R., & Cepla, Z. (2021). Canada needs to improve its immigration channels for essential migrants workers. *Policy Options*: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/august-2021/canada-needs-to-improve-its-immigration-channels-for-essential-migrant-workers/>

Zetter, R. (2021). Theorizing the refugee humanitarian-development nexus: a political-economy analysis. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34 (2): 1766-1786.

Kreichauf, R. (2023). Accommodation for profit, not for refugees: Racial capitalism and the logics of Berlin's refugee accommodation market. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 41 (3): 471-493.

Week 12: Regulating Sex and Public Policy

Brender, N. (2024) What's at stake in supporting sex workers' right to health. *Policy Options*: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/february-2024/sex-work-dangerous-law/>

Lewis J., & Maticka-Tyndale, E. (2000). Licensing sex work: Public policy and women's lives. *Canadian Public Policy*: 437-449.

Writzer, R. (2020). The campaign against sex work in the United States: A successful moral crusade. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 17 (3): 339-414.