Italian code: SPS/04 (old) – GSPS-02/A (new)	**Credits: 9**
Course: Political Science/Public Policy Analysis	
Main language of instruction: Italian	
Other language of instruction: English	

Head instructor
Professor Roberto De Rosa - roberto.derosa@unicusano.it

Objectives

This course aims to provide the essential foundations for understanding and analyzing the key processes underlying the formulation and implementation of public policies, enabling students to acquire both the fundamental knowledge and the competencies necessary to shape decision-making programs in public policy production. Starting from the origins of policy analysis and its relative distinction and autonomy from political science, the course examines the methodologies and theories of public policy analysis as crucial to studying the entire political process.

To ensure thorough comprehension, all theoretical components of the course will be consistently supported by the examination of various empirical research studies drawn from the relevant academic literature.

Prerequisites for admission
Basic knowledge of political science and contemporary history is presumed.

Course structure
The Political Science C.M. course (Public Policy Analysis) has the following learning objectives:
1. Present and define the fundamental approaches of policy analysis.
2. Identify and illustrate the main actors in the policy process, as well as the instruments available to them.
3. Explain the dynamic aspects of the policy process and the policy cycle approach.
4. Examine the individual stages of the policy cycle, from agenda setting to evaluation.
5. Illustrate the various decision-making styles and the mechanisms that govern policy design and policy change.

Competencies

A. Knowledge and understanding:

Students should possess a solid understanding of the topics covered during the course and be able to employ the acquired tools in a conscious manner. In particular, they should: Know the theories applicable to the analysis of public policies, as well as the categories of actors and instruments that can be employed. Understand the stages of the policy process and their characteristics. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of decision-making models and analytical categories. Apply conceptual and analytical tools to specific policy areas, such as environmental policy.

B. Applying knowledge and understanding:

The student must demonstrate professional competence in applying the topics covered in the course, specifically with reference to policy analysis. They should identify potential connections among the various stages of the policy cycle and the analysis of real-world cases, as applied in political practice, thereby developing the skill set characteristic of a public policy analyst.

C. Making judgements:

The student should be capable of applying the knowledge acquired to develop analyses that are as original as possible, and of processing analytical data to define the scenario/context and either systemic or specific conditions.

D. Communication skills:

The student must acquire an appropriate disciplinary vocabulary and be capable of articulating it across different communication channels, taking into account the need to communicate clearly and thoroughly with specialists in the field, while also being able to address non-specialists effectively.

E. Learning skills:

The student must be able to fully apply the knowledge and skills acquired through attending the course and to integrate them with the instruction provided in other modules of the study program, as well as the methodological competencies that enable them to independently pursue new learning paths in the field of Political Science.

Syllabus

Subject 1 – PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
- Public policy analysis and political science
- Objectives of policy science
- Definition of "public policy"
- Understanding public policies
- Problem-solving in the "policy" process
- The "policy cycle" model

Subject 2 – DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO STUDYING PUBLIC POLICIES
- Approaches to the study of public policies
- Deductive and inductive theories: public choice, Marxism, and neo-institutionalism vs. welfare economics
- Pluralism and statism

Subject 3 - ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS
- Actors in the policy process
- State organization
- Organization of society
- The international trade regime
- The international financial system
- Effects of international institutions

Subject 4 – POLICY TOOLS
- Policy tools
- Classification of policy tools: voluntary tools, coercive tools, mixed tool

Subject 5 – POLITICAL AGENDA SETTING
- Problem identification and agenda-setting
- Policy determinants and "policy windows"
- Origins of policy problems
- Economic and technological determinism, and the role of ideas and ideology
- Key agenda-setting models: funnel of causality, Cobb, Ross & Ross model, Kingdon, Downs

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Subject 6 – POLICY FORMULATION
- Policy formulation
- Policy community and policy network: definitions
- Policy subsystems: sub-governments, iron triangles, and issue networks

- Advocacy coalitions
- Policy networks and policy communities
- Classification of policy subsystems

Subject 7 – DECISION-MAKING IN PUBLIC POLICIES
- Rationalism, incrementalism, and irrationalism
- Decision-making models: the rational model, the incremental model, and the garbage can model
- A decision-making model based on subsystems

Subject 8 – POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
- Policy implementation
- Policy design and tool selection
- Practical aspects of policy implementation
- Approaches to policy implementation
- Logical justifications for tool selection
- Economic models
- Political models

Subject 9 – POLICY EVALUATION
- Policy evaluation
- Policy analysis and learning
- Types of policy evaluation
- Judicial evaluation: judicial review and administrative discretion
- Theoretical and methodological premises of evaluation
- Other evaluation types: research design, ex-post evaluation, and mid-term evaluation
- The role of evaluation: performance, legitimacy, and consensus

Subject 10– DECISION-MAKING STYLES, POLICY PARADIGMS, AND POLICY CHANGE
- Decision-making styles, policy paradigms, and the policy cycle
- Normal and paradigmatic models of policy change
- Examples of normal models of policy change and decision-making styles

Evaluation system and criteria

The exam consists of an oral and/or written test aimed at assessing the ability to analyse and re-elaborate the concepts acquired, as well as a series of interactive activities carried out during the course.

Erasmus students are encouraged to contact the professor to agree on a customized syllabus.

Study materials (available in both Italian and English) will be provided directly by the professor if not available in the library. The oral exam can be taken in English.

The examination will be aimed at:

- ascertaining the knowledge and comprehension of the main IR theories and concepts;

- ascertaining the ability to apply that knowledge to current trends and events in international politics;

- ascertaining the mastery of the specific language concerning the Public Policy Analysis vocabulary.

Bibliography and resources

1. Materials to consult

Notes written by the instructor are available in Italian and also in English.

2. Recommended bibliography

The student is required to select one (and only one) of the following recommended texts:

A)   - Italian Version- M. Howlett, M. Ramesh , Come studiare le politiche pubbliche, Il Mulino, Bologna 2003.

B)   -English Version- M. Howlett, M. Ramesh and A. Perl, "Studying Public Policy, Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems," Oxford University Press, Toronto, 2009.