

Term Paper Assignment

POSC 315: Introduction to Public Policy

David P. Adams, Ph.D.

California State University, Fullerton

Spring 2025

Overview

- ▶ Choose a public policy issue.
- ▶ Conduct a comprehensive literature review.
- ▶ Apply a specific policy process theory.
- ▶ Assignment stages:
 1. Topic Selection and Proposal (Week 4)
 2. Annotated Bibliography (Week 7)
 3. Literature Review (Week 10)
 4. Draft Analysis (Week 12)
 5. Final Paper (Week 15)
- ▶ Peer reviews via Canvas included at every stage.

Stage 1: Topic Selection and Proposal

Due: Week 4

- ▶ Choose a focused public policy issue at any level (local, state, national, or international).
- ▶ Write a one-page proposal outlining:
 - ▶ Policy issue or legislation.
 - ▶ Its significance (economic, environmental, social).
 - ▶ A research question focused on the policy process.
- ▶ Example:
 - ▶ **Topic:** Clean Air Act amendments of the 1990s.
 - ▶ **Research Question:** How did agenda-setting processes influence the amendments?
- ▶ Submit to Canvas and participate in peer review.

Stage 2: Annotated Bibliography

Due: Week 7

- ▶ Gather 8–10 scholarly sources relevant to your policy issue and theory.
- ▶ For each source:
 - ▶ Provide a full citation.
 - ▶ Summarize the main arguments (2–3 sentences).
 - ▶ Describe relevance to your theory and question (2–3 sentences).
- ▶ Example:
 - ▶ **Citation:** Smith, J. (2015). Policy Formulation and Environmental Legislation.
 - ▶ **Annotation:** Highlights how coalitions influenced Clean Air Act amendments.
- ▶ Submit to Canvas and complete peer reviews.

Stage 3: Literature Review

Due: Week 10

- ▶ Synthesize themes, debates, and findings from your annotated bibliography.
- ▶ Organize thematically or chronologically.
- ▶ Identify:
 - ▶ Gaps in research.
 - ▶ Areas of disagreement.
 - ▶ Unresolved questions.
- ▶ Example:
 - ▶ "While economic and political factors are central, scholars disagree on the role of environmental justice concerns."
- ▶ Submit a 3–4 page review and participate in peer reviews.

Stage 4: Draft Analysis

Due: Week 12

- ▶ Write a 6–8 page draft applying a policy process theory.
- ▶ Include:
 - ▶ Introduction with research question.
 - ▶ Revised literature review.
 - ▶ Chosen theoretical framework and rationale.
 - ▶ Preliminary analysis using examples (e.g., legislative timelines, media coverage).
- ▶ Example:
 - ▶ **Framework:** Kingdon's Multiple Streams explains how problem recognition and political shifts converged during the Clean Air Act amendments.
- ▶ Submit and participate in peer reviews.

Stage 5: Final Paper

Due: Week 15

- ▶ Produce a polished 10–12 page paper that:
 - ▶ Articulates your research question.
 - ▶ Refines your literature review.
 - ▶ Systematically applies a policy process theory with evidence.
 - ▶ Concludes with well-supported findings.
- ▶ Example:
 - ▶ Kingdon's framework highlights public awareness and political shifts as pivotal to Clean Air Act amendments.
- ▶ Submit via Canvas with proper formatting and bibliography.

Peer Review and Grading Criteria

Peer Review:

- ▶ Provide constructive feedback at each stage.
- ▶ Focus on clarity, argument structure, and integration of theory.

Grading Criteria:

1. Depth of research.
2. Analysis and application of theory.
3. Organization and clarity.
4. Writing quality and proper citations.
5. Incorporation of feedback.

Final Thoughts

- ▶ Stay on top of due dates.
- ▶ Engage actively in peer reviews.
- ▶ Ask questions whenever you need clarification.

Remember: Each stage builds toward a stronger final paper.
Good luck!