Description: This course discusses policy designs and designing. It looks at how government policies are formulated and implemented; that is, how policy problems are articulated and, especially, how solutions to them are derived and assessed so they then be delivered on the ground. The course looks in detail at the range of instruments available to governments in implementing their programmes, the strengths and weaknesses of different tools, and issues related to how tools are combined in policy portfolios or mixes. Classes and readings also examine the nature of the actors involved in formulation and design activities, how these actors and processes are organized, and the nature of the knowledge and techniques actors employ in providing advice to decision-makers about how to address issues on their agendas. Lessons from various jurisdictions and policy sectors about best practices and fundamental principles of policy designs are discussed with a specific focus on lessons derived from Canadian cases and experiences.

Rationale: This course equips students to assess and evaluate policy designs and designing activity, and importantly provides tools to better understand what can be done to improve outcomes and make policies more effective. It offers students a critical introduction to essential concepts, approaches and analytical tools to respond to these vital questions in policy analysis and policy-making. The focus is on the substance and the context of public policies, the forms in which they are delivered and financed, and how they can be improved.

Course Structure: The course is divided in two parts. The first three-quarters of the course reviews conceptual and analytical tools from various disciplines including public administration, public financial management, microeconomic theory, and policy sciences to lay the theoretical foundation of how policy design can be assessed and evaluated, and ultimately improved. The final quarter provides students with an opportunity to present the results of their research into key areas of contemporary design thinking and practice.

Grading:
- Presentation on class readings: 20%
- Participation in seminar discussions: 20%
- Research Paper Outline: 5%
- Research Paper Class Presentation: 15%
- Final research paper: 40%

Research Paper Topic:
The complexity of the problem environments that confront governments has placed renewed emphasis in recent years on the importance of policy design. How the design of policy and programs can be improved to achieve better societal outcomes is an issue for both scholars and practitioners and has generated much recent writing and research on the subject. Choose a key policy issue and programme in Canada (topics from other jurisdictions require instructor approval) and set out its basic components, history and goals. This should discuss (1) what kind of policy instruments are found in this area (2) what kind of policy mix exists in this case (3) how the policy originated and evolved (4) who is behind the policy and (5) how it has been targeted. Utilizing the principles for effective policy-making articulated in the course readings, the paper should then assess (6) whether or not the policy is effective, (7) how it could be improved in theory and (7) if and why or why not these improvements are feasible under current conditions and circumstances.

Required Texts:

Recommended Texts:
**Supplementary Texts:**

**Key Questions to be Addressed in the Course**
- What is Policy Design?
- Who Designs Public Policies? Why Do They Do It?
- How and When Do Designs Come About?
- What is good policy design? How Do We Know?
- Can the design of public policies be improved to solve complex problems?
- How should the design of specific policies be evaluated?

**WEEKLY TOPIC SUMMARY**

**SECTION I: Introduction**
Week I - Introduction and Administration: What is Policy Design and How has it Evolved?

**SECTION II: What and When?**
Week IV – Compliance and Targeting: Deploying Persuasive Designs
Week V - Policy Designing Over Time: Sequencing, Policy Patching, Layering, Stretching and Packaging

**SECTION III: Who and How?**
Week VII – Who are Policy Designers and How Do They Think?

**SECTION IV– Best Practices and Principles**
Week VIII - Effectiveness and Design Evaluation: 1st and 2nd Best Designs/Goodness of Fit and Degrees of Freedom: The Need for Coherence, Congruence and Consistency in Policy Mixes/Managing Uncertainty: Controlling for Spillovers and Contradictions/Agility and Robustness as Design Criteria

**SECTION V: Why?**

**SECTION VI: Future Trends**

*Class Presentations:* Week XI/Week XII/Week XIII
WEEKLY READING LIST

PART I – LECTURES/SEMINARS

SECTION I: Introduction

Week I (SEPT 5) - Introduction and Administration: What is Policy Design and How Has It Evolved?

Required


Recommended


SECTION II: What and When?

Week II (SEPT 12) – Policy Design and the Policy Cycle: Policy Formulation, Policy Implementation and Policy Styles

Required


**Recommended**


**Week III (SEPT 26)– Policy Tools and Policy Portfolios**

**Required**


**Recommended**


**Week IV (OCT 3) – Compliance and Targeting: Behaviour and Persuasive Designs Required**


**Recommended**


Weaver, Kent. “If You Build It, Will They Come? Overcoming Unforeseen Obstacles to Program Effectiveness.” THE TANSLEY LECTURE - University of Saskatchewan, 2009.


**OCTOBER 10 – No Class – Outlines Due**

**Week V (OCT 17) - Policy Designing Over Time: Sequencing, Policy Patching, Layering, Stretching and Packaging Required**


Recommended


SECTION III: Who and How?

Week VI (OCT 24) - Policy Advisory Systems: Policy Advice and Analysis

Required


Recommended


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**Week VII (OCT 31) – Who Are the Policy Designers and How Do They Think?**

**Required**


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**Recommended**


**SECTION IV – Best Practices and Principles**

**Week VIII (NOV 7)- Policy Effectiveness: Coherence, Congruence, Consistency, Sequencing & Agility**


SECTION V: Why?

Week IX (NOV 14) – The Politics of Policy Design: (In)Capacity, (Un)Intentionality, (In)Feasibility Required


Recommended

SECTION VI: Future Trends

Week X (NOV 21)– Research and Practice Looking Forward: Big Data, Crowd-Sourcing, Co-Design and More Required

**Recommended**


**NOVEMBER 28 – No Class**

**PART II – CLASS PRESENTATIONS**

**Week XI / Week XII / Week XIII (December 6-8)**

**PAPERS DUE (December 13)**

NOTE: Department Undergraduate Notes:
The Department of Political Science strictly enforces a policy on plagiarism.
For details, see [http://www.sfu.ca/politics/undergraduate/program/related_links.html](http://www.sfu.ca/politics/undergraduate/program/related_links.html) and click on “Plagiarism and Intellectual Dishonesty”.