Civic Engagement in Action: Citizens and Policy Advocacy

Learning Objectives

This course engages students in experiential learning of the Maryland legislature. The course will involve an exploration of the lawmaking process (i.e. policy analysis), combined with policy advocacy. Policy advocacy refers to the activities involved in advancing one's preferred policy responses to social problems.

Citizen engagement in the political and policy process is crucial to the health of a democracy. In recent years there has been a decline in both civic education (particularly in high schools) and in the priority placed by citizens on civic engagement. In an era where there are concerns about the strength of our democracy and the durability of government institutions, it is particularly important that students learn about and engage with the policymaking process, especially at the state level where the most consequential laws are enacted.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Analyze and be able to explain the policymaking process in general and in the state of Maryland, specifically.
- Demonstrate substantive expertise in at least one policy topic.
- Communicate your knowledge and expertise in various oral and written formats—across multiple settings and to diverse audiences.
- Explain circumstances that enhance or detract the probability of bills advancing through the legislative process.
- Understand the main players involved in policy advocacy process (e.g. citizens, lawmakers, advocacy organizations) and what makes some more successful and effective than others.
- Explain how better to motivate citizens to engaged in the policy making process and how these motivations can be durable.

Course Resources

Course website: https://umd.instructure.com/courses/1277593 (ELMS)
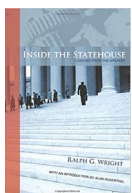
Inside the Statehouse: Lessons from the Speaker
Ralph G. Wright
Publication year: 2005
ISBN #1-56802-949-7

Weekly required readings (in the form of articles, chapters, or webpages) will be provided through ELMS.

Dr. Stella Rouse
srouse@umd.edu
Phone: 301-405-4194
Office: Tydings #1137

Class Meets
Tuesdays & Thursdays
11:00 am – 12:15 pm
Tydings #2111

Office Hours
Tues & Thur 1:00-2:00pm
and by appointment

TA for Course:
Nicholas Miras
nmiras@terpmail.umd.edu
Office: Tydings #1127D
Office Hours: Wed 1:00-3:00pm

Course Communication
We will use ELMS as our primary source of communication. Students are responsible for ensuring they know how to use ELMS and that their email is registered. Lack of communication with ELMS is not an excuse for not being aware of assignment or class schedule changes. Please be professional in your communication.

The Maryland General Assembly website: http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite
This site will be used to track bills. The site updates almost immediately when legislative action is formally taken. This **does not** include information about committees or subcommittees.

MARYLAND
MATTERS

A great source for independent news on the Maryland legislative session.
https://www.marylandmatters.org/

Course Expectations

The class will have various components—seminar style, class/group discussions, independent research and learning, interactive meetings—all of which are designed to maximize the experiential goals of the course. In line with the expectations of an upper division course, students will be assigned a fair amount of reading and will be expected to come to class prepared for a lively discussion on the weekly topics. Irregular attendance, non-completion of the readings and course assignments will be reflected in the student's overall class performance. Further, students are expected to exhibit the ability to be analytical, to grasp concepts and theories, and to convey an understanding of the material both during class discussions, in oral presentations, and through written assignments.

Students are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to learning. As such, our classroom will be a place where people can feel comfortable expressing diverse opinions without fear of ridicule or intimidation. It is expected that students will remain respectful of others, regardless of whether or not they share similar opinions and beliefs. Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed.

Texting or talking on cell phones, having independent conversations during lecture/class discussions, and repeatedly coming to class tardy or leaving early will not be tolerated.

Group Work

Group work is essential part of the policy analysis and policymaking process and as such, we will simulate this component in our class. For groups to be effective, group members need to understand that each student's success on group projects is contingent on the work of each individual group member. A group should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each group member, and determine how to allocate responsibilities with these factors in mind. You should be sensitive to the fact that group members have different commitments and schedule constraints. The following website provides useful tips for how to be successful in working on group projects:
https://www.le.ac.uk/oerresources/ssds/studyskills/page_83.htm

Work Outside the Classroom

One of the unique aspects of this course is the type of work that is required outside the classroom. Some of this work will entail meetings with your group (on campus or off campus) to work on group projects. The other part of this outside work will consist of conducting interviews with policymakers (in person or via phone), and meeting with advocacy groups, interest groups, or relevant group representatives. **It is essential that you are able to dedicate outside time to this work in order to be successful in the class.**
A class tour of the statehouse and meeting with the House Majority Leader will take place on February 18th.

When working off campus, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Remember that you are students at the University of Maryland and your conduct serves as a reflection of the institution. Please make sure to dress professionally for meetings and to be on time and prepared for scheduled appointments. Those

who make the time to meet with you are doing so out of their interest in your learning experience. Make sure to show that you value their time.

ENACT Network
Students in this class have the opportunity to join the Educational Network for Active and Civic Transformation (ENACT). This national program engages undergraduate college students in the effort of participating and producing state level change through policy advocacy. The network provides students with access to the ENACT Online Network, a national in-person and online network of students, faculty, activists, and legislators. It serves as a resource for strategies for state-level legislative engagement, reflections, and analysis, and connections with other individuals and organizations that share similar goals and interests. As a student in this course, you will receive an invitation to join SLACK channels where members of the network engage and interact. Furthermore, you have access to work by previous ENACT students that should be resources for your assignments. These student anthologies can be found here: https://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/publications/BrandeisENACTanthologies.html and organized thematically in Google Drive here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B435-3EtreLJalF2Z0VsemxOUDg. The SLACK channel (#enact-network-general channel) will also allow students to search shared files for PDFs and will have a list of documents posted there by the ENACT Student Delegates with guides to aspects of the course. Finally, as an ENACT student you are also eligible join the official ENACT group on LinkedIn – an opportunity for professional networking with ENACT students, alumni, faculty, staff and partners. https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8601882. Please note: This is a closed group, so you must request to join. All ENACT students and alumni will be accepted. When you make your request to join please note the school and professor for your ENACT course.

Campus Policies
It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

In particular, I will highlight two policies:
1) Academic Honesty: The work done in this course is expected to be solely the effort of each individual student. Cheating and plagiarism (representing the words or ideas of others as one's own or copying the work of another without giving proper credit) will not be tolerated. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the course (regardless of prior class achievement) and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you are unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the Office of Student Conduct's "What is Academic Dishonesty?"
2) Students with Disabilities: Every effort will be made to accommodate students who are registered with the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) Office. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with ADS or who do not provide documentation. These students will be referred to the ADS office. Please provide information about disability and registration with ADS as early as possible in the semester, **but no later than February 11, 2020**. If you have any questions, please visit the ADS website: https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/

More information about campus-wide policies can be found here: www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html

Electronic Device Policy
In general, phones and personal electronic devises should be stored during the class period. This is especially the case during lectures and class activities. However, there will be times when work in class will require the use electronic devices to look up information, develop project sheets, etc. Please be mindful of when computers should

and should not be used. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask me. Students should **never** use electronic devices to text, surf the internet for material not related to the course, or checking emails. If this policy is continuously violated, I reserve the right to take away or ban electronic devices during class.

If you have an accommodation for continuous use of a computer or electronic device, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and provide me with the necessary ADS documentation.

It is OK to Get Help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for you own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so I encourage you to consider visiting http://ter.ps/learn and schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting http://ter.ps/writing and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit http://www.counseling.umd.edu.

These resources are available because **everyone needs help** at some point… all you have to do is ask for it.

Learning Assessments- Components of the Legislative Advocacy Project

Legislative Advocacy Project	Category Weight
Legislative Research Report	30%
Lessons Learned Presentation/Report	20%
Journal Reflections	20%
Fact Sheet	10%
Elevator/Meeting Pitch	10%
Op Ed	5%
Class Participation	5%
Total	100%

Grading Procedures

Grades for the course are determined by a student's performance on the **Legislative Advocacy Project.** This project is broken down into several components, each with varying grade weights (see above). The different components of the project are designed to help students develop the necessary skills to engage in state legislative advocacy. Some parts of the projects are completed in groups, while other parts are completed individually. The main part of the project involves selecting a bill that has been introduced in the Maryland Legislature for the 2020 legislative session. Students must engage in at least one advocacy activity in support or defeat of a bill (e.g., lobbying a key state legislator on a bill, testifying in committee hearing on a bill, sharing research at an advocacy group meeting). We will spend some class time learning how to search for bills on the Maryland General Assembly site. Students will be responsible for exploring potential topics, finding corresponding bills for those topics, and forming groups with members who share similar interests (with my guidance and approval). We will discuss how the group formation process will take place during the first few meetings of the semester. **Assignments are due at 3:00 pm on assignment due date.** Components of the project are as follows:

- **Legislative Research Report (GROUP COMPONENT- Due Tuesday, May 12):**
  Students will select a proposed bill that has been introduced in the Maryland Legislature for the 2020 legislative session. Working in small groups, students will design and implement a legislative advocacy report by researching the issue(s) involved with the bill and speaking to various stakeholders (e.g. legislators, advocacy organization, and/or other interest groups). These stakeholders will help students better

understand the lawmaking process, the challenges of marshalling a bill through the legislature, and setting reasonable expectations for the success of a bill.

In an approximately 10 to 12-page report, teams will write a detailed analysis of the bill or bills chosen and the efforts made for the successful adoption or defeat of the legislation. The report should contain arguments and counterarguments, supported by facts, figures, analyses and relevant studies explaining the rationale for and consequences of the bill. The report should include a bibliography. More details about the advocacy project will be provided in a separate sheet.

- **Lesson Learned Presentation and Report (GROUP COMPONENT- Due Tuesday, May 5)**:
  At the end of the semester, student groups will present a reflective analysis of the experience of serving as a policy advocate. This presentation should be analytical, critical, and reflective. It should be thought of as a roadmap (e.g., "do's" and "don'ts" of being an advocate). In other words, what would you advise a future group to do if they are embarking on this same project?

  A 3-page report will also be submitted that includes the major points given in the presentation.

- **Op-Ed (INDIVIDUAL COMPONENT- Due Thursday, April 2)**:
  Students will write a short, concise piece (approximately 600-700 words) that makes an argument for their respective bill. A good Op-ed will have a clear and specific message. The focus of the op-ed will be made strongly and concisely in the first paragraph. It should have a clear viewpoint, use direct language and a conversational tone, and make a call to action.

- **Elevator/Meeting Pitch (INDIVIDUAL and GROUP COMPONENT- Due Thursday, March 5)**:
  Students will develop two oral presentations in defense of their bill. The first will be a short, individual "elevator pitch" that can be quickly delivered to legislators. The second is a longer group "pitch" to be used as a script when meeting with legislators or as part of committee testimony.

- **Journal Reflections (INDIVIDUAL and GROUP COMPONENT- Due Multiple Times Throughout Semester):**
  Time spent on the Legislative Advocacy Project and the varying activities related to the project will be evaluated through journal reflections. Students will submit 2-page journal entries throughout the semester. The first journal entry is an individual reflection on the purpose and requirements of this course. The last journal entry will be done as a group—reflecting on the group's efforts throughout the semester, from inception to completion of project. I will provide prompts for the reflection pieces. Each journal reflection will be submitted via ELMS/BLACKBOARD by 3:00 pm on the due date.

- **Factsheet (INDIVDUAL COMPONENT- Due Tuesday, February 25)**:
  Students will prepare a 3-page fact sheet that provides an overview and summary of their issue solution (i.e. passage or defeat of a bill). Effective factsheets often include a personal connection to the topic of the legislation being advocated. This helps illustrate the importance of the issue and the necessary solution. Not only will the factsheet be part of the project, but it will serve as the summary information provided to a legislator, a committee, or an interest group.

- **Class Participation (INDIVIDUAL COMPONENT):**
  This is a highly interactive class where student are expected to attend and actively participate in all class sessions. Students are also expected to actively participate within their groups. Participation grade will be determined by my assessment of participation in these two settings.

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course. If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades, or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet in my office. All assignment grade appeals must first be done in writing. I reserve the right to look over an entire assignment when considering grade appeals.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. Grades will be rounded to the first decimal with .5 being the cutoff to round up to the next letter grade (exp. 79.4 is a C+ and 79.5 is a B-). To be fair to everyone, I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same this as making the cut. It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others. Please do not email me requesting exceptions to this rule.

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	88.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%		
A	93.00%	B	85.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%		

Late Assignments

I will only consider late assignments under specific and compelling documented emergencies (serious illness, accident, family crises, etc.). I try to avoid assignment deadlines on major religious holidays. However, if for some reason a major grading event is scheduled for or due on a religious holiday a student observes, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, prior to the end of the second week of the semester and arrange turn in assignment prior to that date. Penalty for unexcused late assignments are as follows: a deduction of a full letter grade (or 10 points) if assignment is completed on same day, but after time deadline; a deduction of an additional letter grade (or 10 points) for every day late after due date (including weekends). **Please note that the university attendance/absence policy or my policy does not apply to days when assignments are due.**

Course Schedule

DATE	DURING CLASS MEETING OR CLASS DAY	DUE BEFORE CLASS
WEEK 1		
Tues 1/28	Course overview and class procedures	Read and learn the information in the syllabus
Thu 1/30	Guest Speaker: Karl Aro Introduction to the Maryland Legislative Process	Come with questions!
WEEK 2		
Tues 2/4	**Why States?** Moncrief and Squire "Making a Case for the States" [ELMS] Wright "My First Campaign" (Chapter 1) Start investigating topics and bills for MD Legislative Session	Read Moncrief and Squire; Wright Explore MD General Assembly and Maryland Matters websites
Thu 2/6	**State Policy and Policy and Policy Research** Moncrief and Squire "Public Policy and the Role of the States…" Berkowitz "Conducting Research to Influence Policy" [ELMS] Class time for discussion of group selection	Read Moncrief and Squire and Berkowitz Continue to investigate potential bill topics Journal Reflection #1 Due
WEEK 3		
Tues 2/11	**Intergovernmental Relations and Federalism** Moncrief and Squire "States and the Federal System" [ELMS] "GOP Aims to Rein in Liberal Cities" *The Hill* [ELMS] List and rank of bill policy topics due in class/Group selection	Read Moncrief and Squire, Ch. 2; *The Hill* article Create list and rank policy topics
Thu 2/13	**Introduction to Policy Advocacy** Meredith and Monsell "Laying the Groundwork for a Successful Campaign" [ELMS] Fox "Vertically Integrated Policy Monitoring: A Tool for Civil Society Policy Advocacy" [ELMS] **Discussions of group formation and bill selections**	Read Meredith and Monsell; Fox Bill Selection Due
WEEK 4		
Tues 2/18	**State Policymaking** Visit to Annapolis. Tour of the Capital and Meeting with House Majority Leader Eric Luedtke	Familiarize yourself with Delegate Eric Luedtke
Thu 2/20	**Group Work Day**	Journal Reflection #2 Due
WEEK 5		
Tues 2/25	**State Policymaking Environment** Wright "Life in the Legislature" (Chapter 2) Moncrief and Squire "The Policymaking Environment of the States" [ELMS] Meredith and Monsell "Life in the Legislative Arena" [ELMS] Factsheet Discussion	Read Wright, Moncrief and Squire, and Meredith and Monsell chapters. Factsheet Due
Thu 2/27	**State Policymaking Environment: Committees** Wright "The Committee Process" (Chapter 3) Meredith and Monsell "Committees and Committee Meetings" [ELMS] Look at Committee Pages on MD Assembly Page http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Committees/Charts	Read Wright, Meredith and Monsell, and MD Committee page.

		WEEK 6	
Tues	3/3	**Messaging and Advocacy** Berkowitz "Using Principles of Persuasion" [ELMS] Nagy "General Rules for Organizing for Legislative Advocacy" [ELMS] Leedy and Pacurar "Between Floors with a Significant Decision Maker? Be Prepared with the Right Elevator Pitch" [ELMS] Class work on elevator pitch	Read Berkowitz, Nagy, and Leedy and Parcurar Journal Reflection #3 Due
Thu	3/5	Elevator Meeting/Pitch Presentations	Elevator/Meeting Pitch Presentations Due
		WEEK 7	
Tues	3/10	Elevator Meeting/Pitch Presentation	Elevator/Meeting Pitch Presentation Due
Thu	3/12	**Group Work Day/Visit Annapolis/Visit with Advocacy Partners**	
		WEEK 8	
Tues	3/17	NO CLASS- SPRING BREAK	
Thu	3/19	NO CLASS- SPRING BREAK	
		WEEK 9	
Tues	3/24	**Messaging and Advocacy (cont.)** Duke University "How to Write an Op-Ed Article" [ELMS] Harvard University "How to Write and Op-Ed or Column" [ELMS]	Read Duke and Harvard Pieces
Thu	3/26	**State Policymaking Environment: Legislative Leadership** Wright "Gaining Leadership" (Chapter 4) Wright "The View from the Podium (Chapter 5)	Read Wright (Chapters 4 & 5) Journal Reflection #4 Due
		WEEK 10	
Tues	3/31	**State Policymaking Environment: The Media** Wright "The Press" (Chapter 6) Meredith and Monsell "Using the Media in Public Policy Campaigns" [ELMS] Work on Op-Ed in class	Read Wright (Chapters 6); Meredith and Monsell
Thu	4/2	**State Policymaking Environment: Lobbying** Wright "Lobbyists" (Chapter 7) Whyte and Wieder "Amid Federal Gridlock, Lobbying Rises in the States" [ELMS]	Read Wright; Whyte and Wieder Op Ed Due
		WEEK 11	
Mon	4/6	***Maryland Legislative Session Ends***	
Tues	4/7	**State Policymaking Environment: Legislative-Executive Relations** Wright "Working with the Executive Branch" (Chapters 9-11) *Potential Day for Annapolis/Partner Visit (if necessary)	Read Wright Chs 9-11
Thu	4/9	**Elections and State Political Organizations** Moncrief and Squire "Elections and Political Parties" Narea and Shepard "The Democrats Biggest Disaster" [ELMS]	Read Moncrief and Squire; Narea and Shepard

		WEEK 12	
Tues	4/14	**Policy Implementation** Meredith and Monsell "Implementation Blues" Group work on Legislative Report	Read Meredith and Monsell <mark>Journal Reflection #5 Due</mark>
Thu	4/16	**Bureaucracy** Moncrief and Squire "State Fiscal Systems" [ELMS] Pope "When Government Sets Hospital Prices: Maryland's Experience" [ELMS]	Read Monrief and Squire; Pope
		WEEK 13	
Tues	4/21	**Policy Diffusion** Volden "What is Policy Diffusion and Why Should We Care? https://poliscizurich.wordpress.com/2010/10/18/what-is-policy-diffusion-and-why-should-we-care/ Mallinson and Hannah "Has the U.S. Reached a Tipping Point in Marijuana Legalization?" [ELMS] Volden "Policy Diffusion in Polarized Times" [ELMS]	Read Volden, Millinson and Hannah, and Volden
Thu	4/23	**Direct Democracy** Kaufmann "While U.S. Politics Remains Divisive Direct Democracy is Proudly at Work Locally." [ELMS] Radcliff "Direct Democracy May Be Key to Happier American Democracy." [ELMS]	Read Kaufmann and Radcliff
		WEEK 14	
Tues	4/28	**Make up Day**	
Thu	4/30	**Group Work Day** Time to finish "Lessons Learned" and Legislative Report	<mark>Journal Reflection #6 Due</mark>
		WEEK 15	
Tues	5/5	Lessons Learned Presentation	<mark>Lessons Learned Report Due</mark>
Thu	5/7	Lessons Learned Presentation	
		WEEK 16	
Tues	5/12	Lessons Learned Presentation (if necessary)	<mark>Legislative Report Due</mark>

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for up-to-date deadlines.