

**90-858 W1 6 Units****How Ideas Become Policy: Getting Stuff Done (V: Sept 1, 2021)**

**Summary of class times and assignments:** Wens Sept 1 (10:30-1:30) and Wens Sept 8, 15, 22, 29 from 12-1 (with brief write up due end of day) and Fri Sept 10, 17, (one pager due Sept 19), Sept 24, Oct 1 from 10:30—12:20 and Oct 8 9:30-12:30 (class presentations); and final paper due Oct 10.

**Amb./Prof. Sarah E. Mendelson, [smendelson@cmu.edu](mailto:smendelson@cmu.edu)**

Office Hours: By Appointment (Please contact Robin Cole [rpscole@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:rpscole@andrew.cmu.edu) to make arrangements.)

This course examines an array of public policy challenges facing the United States and the world. In public Zoom sessions open to the entire CMU community, we will meet with former senior U.S. government officials to gather tools and tips for successfully turning ideas into policies while also acknowledging today's multiple crises. We, the DC Heinz group, will then meet (either all in person while wearing masks or all by Zoom) for deep dive discussions, and then split into small groups to trouble shoot on-going policy issues and devise policy positions to present back to the Heinz DC group.

In readings, writing assignments, and class discussions, we will analyze what works in getting ideas translated into policy as well as examples of failure. The cases will cover proactive policies (What are we for?) as well as reactive ones (How best to respond to challenges and crises? How best to mitigate or reverse damaging policy?) The role of leadership and personalities emerge as important factors. Paradigm-shifting events—what we are living through right now—also have impacts as well as advocacy campaigns and specific strategies for messaging and building alliances. While no “secret sauce” exists for policy making, students will explore lessons and actively engage in creating a toolkit on how to “get stuff done” in Washington that is relevant to many different contexts, issues, and scenarios. A common theme running through the course, and in anticipation of this academic year's CMU Intersect Conference (February 2022) is how [the Sustainable Development Goals](#) provide relevant policy frames for many of today's most pressing issues—from the climate crisis, the pandemic, gaps in social justice, and more.

**Goals/Takeaways of the Course by the End of the Semester:**

- Students will have gained practical knowledge through analysis and practice using a toolkit discussed in class to generate actionable public policy;
- Students should be able to identify lessons from successful cases of ideas becoming policies as well as from unsuccessful cases, analyzing what works and what does not;
- Students should be able to write crisply articulated policy memos and deliver briefings that evaluate successful and unsuccessful efforts at turning ideas into policy.

**Required Reading for September 1:**

This syllabus (please bring a printed copy with you to the September 1 session.)

William B. Taylor, “Opening Statement of William B. Taylor,” Delivered to the House Committee on the Judiciary, October 22, 2019, available at [https://judiciary.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2019-10-22\\_statement\\_of\\_taylor.pdf](https://judiciary.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2019-10-22_statement_of_taylor.pdf) (Note: full documentation available at <https://judiciary.house.gov/the-impeachment-of-donald-john-trump/>)

Barack Obama, “How I approach the toughest decisions: our choices reflect and determine who we are,” *Medium*, December 9, 2020, available at <https://barackobama.medium.com/how-i-approach-the-toughest-decisions-dc1b165cdf2d>

### **September 1**

10:30-11:00 Introductions

11:00-11:30 Deep Dive into the Syllabus

11:30-12:15 Overview of the Policy Toolkit

Grab Lunch

**12:30-1:30 In person with Ambassador William B. Taylor, VP, Strategic Stability and Security, United States Institute of Peace, and Former Chargé d'affaires, U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, “Lessons in Leadership: Dealing with ‘Irregular Channels’ and Other Challenges”**

**No write up due this day!**

### **September 8**

**12:00-1:00 (Recorded) Zoom session with Ambassador Elizabeth Cousens, President, UN Foundation, Former U.S. Representative to ECOSOC, “How the SDGs Came Together—A Plan for Humanity through 2030.”**

### **September 10**

10:30-11:00 Deep Dive

11:00-11:50 Split into three groups (MDG+, climate cluster, and 16+ or peaceful, just, inclusive communities) to develop policy proposals addressing your cluster. Suggest each group focuses on a specific target and concrete priority on which to make progress within the next 12-24 months. (Modified 17 Rooms—note: not the perfect step but a next step.)

11:50-12:20 Report out

### **Required Reading for September 10:**

Macharia Kamau, Pamela Chasek, and David O'Connor, *Transforming Multilateral Diplomacy: The Inside Story of the Sustainable Development Goals* (Routledge: New York, 2018), 161-210 and available on Canvas and by Box. (If you have trouble accessing **please contact Robin Cole.**)

We the People for the Global Goals, September 2015,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpgVmvMCmp0>

John McArthur, “Make Room(s) for Change,” Center for International Relations and Sustainable Development, Summer 2021, available at <https://www.cirsd.org/en/horizons/horizons-summer-2021-issue-no-19/make-rooms-for-change>

### **September 15**

**12:00-1:00 Public Zoom session with Steve Feldstein, Senior Fellow, Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, Carnegie Endowment, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, State Department, “Digital Repression and How the Biden Administration Can Respond.”**

### **September 17**

10:30-11:00 Deep Dive

11:00-11:50 Split into three groups and develop policy proposals to tackle either disinformation or regulation of big tech companies.

11:50-12:20 Report out

#### **Required Reading for September 17:**

Steven Feldstein, *The Rise of Digital Repression: How Technology is Reshaping Power, Politics, and Resistance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 254-286, **available on Canvas or in Box**. If you have trouble accessing **please contact Robin Cole**

Steven Feldstein, “Can Democracy Survive the ‘Splinternet?’” *American Purpose*, September 1, 2021, available at: <https://www.americanpurpose.com/articles/can-democracy-survive-the-splinternet/>

#### **September 19: One Page Memo Due by 10pm—please send as a doc by email**

### **September 22**

**12:00-1:00 Public Zoom session with Maha Jweied, former Acting Director, Access to Justice Office, Department of Justice, “Leveraging International Engagement to Advance Justice at Home—Reflections on What Works.”**

### **September 24**

10:30-11:00 Deep Dive

11:00-11:50 Split into three groups to develop policy proposals to address social justice gaps and/or reduce inequality and/or advance restorative justice.

11:50-12:20 Report out

### Required Reading for September 24:

Sarah E. Mendelson, "Inequality, the SDGs, and the Human Rights Movement in the US and Around the World," *Brookings Blog "Future Development,"* June 12, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/06/12/inequality-the-sdgs-and-the-human-rights-movement-in-the-us-and-around-the-world/>

Maha Jweied, NYU CIC, *From the Global to the Local: Leveraging International Engagement to Advance Justice at Home* (December 2020).

### September 29

**12:00-1:00 Public Zoom session with Anthony Pipa, Senior Fellow, Center for Sustainable Development, Brookings Institution, Former Chief Strategy Officer at USAID among other senior appointments in the Obama administration, "Sustainable Cities: What's Working and Why."**

### October 1

10:30-11:00 Deep Dive

11:00-11:50 Split into three groups to develop policy proposals to increase equity and create more sustainable cities.

11:50-12:20 Report out

### Required Reading for October 1:

Anthony Pipa and Max Bouchet, Editors, "City Playbook for advancing the SDGs," The Brookings Institution, July 2021, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/multi-chapter-report/city-playbook-for-advancing-the-sdgs/>

Michael Nutter and Simone Brody, "Will Relief Funding Help Those Who Need it Most?" *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, August 4, 2021, [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/will\\_relief\\_funding\\_help\\_those\\_who\\_need\\_it\\_most?utm\\_source=Enews&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=SSIR\\_Now](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/will_relief_funding_help_those_who_need_it_most?utm_source=Enews&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=SSIR_Now)

Cities and Universities for a Sustainable Future: The Importance of Community-focused Partnerships (**video**)  
<https://vimeo.com/534544605>

Note: No public meeting on October 6.

### October 8

**9:30-12:30 Policy Presentations:** Students should come prepared to make a five minute presentation followed by up to three minutes of question/answer. This presentation should ideally be based on your first draft of your five-page memo that will be due days later. Power

point presentations are encouraged but **only if they are sent to Robin Cole to upload by 5 pm on October 7. Note class will run this day from 9:30-12:30.**

**October 10: Five Page Memo Due by 10 pm—please send as a doc by email**

**At A Glance**

Grading Scale:

A, A- 100-90% (excellent)  
 B+, B, B- 89-80% (good)  
 C+, C, C- 79-70% (satisfactory)  
 D 69-60% (passing)  
 R 59% and below (not passing)

Attending Public Lecture/Open Zoom Session and one paragraph (individual) read out (20% Throughout)

One Page Memo (10%)

Final In Class Presentation (20%)

Five page memo (25%)

Additional Class Participation (25% Throughout)

**TOTAL: 100%**

Writing:

Students should **email brief one paragraph report out by end of day following the public Zoom sessions on the major points and come to class prepared to discuss.** (More details below.)

The one page memo should be a brief version of your five page memo.

Your oral presentation should be maximum a five-minute presentation followed by two to three minutes of questions. You are encouraged to use power point in your presentation.

Class Participation: 25% Students are expected to have read the assigned material, watched the assigned Zoom, and come prepared to discuss and debate in small group and be prepared to present during the read out sessions. (Students will take turns to present during the read outs so that everyone has an opportunity to present.) Repeated failure to engage in class discussions will affect the final grade. Small group discussions/team work form a key part of this course and will also count toward the class participation grade.

**Guidance for One Paragraph Read out from the Open Zoom Sessions:**

Whether you are or will be working in a non-profit, the US government, or an international organization, you will often be sent to represent your organization at various meetings and then expected to report back on the key elements of the meeting. These brief summaries typically go into an “end of day book” for the principal to take home and read. So, by end of day, **after each public session, you should send to me by email (and to Robin Cole), a**

paragraph in a document that addresses the main “take aways” of the meeting you attended. Suggested formatting would be:

**Topic (your last name):** and then a few key sentences on what you took from the meeting.

**Here is a partial example of these end of day paragraphs:**

**Contentious New Crimea Resolution Passes (Jones):** Today, the 71<sup>st</sup> UNGA Third Committee adopted, for the first time, a Ukraine-led resolution on the situation of Human Rights in the Republic of Crimea. The speakers noted that this resolution passed following a concerted effort by a number of countries to..... etc etc. Issues addressed include....

**Guidance for One Page and Five Page Memos: (Note: Rubric forthcoming)**

**WHEN DELIVERING both one paragraph reports, and memos, PLEASE SEND AS DOCS THROUGH EMAIL TO ME AND TO ROBIN COLE.**

Students have a lot of leeway to choose topics but should **pay careful attention to the instructions below**. Students should feel free to get feedback on a potential topic from me before submitting the one pager. Where needed, students will receive timely written feedback from me regarding content and grammar on writing assignments and are **expected to address/absorb the feedback**. Students should carefully cite sources. These writing assignments are to be done alone. Collaboration—writing or editing someone else’s paper—is considered a violation of academic integrity.

For the policy memos, students will prepare first a one page version—**not an outline**—of what the five page memo will cover.

**You have two options for your memos:** Something looking forward or something looking backward. You should stick to the same topic for the one pager and the five pager so choose carefully!

Option A: The memo should be a five-page document addressed to a senior official in the executive branch, a member of Congress, or a leader of a non-profit advocating **how an idea successfully becomes a policy**. Each memo should clearly define the problem you are solving, who is affected by the problem, and cite evidence that this issue is a problem. Each memo should identify a policy solution. The memo should be clear who the champions and opponents are, and articulate a strategy for messaging and the budget implications.

Option B: The memo should be five-page “hotwash” **or after-action report of how an idea did not become a successful policy**. You are writing to your boss (again a senior official in the executive branch, a member of Congress, or a leader of a non-profit) analyzing what happened in the failed effort to get an idea to become a successful policy. Memos should be clear about the policy you are addressing. What were the policy ideas tried? What went wrong? What should have happened? What would be a better strategy for landing the policy next time?

**Cases of success and failure can come from either US domestic or foreign policy context and from any post World War II US Administration. They can also be drawn from state level or city level contexts.**

**Examples of Issues:**

- The Affordable Care Act;
- Infrastructure Bill;
- Numerous Covid-19 Federal and Local Responses;
- Voting Rights Legislation;
- Movements for Racial Justice;
- The Green New Deal or other energy related legislation or policies;
- Generating the international humanitarian response to Ebola;
- Cooperative Threat Reduction;
- Americans with Disabilities Act;
- PEPFAR;
- The Freedom Agenda;
- The JCPOA (Iran Nuclear Deal);
- New Cuba policy, the Russia reset, or other US foreign policy pivots regarding a specific region;
- Responses to Russian interference in US elections;
- Getting legislation passed that uncovers beneficial ownership and/or the Global Magnitsky Act;
- The Genocide Prevention Act or when the US government determines a genocide has occurred;
- The Clean Water Act;
- Immigration reform;
- Refugee assistance policy;
- Gun control legislation;
- Anti-torture legislation;
- Closing GTMO;
- US and International Withdrawal from Afghanistan.

For a list of some other recent legislation that passed in a bipartisan fashion in the last several administrations see: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/05/opinion/biden-bipartisan-congress.html>

**Use of Internet Sources:** Please use common sense and look for reliable sources.

**Citation guidance:**

- You can choose to hyperlink.

- BUT If you are quoting someone, you must indicate that you are indeed quoting someone. Footnotes should be placed **at the end of a sentence after the period.**<sup>1</sup>
- Please do not use roman numerals for footnotes. Please use footnotes and not endnotes.
- When citing an article: First name last name, "title of article," *Journal*, volume, (Date), available at: add link here.
- When citing a book: First name last name, *Title of Book* (Place: Publisher, year), pages x-y. **Make sure to use Chicago citation style.** If you have any doubts about the citation style, please consult [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
- Papers that do not properly quote or leave out citations will be penalized.
- **Print out and proof read your work before sending your documents to me and to Robin Cole.**

**Format:** 1 inch margins, 12 pt. font, line spacing=1½ (one and a half). Please include page numbers (1, 2, 3 and not Roman numerals!) **Please submit your document in word format in an email to me and to Robin Cole with subject line containing relevant information (one pager, final paper, etc).**

Please follow the guidance above and keep in mind that your grade derives from the content, the presentation, and the organization of the memos.

Begin with a crisp topic sentence and avoid long paragraphs. (Policymakers are busy with little bandwidth; memos should be crisp, clear, precise, and concise.) Use adjectives sparingly. Grammatical and spelling errors will affect your grade. Your arguments should be supported by evidence.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).

**Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism:** Students who plagiarize will receive zero points for the assignment and consequently will fail the class. The instructor will make use of all available University policies. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean and Program Chair.

**If we need to shift to remote teaching, please note the Zoom code of conduct (and note these also apply for the public sessions on Wednesdays): All public sessions will be recorded. Please do not share the recordings because FERPA rules apply.** Please put cell phones on airplane mode before coming to class and refrain from either checking or sending text messages while in class, just as you would if we were meeting in person. **If we need to shift to**

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<sup>1</sup> Like this!



**meeting as the DC team by Zoom**, we will let you know by email. If we do this, please feel free to use the chat function or the raised blue hand on Zoom, however, to indicate you want to speak. Please, if at all possible, keep your video open during class but keep your mute button on unless you are speaking. (If you have tech issues, please let Robin Cole know.) If you are planning to share your screen with the class, please have the document open before coming to class so it is easily found.

**We are planning to meet in person** for the foreseeable future. **All participants, following guidance from the DC government and from the CMU administration, will be required to wear masks covering nose, mouth, and chin.**

**We must treat every individual with respect.** We are diverse in many ways, and this diversity is fundamental to building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive campus community. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Each of these diverse identities, along with many others not mentioned, shape the perspectives our students, faculty, and staff bring to our campus. We, at CMU, will work to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion not only because diversity fuels excellence and innovation, but because we want to pursue justice. We acknowledge our imperfections while we also fully commit to the work, inside and outside of our classrooms, of building and sustaining a campus community that increasingly embraces these core values. These values are, in fact, at the core of creating a peaceful, just, and inclusive world.

Each of us is responsible for creating this safer, more inclusive environment.

Unfortunately, incidents of bias or discrimination do occur, whether intentional or unintentional. They contribute to creating an unwelcoming environment for individuals and groups at the university. Therefore, the university encourages anyone who experiences or observes unfair or hostile treatment on the basis of identity to speak out for justice and support, within the moment of the incident or after the incident has passed. Anyone can share these experiences using the following resources:

**Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion:** [csdi@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:csdi@andrew.cmu.edu), (412) 268-2150

**Report-It online anonymous reporting**

**platform:** [reportit.net](https://reportit.net) username: *tartans* password: *plaid*

All reports will be documented and deliberated to determine if there should be any follow-up action. Regardless of incident type, the university will use all shared experiences to transform our campus climate to be more equitable and just. This commitment is part of our work on sustainable development.

**Take care of yourself—especially now!**

We are living in very uncertain times—indeed, unprecedented times. It is not unusual to feel stress these days. When you take a break during the day, I encourage you to step away from the computer and stretch. Try to avoid checking email. Walk around a bit.

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available and an important part of the graduate school experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is there to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for aid in getting connected to the support that can help.