

**Nazarbayev University**  
**Department of Political Science and International Relations**  
**Spring 2023**

**PLS 374 Public Choice and Public Policy**

Professor Jessica Neafie

Office Hours: Wednesday 12.00-14.00 and Thursday 11.00-14.30 by appointment:

<https://calendly.com/jessica-neafie/15min>

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**Course Description:**

Arthur Okun: "There is a place for the market and the market must be kept in its place."

The market is a subject of intense political debate about government's responsibilities and citizens' expectations regarding its scope. This course will introduce you to a variety of theories and readings that introduce students to public choice, and its critics. Public choice is "the use of economic tools to deal with traditional problems of political science" (Tullock 2008).

Public choice and public policy is a survey course designed to acquaint students with a sub-discipline of economics and political science that attempts to explain the public policy process via economics. Students will learn about the origins of public choice and the key theories of the public choice school.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Be able to explain Public Choice concepts in written form and present them to an audience.
2. Be able to describe and interpret Public Choice papers and arguments.
3. To know the foundational literature in Public Choice theory.
4. Be able to synthesize arguments in Public Choice.
5. Be able to develop a research question and answer it using appropriate sources.

**Required Texts:**

There are no required textbooks for this course, all readings will be made available on the course Moodle page.

**I reserve the right to change this syllabus, including the course schedule, readings, and due dates. All changes will be announced in class and via Moodle.**

**Grading Scale**

Points    Grade  
100 – 95.0 = A  
94.9 – 90.0 = A-  
89.9 – 85.0 = B+  
84.9 – 80.0 = B

Points    Grade  
79.9 – 75.0 = B-  
74.9 – 70.0 = C+  
69.9 – 65.0 = C  
64.9 – 60.0 = C-

Points    Grade  
59.9 – 55.0 = D+  
54.9 – 50.0 = D  
49.9 – 0     = F

## Grades:

- 30%, Student Led Discussion (2\*15% each), **ABSOLUTELY NO MAKE UPS OR LATE DISCUSSIONS ACCEPTED IF YOU DO NOT ATTEND YOU LOSE 15 points**
  - 15% (2\*7.5%) 1000-1500 word summary of the week's readings, **physical copy only** handed in at the start of class.
  - 10% (2\*5%) 5-10 minute presentation of your summary (ppt optional)
  - 5% (2\*2.5%) 5 thought provoking questions about the weeks readings to ignite conversation (**must be at the end of the summary** when handed in and used throughout discussion)
  - Students will do 2 presentations throughout the term on the readings for the assigned day, they are expected to do at least a 5-minute presentation presenting the material (you make pick any aspect of the material you thought was interesting/confusing or that you agree/disagree with); comparing it to other readings in the course and providing their own analysis of the material.
    - Must ask at least 5 questions to lead the weeks discussion.
  - Each week you will be working with at least one other student for the presentations.
    - Your presentation should be coordinated but you must each hand in your own paper and have your own questions.
    - <https://empathy.guru/2015/09/28/what-does-empathetic-criticism-look-like/>
- 15%, 3 mini-summaries (3\*5%)
  - On three weeks you are not presenting you must summarize the readings in a short 500-1000 word paper and have 1 thought provoking question.
  - These are due in paper copy at the beginning of class with the question at the end of the summary.
- 10% Perusall (**2 weeks are excused**)
  - No make-ups for this assignment (you are responsible for having it done before class)
- 15% Pop-quizzes
  - No make-up pop quizzes. You will be allowed to miss 1 pop quiz without penalty.
- 5% reading assignment, due by week 3 no make up
  - Details given in week 1, along with a lecture on how to read in academia.
  - This assignment may be done using week 2 or 3's readings (if you do both you get at 1 point bonus on the final grade), and will be turned in by paper copy in week 2 or 3 before class starts.
- 25%, Final Persuasive Paper, Op-ed style (online)
  - At least 2500 word paper to persuade an audience of the proper way to tackle a policy problem.
  - (5% of Final Grade) A rough draft will be due Week 13 (2 physical copies), you will each review 2 other papers during week 13 and report on week 14
  - (15% of Final Grade) Final Paper will be due Week 16

- Students are expected to submit an op-ed to advocate a position for or against the use of a public policy/public choice approach to a particular policy problem. The student will submit (1) a rough draft of the op-ed (5% at least 2500 words long), (2) 2 peer reviews (see below) (5%, 2.5\*2), and (3) a final draft of the op-ed (15% of final grade).
- Website: <https://valenciacollege.edu/students/learning-support/winter-park/communications/documents/ElementsofPersuasive.pdf>
- 5%, Peer Review
  - No make ups, you must do this between week 14 and week 15.
  - No late Peer Reviews will be accepted.
- **EXTRA CREDIT- 3 points on final grade**
  - **Present your Persuasive Paper to the class in Week 15. You must inform me by week 13 if you plan to present.**

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Introduction, How to Read in Academia	
2	What is Public Choice and Public Policy	Reading Assignment Due
3	The Market System	Reading Assignment Due
4	Public Choice Theory	
5	Rationale for Government	
6	Collective Action/Collective Choice	
7	Dictatorship and Democracy	
8	Political Action: Why do people vote?/voter turnout	
<b>9</b>	<b>No Class, Women's Day</b>	
10	Designing Public Policy and Topic: Social Issues	
<b>11</b>	<b>No Class, Spring Break</b>	
12	Topic: The Environment	
13	Topic: International Relations; start Peer-Review	Op-ed rough Draft
14	Topic: Alternatives to Market Systems; Review Peer Review,	Peer Review
15	Extra-Credit Presentations, Class Wrap-up	
16	Finals Period	Final Paper

### Tentative Reading Schedule:

- a. Week 2: Public Choice and Public Policy
  - i. Holcombe. Chapter 1, Public Policy and Public Choice
  - ii. Jones and Cullis "Public Choice and Public Policy: The Vulnerability of Economic Advice to the Interpretation of Politicians"
- b. Week 3: The Market System
  - i. Lindblom The Market System 1-7
- c. Week 4: Public Choice Theory/Property Rights
  - i. Buchanan Politics Without Romance
  - ii. Tullock et al. Government Failure. Chapter 1; pg 3-16
  - iii. Mueller Public Choice a Survey
  - iv. Applied Mainline Economics, Chapter 1-3
  - v. Wright Critique of Public Choice
- d. Week 5: Rationale for Government

- i. Friedman 1978 The Role of Government in a free society
  - ii. Simmons Beyond Politics Chapter 1 and 2
  - iii. Applied Mainline Economics 4-6
- e. Week 6: Collective Action/Collective Choice
  - i. Olson Collective Action 1-2
  - ii. Ostrom Governing the Commons (Chp. 1,2,6)
  - iii. Kimura Critique of Olson
- f. Week 7: Dictatorship and Democracy
  - i. Holcombe Chapter 3
  - ii. Mueller Chapter 18. Dictatorship
  - iii. Olson Dictatorship Democracy and Development
  - iv. Coyne After War Chapter 1
- g. Week 8: Voter Turnout/Why do People Vote?
  - i. Holcombe Public Choice Chapter 4 - 6
  - ii. Tullock Problems of majority voting
  - iii. Buchanan Individual Choice in Voting
  - iv. Pressman What is wrong with Public Choice?
- h. Week 10: Designing Public Policy
  - i. Holcombe Public Choice Chapter 7-11
  - ii. McChesney Rent Extraction and Rent Creation in the Economic Theory of Regulation
  - iii. Wagner Boom and Bust
- i. Week 12: Can Public Policy Solve Social Dilemmas?
  - i. Storr, "The Market as a Social Space: On the Meaningful Extra economic Conversations that Can Occur in Markets."
  - ii. Coyne, C.J. Doing Bad by Doing Good: Why Humanitarian Action Fails, Chp. 3, 6, & 7
- j. Week 13: The Environment
  - i. Schroeder Public Choice and Environmental Policy
  - ii. Yandle Public Choice at the Intersection of Environmental Law and Economics
  - iii. Sproule-Jones Public Choice Theory and Natural Resources
- k. Week 14: International Relations
  - i. Leeson Efficient Anarchy
  - ii. Frey Public choice of International Institutions
  - iii. Coyne Tyranny Comes Home, Chp. 2, 5, & conclusion
- l. Week 14: Alternative to Market Systems
  - i. Lindblom The Market System Part 3

**Course Policies and Procedures:**

**Make-up Test Procedures** - No make-up examinations will be given unless arranged for in advance. It is the student's responsibility to notify me before the examination is given if they are unable to take the exam and provide an acceptable reason for the absence. Failure to

following this procedure will result in an automatic one-letter grade reduction for the test, and an additional one-letter grade per day missed.

**Late Assignments** - All assignments are due by midnight on the dates listed in the Course Schedule. Failure to turn in the assignment on time, or to provide prior notification (with acceptable excuse), will result in a 3 point per day grade reduction

**Grade Appeals or Challenges**: I am not infallible and may make grading errors. You may then email me to make an appointment to discuss the problem. If you believe there is a miscalculation in your grade feel free to contact me as soon as possible.

If you have a question or concern regarding your performance on an assignment or an exam, you must wait 48 hours after the exam or assignment has been handed back to the class to contact me. You should also present an email statement that concisely expresses a substantive and legitimate reason for the request. "Substantive and legitimate" reasons include a grade miscalculation or a misunderstanding between the instructor and student, specifically in terms of the content of the student's work. Your appeal will be rejected if it does not satisfy these conditions. You have two weeks to appeal the assignment once the work is handed back to the entire class, and no grade challenges will be entertained afterward. Please also note that if you appeal a grade on an assignment and I decide to reexamine the assignment, the grade may go up or down. It will be treated as a new grade on the assignment, and all aspects of the assignment are open to reexamination.

**Communication with the Instructor**: If you have any suggestions, comments, and questions about the course, political science, or graduate school, feel free to email me to set up an appointment to chat. Please allow 24 hours for a response when contacting me during the week, and up to 48 hours on the weekends. I will use email and our Moodle site to communicate with you about course assignments, activities, and any changes to the course schedule or syllabus.

**Academic Integrity**: Plagiarism and other academic dishonesty/misconduct will not be tolerated. Cheating and dishonesty on tests/ assignments (using unauthorized sources of information, and/or providing or receiving unauthorized assistance of any form of academic work), and plagiarism (presenting someone else's material as your own) will result in an F for the assignment, and possible failure of the class and disciplinary action by the university.

It is your responsibility to know and abide by the Student Code of Conduct for Nazarbayev University. Violations of this policy may include, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism (including "patchwriting"), aid of academic dishonesty, fraud check-in, fabrication, and threatening behavior. These instances and other academic dishonesty/misconduct will be handled according to the requirements and procedures in the Student Code of Conduct for Nazarbayev University. Students should also be familiar with the university's official statement on academic misconduct, plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of documents:

**Academic misconduct** is an act in which a student:

1. Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation (plagiarism);
2. Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work or others;
5. Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of any student's academic performance;
6. Engages in any form of cheating on an exam or assignment;
7. Assists other students in any of these acts.

**Plagiarism** is intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own. It includes submitting an assignment purporting to be the student's original work which has wholly or in part been created by another person. It also includes the presentation of the work, ideas, representations, or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources. Plagiarism occurs when a person:

1. Directly copies one or more sentences of another person's written work without proper citation. If another writer's words are used, you must place quotation marks around the quoted material and include a footnote or other indication of the source of the quotation. This includes cut and paste from the internet or other electronic sources;
2. Changes words but copies the sentence structure of a source without giving credit to the original source, or closely paraphrases one or more paragraphs without acknowledgement of the source of the ideas, or uses graphs, figures, drawings, charts or other visual/audio materials without acknowledging the source or the permission of the author;
3. Submits false or altered information in any academic exercise. This may include making up data for an experiment, altering data, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.;
4. Turns in all or part of assignment done by another student and claims it as their own;
5. Uses a paper writing service, has another student write a paper, or uses a foreign language translation and submits it as their own original work;
6. In computer programming class, uses computer code written by another student.

**Cheating.** Cheating harms the very fiber of the University community. Honest students are put at a disadvantage due to the unfairness of the act and the potential that the grading structure of the class may be altered to their disadvantage. Students who cheat do not receive a real education, depriving themselves of the experience of how to learn. Cheating also damages the reputation of the University as well as the fabric of society. Finally, cheating damages the ethics of the individual, teaching them a wrong approach to life that will not be sustainable in their future careers. Cheating occurs when a person:

1. Gains or provides unauthorized access to examination materials;
2. Uses notes, mobile phones, books, calculators or other materials/devices during an examination without the permission of the instructor;

3. Copies from another student's exam sheet with or without their permission or allow a student to copy from their exam sheet;
4. Obstructs or interferes with another student's efforts in an academic exercise;
5. States a dishonest reason in a request for an extension for an exam or paper;
6. Continue to write even when time is up during un exam;
7. Talks during an examination period;
8. Asks another student take an examination or quiz;
9. Commits any other action that gives a student an unfair advantage during an examination period or on any assignment being graded for credit;
10. Assists in, facilitates, organizes or arranges any of the above-mentioned actions.

**Falsification of documents.** Falsification of documents is a form of academic dishonesty that deliberately seeks to misrepresent some aspect of the student. Falsification of Documents occurs when a person:

1. Presents a falsified application form, financial aid form or any other official form submitted to the University;
2. Presents a falsified or misleading medical certificate in order to obtain an excuse for a class absence, examination absence or late work or for any other reasons;
3. Uses a falsified or illegally altered student identification card;
4. Tampers with transcripts or other academic records.

If you have fully read and understand the syllabus and would like 2 bonus points on your final grade, please send me a cat meme by email with the subject line "PLS 374\_Syllabus Read" by week 5! No subject line no bonus.