

COURSE SYLLABUS
POLI 391V: ROOSEVELT INSTITUTION SEMINAR

Spring 2009
M W 2:30 – 3:45
Flinn Hall 207
University of South Carolina

Professor Charles J. Finocchiaro
Office: 319 Gambrell Hall
Phone: 803-777-2707
E-mail: finocchi@mailbox.sc.edu

Course Webpage: <https://blackboard.sc.edu/>

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course provides an opportunity to intensively engage with a number of contemporary public policy issues. Over the course of the semester, students will learn to interpret, research, draft, and present public policy proposals. The semester will begin with a brief introduction to the Roosevelt Institution and an overview of public policy. This will be followed by an examination and discussion of a series of contemporary issues in public policy. Students will choose topics to study, and will produce a paper to be presented at the end of the semester. The course will be structured much like a seminar, meaning that students will be expected to read and write extensively, to present their work, to actively participate in class discussion, and to engage in peer review. Students who successfully complete the course should be able to identify and describe current problems facing U.S. policymakers, evaluate competing policy proposals, and produce and advocate their own policy solutions.

THE ROOSEVELT INSTITUTION AT USC

The Roosevelt Institution is a non-profit, non-partisan national network of campus-based student think tanks. Its members conduct policy research on pressing political issues. The Roosevelt Institution connects the fruits of that research to the policy process, delivering sound, progressive proposals to policymakers and advocacy groups at all levels of government as it organizes, trains, and empowers the next generation of leaders.

A chapter of The Roosevelt Institution was founded at USC in 2007. It currently has approximately 35 members who meet monthly to discuss contemporary domestic and global issues. To date, the chapter has held discussions on US health policy and the War in Iraq; hosted speakers including Dr. Thomas Vogt, Director of USC's NanoCenter, and Dr. Don Fowler, former chair of the Democratic National Committee; held a town hall forum with presidential candidate Jon Edwards and SAVE (Student Association for Voter Empowerment); co-sponsored a roundtable debate on "Ethics in Politics" featuring professors, student leaders, and representation from local government; and attended a national conference on health policy in Washington, D.C. The chapter has also compiled a journal with student ideas on pertinent topics.

COURSE MATERIALS:

In lieu of a textbook, a large selection of journal articles and other reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Many of these readings will be designated by the guest lecturers who will be visiting to give a presentation on current public policy problems. Students will also be reviewing their peers' work, and should plan to download, read, and bring a copy of every assigned reading and student paper to class with them on the appropriate day.

COURSE EVALUATION & EXPECTATIONS:

Students enrolled in the course will be expected to participate and demonstrate proficiency in the course topics by (1) engaging with the material by completing and actively participating in discussions of reading assignments on public policy, (2) completing written response papers to assigned readings, (3) researching and drafting public policy proposals, (4) preparing and participating in oral presentations of policy proposals, and (5) attending at least 1 Roosevelt Institution meeting, as well as one other policy-oriented campus event approved by the professor, during the semester. In accordance with university policy, absence from more than 10 percent of scheduled classes is excessive, and may result in the reduction of one letter grade for the course.

Course grades will be composed as follows:

- 35% Final Paper (30%) and 10-15 Minute Presentation (5%)
 - Subject will be any policy topic of interest to the student
 - Each student must find a faculty mentor knowledgeable about the topic
 - Paper will be submitted to USC Roosevelt Journal

- 30% Two *25 Ideas* Submissions (10% each) and 5 Minute Presentations (5% each)
 - Subject will relate to one of the topics designated by Roosevelt
 - Grades will be based in part on peer review with professor oversight
 - One paper will be submitted to national Roosevelt journals (Apr. 1 deadline)

- 15% Class Participation (includes attendance at two outside events—see above)

- 20% Class Response Papers
 - Students will select a minimum of five lectures for written responses
 - About 2 pages in length
 - Highest five grades will count towards average

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, MAKE-UPS, & ACCESSIBILITY:

Students are expected to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum of a failing grade for the assignment, and may result in additional disciplinary measures including referral to the Office of Academic Integrity. Violations of the university's Honor Code include, but are not limited to, improper citation of sources, appropriating another individual's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. Also, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and civil manner. This includes avoiding disruptive activity by arriving to class on time, turning off cell phones, etc. For more information, see the Carolina Community Student Handbook (<http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/>).

It is imperative that students plan on completing each assignment as scheduled. Makeups/extensions will **not** be offered except under the most extreme circumstances, involving events of an unforeseen nature—i.e., personal illness, death of an immediate family member, and incidents of similar gravity. Written documentation and advance notice must be provided.

Any student with a documented disability (as determined by the Office of Student Disability Services at 777-6142) should contact me in order to make appropriate accommodations.

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 to 10:30

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The course will be run in large part as a seminar—which means that outside of the guest lectures, class discussion will be predominantly student-led and student-driven—with much of the routine coordination and scheduling done by Roosevelt Institution officers in consultation with the professor. Professor Finocchiaro will provide the regular faculty presence (in addition to the seven guests), offer advice and criticism, assess student participation, and grade assignments. Readings may be added or dropped and the syllabus altered at his discretion if necessary.

The course will be divided into three sections: introduction, public policy, and presentations and publishing. The “introduction” section will last three weeks and will focus primarily on providing an overview of what public policy is and how to write, analyze, and publicize/market it. This segment of the course will conclude with brief presentations of case studies based on existing *25 Ideas* papers—students should endeavor to relate their presentations to the material covered up to that point. The “public policy” section will last seven weeks. One day each week, a visiting professor will speak about their particular area of policy specialization (at least one assigned reading, posted on Blackboard, will correspond with this lecture). After the talk, students will write a short response paper, to be turned in during the following class meeting. The other day each week, students will present their *25 Ideas* proposals and get feedback from the class as well as discuss the topic that was presented by the visiting professor earlier that week. The schedule of presentations will be determined early in the semester. The “presentations and publishing” section will last 4 weeks. Students will present their final papers (and give longer presentations). An added component of this segment of the course will involve experience in editing submissions to the USC Roosevelt Journal and planning for a Roosevelt conference in the fall of 2010.

DATE	TOPIC	READING (Blackboard)
	<u>Introduction</u>	
1/12	Introduction to course; case study assigned	
1/14	Overview of Public Policy Prof. Mark Tompkins, Political Science	Steinmo & Watts
1/19	NO CLASS – University Holiday (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Day)	
1/21 & 26	Overview of Public Policy (cont.) Prof. Mark Tompkins, Political Science	Steinmo & Watts
1/28	<i>25 Ideas</i> case study presentations; final topic, date, & mentor signups	
	<u>Public Policy</u>	
2/2 & 4	Development/Economics Prof. Edward Carr, Geography (2/2)	Carr
2/9 & 11	Environment/Energy Prof. Thomas Vogt, Chemistry & Director of the USC NanoCenter (2/9)	Vogt

2/16 & 18	Solutions for the South Prof. Blease Graham, Political Science (2/16)	Graham
2/23 & 25	National Security/Foreign Policy Prof. Gordon Smith, Political Science & Director of the Walker Institute (2/23)	Smith
3/2 & 4	Healthcare Prof. Melayne McInnes, Economics (TBA)	McInnes
3/9 - 13	NO CLASS – University Holiday (Spring Break)	
3/16 & 18	Education Prof. Christian Anderson, Educational Leadership and Policies (3/16)	Anderson
3/23 & 25	Governmental Process Prof. Donald Fowler, Political Science (3/23)	Fowler

Presentations & Publishing

3/30 & 4/1	Research Presentations & Publishing	Student papers
4/6 & 8	Research Presentations & Publishing	Student papers
4/13 & 15	Research Presentations & Publishing	Student papers
4/20 & 22	Research Presentations & Publishing	Student papers
4/27	Course Wrap-up & Debrief	
4/29	FINAL EXAM SLOT – FINAL PAPERS DUE (2pm)	