**Common Syllabus Elements for Public Policy Courses**

Courses taught in the Public Policy Program are covered by a set of course management policies, laid out in this document.

For a number of years, the Department of Economics has been advising instructors to adopt these policies, and Economics has in fact formally adopted the policies as a mandatory element of instruction.

Because these policies already apply to the economics courses that comprise a significant fraction of the Public Policy curriculum, the Program extends them (with minor changes) as a default option to all Public Policy instructors. An elaboration of the purpose and benefits of the policies, from a student perspective, is available from the Economics Department.

Instructors offering Public Policy courses are urged to adopt these policies in course syllabi, either by incorporating them or by linking to this document.

Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies. **These policies also will be employed by the Director of the Public Policy Program in any cases where a dispute arises over course credit toward the Public Policy degree, unless the instructor’s syllabus explicitly adopts contrary policies.** Some of the policies set “bright line” boundaries, because one goal is to reduce the transaction costs associated with more discretionary policies. Other policies are designed to rule out behaviors that beginning students might not realize are inappropriate.

I. Courses have individual policies regarding class attendance.

II. Exam attendance: Exam attendance at the specified time is required. There are a few very specific exceptions to this rule, and if you are requesting one of these exceptions you must email the course instructor. The exceptions, stated below, are health emergencies, deaths in the immediate family, Stanford business that takes you away from campus, and documented disabilities. There are no other exceptions. For example, there are no exceptions for job interviews or beginning jobs or internships before the end of the term, or for other non-educational purposes. Since the exceptions are narrow and clear cut, your email asking for an exception should be short and to the point.

   a. Death of an immediate family member at a time when attending services requires you to travel away from campus. Immediate family members are your parents, siblings, spouse, and children.

   b. Health emergencies where you are unavoidably in the hospital or clinic during the time of the exam. Students who have health emergencies must obtain a certification from Vaden physicians as to when they were seen. That (or similar, if you are in hospital) documentation should follow your email.
c. Absence from campus on Stanford business, for example, for athletic competition. Work through the ARC in order to take your exam at the same time (or slightly earlier, if absolutely necessary) as other students in the course but in a different place.

d. Disabled students who are working through OAE may, in some circumstances, take examinations at a different place than the rest of students. See OAE section below.

III. Students are responsible for making sure, at the beginning of the term, that they can attend the exams. Registering for a course means that you certify that you will be present for the exam (unless one of the explicitly stated exceptions above arises.)

IV. Public Policy courses enforce the every other seat rule for examinations, and exams are to be taken either in the examination room or the designated overflow room if one is needed.

V. On-Time exam attendance

Students who, through bad luck or poor planning, appear late for an exam will need to finish at the same time as other students. Students who arrive late will have less time to finish, finishing at the same time as other students.

VI. Withdrawals and Incompletes

Students may withdraw up to the end of the 8th week of classes for any reason, though a “W” will appear on the transcript. Students may request an Incomplete grade after that deadline and up until the last day of classes provided: (1) the only work that is Incomplete is the course final exam or final paper and (2) there is a health emergency or a death in their immediate family (these are clear cut boundaries, see the precise boundaries under “exam attendance,” above.) Students should promptly (once healthy and past initial grieving) work out an arrangement for clearing an Incomplete with the instructor. The typical arrangement is taking the final in the same course offered in a later term. The University policy that an uncleared Incomplete turns into a grade of NP (not passed) or NC (no credit) after one year, applies here as well.

VII. No make up exams or exams at second times

VIII. Deadlines

Late work, without advance approval, whether problem sets, exams, papers, or other work, does not count for course credit and receives a grade of zero - no exceptions. Advance approval is subject to the same rules as missing exams: extensions are granted only for death in family, illness, or, if approved in advance, Stanford business away from campus.
IX. **Weighting**

Weighting different aspects of students’ work is, like the rest of grading, a necessary evil. The relative weights on the different elements course work are set by the instructor. So are the rules that permit (or do not permit) dropping the lowest problem set score. The Program has no set weights. One Program-wide rule is that, if the course permits dropping the lowest problem set score, a student who has entered a course late and missed the first problem set drops that one, not a later one.

X. **Correcting Errors in Grading**

Errors in grading occur, if very rarely; this section lays out rules and procedures for requesting a correction. The important general rule is that such a request should clearly and succinctly state the unambiguous error you believe has occurred.

Errors in grading arising from illegible or garbled answers are not subject to correction.

Students who feel they have been graded incorrectly should petition for a correction in writing to the grader with a copy to the instructor. Students must not approach either instructor or grader with an oral request before making a written request. Requests should be extremely short and must focus on the specifics of the grading error. Requests should occur within a week of the work being returned (for example, within a week of the work being placed in the academic office.)

a. The entire graded work (problem set or examination) should be resubmitted; there is no guarantee that grades will rise as, statistically, positive and negative errors in grading are equally likely. If the request arises because of a claim that different students have been graded differently, all the affected students should submit their work as a group. There is no guarantee that only upward adjustments will occur.

b. These policies apply only to specific and unambiguous errors, not to such items as disputes over grading policies, protests about the form or content of an examination, or claims of learning not displayed in the work. Requests for a correction which do not state, with particularity and specificity, the error to be corrected will be rejected.

c. Here is the appropriate form of a request to correct an error grading: “Dear Prof. X: I am a student in your public policy 999 course. I believe that the grades on my midterm were added up incorrectly. As you can see from the bluebook I left in your mailbox, I have 25 on each of the four questions, but 73 on the exam. I have not spoken with you or any of the TAs about this, and am copying the Director of PP on this email.”
Requests after the end of the quarter are further limited by the University’s policies. For more information, refer to the Registrar’s page on grading.

XI. Honor Code Issues

The Honor Code is a very important part of Student life, and the Public Policy Program takes it seriously. The Program encourages course instructors to comply fully with their responsibilities to honorable students under the Honor Code. Many instructors and TAs are very offended, to the point of suspecting an Honor Code violation, when students ask for “hints” about future exams and problem sets. Don’t do things (like this) which lead Professors and TAs to think ill of students. The Program reserves the right to undertake procedures that would catch violations of the Honor Code should any arise, such as photocopying work before it has been returned.

XII. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability that may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education rather than the instructor. The OAE will evaluate the request along with the required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE in the first week of the quarter as timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk.

Be sure that your instructor, the OAE, and you have a common understanding, at least two weeks before any examination, of the precise logistical arrangements by which you will be accommodated.

XIII. Consideration of Course Materials Costs

Through a UAR workshop hosted in January 2016, the Stanford Office of Undergraduate Advising and Research (UAR) heard first-hand accounts from undergraduate students about the influence that perceived and real costs of course materials have on student academic choices.

In light of this, the D-Gen Office would like to remind instructors of the Opportunity Fund, a campus resource that reviews undergraduate requests for materials such as books or course fees. So that faculty can inform students of this opportunity, UAR has provided the following text explaining this opportunity, which you are welcome to include in your course syllabi:

"Stanford University and its faculty are committed to ensuring that all courses are
financially accessible to all students. If you are an undergraduate who needs assistance with the cost of course textbooks, supplies, materials and/or fees, you are welcome to approach me directly. If you would prefer not to approach me directly, please note that you can ask the Diversity & First-Gen Office for assistance by completing their questionnaire on course textbooks & supplies or by contacting Joseph Brown, the Associate Director of the Diversity and First-Gen Office (jlbrown@stanford.edu; Old Union Room 207). Dr. Brown is available to connect you with resources and support while ensuring your privacy.”