

Veteran Public Policy and Advocacy

James R Craig
University of Missouri, St Louis

An instructional resource prepared for the 2016 NEH Summer Institute on Veterans in Society

Course Description:

Focusing on the American experience, this course provides an overview of American public policy towards military veterans and then works to propose changes to make those policies more effective. The focus of the course will be on understanding the current issues facing veterans then designing new solutions to the current problems. Finally, we will practice effecting change through various written products and presentations.

Course Goals:

By the end of this course, the student should:

- Be able to differentiate the basic approaches to creating public policy
- Know many of the relevant issues facing veterans and be familiar with the important literature and research on veterans
- Evaluate veterans issues in a multidisciplinary manner to identify and address some of the “hard questions” about our society’s obligation to the veteran community
- Be able to effectively advocate for veterans by creating a policy recommendation in several forms (Memo, Op/Ed and oral presentation)
- Be inspired to continue research into Veterans Studies

Course Schedule *(subject to modification)*

| Module | Topic |
|---------------|---|
| 1 | Who are veterans and what are “veterans’ issues”? |
| 2 | How is public policy made and evaluated? |
| 3 | Disability and Health |
| 4 | Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and TBI |
| 5 | Homelessness |
| 6 | External Advocacy: effective Op/Ed writing |
| 7 | Women Veterans |
| 8 | Suicide |
| 9 | Criminal Justice / Veterans Courts |
| 10 | Internal Advocacy: effective memorandum writing |

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| 11 | Education and Employment |
| 12 | Military Connected Families |
| 13 | Popular Advocacy: the short speech <i>TED Talk</i> |
| 14 | Developing your persuasive talk |
| 15 | Give your TED Talk |

1. Veteran issues

The purpose of this block is to introduce the broad scope of veteran issues

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Classify who are and are not considered “veterans” in our society
- Evaluate various veterans policies
- Generate an initial set of ideas for better or new veterans policies

Required Readings:

- CRS 2016 Who is a Veteran - Basic Eligibility.pdf
 - Davis--IAVA - Storming the hill.pdf
 - National-Strategy-PublicationFINAL.pdf
 - Review the research briefs available at IVMF to get an idea of some potential topics and policy recommendations: <http://vets.syr.edu/research/briefs/>
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2. Public policy making

The purpose of this block is to increase understanding of the ways policies are made in the USA

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Understand the various ways policies are created
- Evaluate various veterans policies

Required Readings:

- Watch the McGuire Video “What is Public Policy” online (45 Min)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpWH8r5sqs8>
 - Gabriel Almond--Comparative Politics - Public Policy.pdf
 - Kingdon 1995 Chapter 1 Processes.pdf
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3. Disability and Health

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of veteran disability and health issues

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various veteran disability and health issues
- Critique current veteran health and disability policies
- Hypothesize and design new or improved veterans disability or health policy

Required Readings:

- CQ Researcher VA Vet Care.pdf
 - CRS 2014 Health Care for Veterans - FAQs.pdf
 - CRS 2014 The Number of Veterans That Use VA Health Care Services.pdf
 - CRS 2014 Veterans Affairs - Presumptive Service Connection and Disability.pdf
 - CRS 2014 Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange.pdf
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4. PTSD and TB

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of veteran Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury issues

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various veteran PTSD and TBI issues
- Critique current veteran PTSD and TBI policies
- Hypothesize and design a new or improved veteran PTSD and TBI policy

Required Readings:

- CRS 2013 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Mental Health Problems in the Military.pdf
 - CRS 2013 Traumatic Brain Injury Among Veterans.pdf
 - As disability awards grow, so do concerns with veracity of PTSD claims - LA Times.pdf
 - Boone - The Paradox of PTSD.pdf
 - Finley - Politics of PTSD.pdf
 - PTSD--Betthausen et al.pdf
 - The Unintended Consequences of the Current PTSD Diagnosis _ TIME.pdf
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5. Homelessness

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of veteran homelessness

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various veteran homelessness issues
- Critique current veteran homelessness policies
- Hypothesize and design a new or improved veteran homelessness policy

Required Readings:

- CRS 2014 Veterans and Homelessness.pdf
 - VA - Housing First Implementation brief.pdf
 - Peck - The Imaginary Panacea to the Problem of Homeless Veterans.pdf
 - Applewhite--Homeless Veterans.pdf
 - Program to End Vet Homelessness Reaches a Milestone in Arizona - NYTimes.pdf
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6. Op/Ed Writing

The purpose of this block is to learn about policy advocacy using populist means – an Op/Ed submission

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Write an effective Op/Ed article that shapes the environment around a policy issue and influences the thoughts of senior decision makers

Required Readings:

- Harvard KSG – How to write an Op/Ed
 - Duke U – How to write an Op/Ed
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7. Women Veterans

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of veteran issues specifically related to females

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various female veteran issues
- Critique current female veteran policies
- Hypothesize and design a new or improved female veteran policy

Required Readings:

- Watch: The Invisible War, 2012 (95 min)
 - CRS 2013 Military Sexual Assault - Chronology of Activity in Congress.pdf
 - CHAUS female-vets-special-needs---the-long-journey-to-normal.pdf
 - Carlson--Women Veterans.pdf
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8. Suicide

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of veteran suicide

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various veteran suicide issues
- Critique current veteran suicide policies
- Hypothesize and design a new or improved veteran suicide policy

Required Readings:

- CRS 2015 Health Care for Veterans- Suicide Prevention.pdf
 - CQ Researcher Military Suicides v.21-33.pdf
 - VA Suicide Data Report 2012
 - USA Today – VA study says 22 Vets a Day
 - Washington Post – Context behind 22 Vets a Day Suicides
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9. Criminal Justice and Veterans Courts

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of veterans in Criminal Justice and Court programs

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various veteran criminal justice issues
- Critique current veteran criminal justice policies
- Hypothesize and design a new or improved veteran criminal justice policy

Required Readings:

- VJO - St. Louis Info Paper.pdf
- A mentor in combat veterans court.pdf
- Criminal justice_ Leave no veteran behind _ The Economist.pdf
- Schaller - veterans on trial - 2 chapters.pdf
- Kravetz - way off base.pdf

10. Memorandum Writing

The purpose of this block is to learn about policy advocacy using formal means – an action memorandum

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Write an effective policy recommendation memorandum that shapes the policy decisions of senior decision makers

Required Readings:

- Robert Behn, The Craft of Memo Writing
- Danzinger, Checklist for Writing Action Memoranda
- Herman, Short Policy Memo Workshop – pay particular attention to the example memos at the end

11. Education and Employment

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of veteran education and employment issues

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various veteran education and employment issues
- Critique current veteran education and employment policies
- Hypothesize and design a new or improved veteran education or employment policy

Required Readings

- CRS - A Brief History of Veterans Education Benefits.pdf
 - CRS 2012 Veterans' Benefits - Vocational Rehab and Education.pdf
 - CRS 2014 Employment for Veterans.pdf
 - CRS 2014 The Post-9-11 Veterans Educational Assistance (post 9-11 GI BILL).pdf
 - Renewing America - Policy Initiative Spotlight_ Employing Post-9_11 Veterans.pdf [?](#)
Rumann and Hamrick--Student Vets in Transition.pdf [?](#) Veterans and Jobs--
Bolduc.pdf:
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12. Military Connected Families

The purpose of this block is to conduct an in-depth study of the issues related to military connected families

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Differentiate various issues related to military connected families
- Critique current policies concerning military connected families
- Hypothesize and design a new or improved policy for military connected families

Required Readings:

- Clever – The Demographics of Military Children and Families
 - Byrd – Family and Couples Treatment for Newly Returning Veterans
 - Walsh – Fathering after a Military Deployment
 - Gilreath - Substance Use Among Military-Connected Youth
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13. Refining your advocacy

The purpose of this block is to learn about policy advocacy using modern / populist means – a TED Talk

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Hypothesize and design an effective TED Talk that shapes the environment around a policy issue and influences the thoughts of senior decision makers

Required Readings:

- 9 Public Speaking Lessons from TED Talks – Forbes Magazine
 - 5 Quick Steps to a Killer Ted Talk – Forbes Magazine
 - The 7 Steps To Delivering A Mind-Blowing TED Talk [?](#)
 - TEDx GatewayArch Speaker Selection Guide [?](#)
 - View the Following TED Talks in this order:
 - 1.http://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks
 - 2.http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity
 - 3.http://www.ted.com/talks/sebastian_junger_why_veterans_miss_war?language=en
 - 4.<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/The-Moral-Obligation-To-Know-Ou>
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14. Developing your persuasive talk

The purpose of this block is to further improve the TED Talk

Learning Objectives:

After completing the readings and participating in the discussions, students will be able to

- Write and record an effective TED Talk that shapes the environment around a policy issue and influences the thoughts of senior decision makers

Required Readings:

- View the following TED Talks:
 - 1.https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action
 - 2.https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are
 - 3.http://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement
 - 4.<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/Life-after-Iraq-Andrew-Chambers>
 - 5.http://www.ted.com/talks/jake_wood_a_new_mission_for_veterans_disaster_relief
 - 6.<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/The-Heros-Journey-After-the-Cre>
 - 7.<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/Transitioning-Veterans-Charlott>