



Skyline High School  
**Introduction to Public Policy**  
Course Syllabus

Ross Dunbar - Room B308  
Cate McCraw - Room B306

### **Course Information**

Introduction to Public Policy is a required course for the Communication, Media and Public Policy Magnet Program. It is a one-term course. Students earn one-half (0.5) credit for Introduction to Public Policy. Although this is an elective course, it is required for the CMPP endorsement on the Skyline transcript and diploma.

### **Course Overview**

This course introduces the concept of public policy and gives students an opportunity to learn, first-hand, the power of citizen participation in solving local problems. Students learn a multi-step policy analysis process: define problem, investigate, identify solutions, recommend solutions and evaluate effectiveness. Students apply this process to the analysis of real policy issues from today's headlines that involve either the City of Ann Arbor, the State of Michigan or the federal government.

### **Learning Goals**

#### Communication

- Use technology & tools strategically in learning & communicating
- Communicate and collaborate effectively with a variety of audiences, explanations and design solutions

#### Critical Thinking

- Use argument & reasoning to construct arguments & critique reasoning of others
- Analyze evidence including primary & secondary sources
- Evaluate credibility of source using criteria like factual accuracy, emotional appeal, inconsistencies, bias

#### Language Arts

- Establish & maintain a formal style & objective tone while maintaining norms of policy analysis
- Make a claim and support with reasoning and evidence

#### Policy Analysis

- Distinguish powers/responsibilities of local, state & national political institutions
- Address public issue by suggesting alternative solutions, evaluating consequences & proposing an action
- Describe what encourages thoughtful participation in public affairs
- Participate in a civic activity and reflect on the importance of participating in civic life

### **Teaching & Learning Philosophy**

Teaching and learning strategies are based on solid personal relationships, steeped in rigor, and relevant to the learners' world. The curriculum for the Introduction to Public Policy course is standards-based and reflects the National Social Studies Curriculum standards, the ACT reading and writing standards and the Michigan High School Content Expectations for Social Studies.

**Grading Philosophy:** Grades are a method for providing information to students and parents about progress towards mastery. While a single letter grade provides little specific information, a well-defined grading system can be a useful part of the evaluation and feedback process. Using the AAPS grading scale to help students and parents understand a student's present level of academic performance in terms of the specific course standards, is the objective of grading for mastery.

**Mastery Learning:** Mastery learning is a method of teaching and learning that assures that a student reaches a level of predetermined mastery on a unit of instruction before progressing to the next level or unit. In a mastery learning setting, students are given specific feedback about their learning progress, as well as learning support as needed, at regular intervals throughout the instructional period. Mastery learning is a process designed to ensure that all students achieve content mastery. Mastery in Social Studies is a predetermined level of achievement of course standards. Michigan's High School Content Expectations guide the planning of the instructional and assessment standards for all Social Studies courses at Skyline High School. The goal in each of these courses is for all students to achieve mastery of these state standards.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections**

Interdisciplinary teaching involves a conscious effort to apply knowledge, principles, and/or values to more than one academic discipline simultaneously. It is seen as a way to support the transfer of learning, teaching students to think and reason and provide a curriculum more relevant to students. This course is designed with strong connections between World History and Geography (A) and English Language Arts, and more informal connections to Science, Math, World Languages and Visual, Performing and Applied Arts.

### **Expectations**

#### Be prepared

- Be in class on time every day
- Bring all necessary materials
- Complete all assignments

#### Be respectful

- Respect yourself and others
- Respect your own and others' property
- Respect your school

#### Be responsible

- Participate productively
- Use a planner

#### Expect Challenge

- Do your best
- Ask for help
- Take pride in your work

### **Writing Support:**

#### **Skyline Writing Center Website: [tinyurl.com/skylinewc](http://tinyurl.com/skylinewc)**

- The Skyline Writing Center offers free writing support to all currently enrolled Skyline students. Writing Center tutors are highly trained juniors and seniors that have been identified as having excellent writing skills and teaching ability. The Writing Center is open every hour of every day that school is in session. Writing Center tutors can assist students at any academic level and at any stage in the writing process from initial brainstorming to final revisions. Students may use the Writing Center's services for writing assignments in any course (except for world language courses). Students may also use the Writing Center for creative writing, college essays, ACT writing preparation, and more.
- Students can visit a tutor in person in room B429 on a walk-in or appointment basis. Appointments can be made with specific tutors at specific times by using the Writing Center website. In-person sessions typically last 15-20 minutes. Students can also submit their work through the Writing Center's website for online tutoring in the Online Writing Lab (OWL). Writing is returned in 48-72 hours with suggestions and an invitation to visit the Writing Center for a follow-up appointment.

### **Grading Scale for Mastery:**

The district-wide A, B, C, D, E grading scale will be used to communicate the student's progress towards mastery. Grades based on the mastery of standards are different than traditional grades. Traditional grading is often used to "track" students, reward speed, is often competitive, oversimplifies the judgment of mastery, and compares students to other students. Grading based on mastery supports student learning by helping every student understand where they are in relation to meeting standards (so they can improve), is often cooperative (students help each other to succeed), and compares

achievement to criteria. Grading for mastery is based on the belief that every child can learn given the right support and opportunity.

- A = Mastery with Excellence (90-100%)
- B = Mastery (80-89%)
- C = Approaching Mastery (70-79%)
- D = Below Mastery (60-69%)
- E = Well Below Mastery (59% and below)

#### **Grading Categories:**

- **Mastery –Tests, Projects, Research Papers, Formal Presentations (80% of Grade):**

*\*Please note that 10% of this weighted category is the final exam.*

Mastery assignments are intended to assess student mastery of the content standards for a lesson, unit, or course. This category includes summative assessments such as tests, which may have essays, short answer, vocabulary, chronology, multiple choice, and/or true/false sections. Major projects, research papers, and formal presentations are also included in this category (Rubrics will be discussed when assigned).

- **Process – Daily Assignments, Class work, Homework (20% of Grade):** This category includes formative assessments and assignments such as note-taking, reading assignments, written responses, and participation.

**Opportunities for Reassessment:** Students will be given an opportunity to be reassessed when they do not attain mastery of content of at least an 80%. Students will only be reassessed on standards they have not mastered. (Upon mastery of content, students will earn a minimum of 80%). In all non-AP/AC classes, students are permitted unlimited reassessment until mastery is achieved. In AP/AC classes, students have access to a minimum of two reassessment opportunities. All reassessment opportunities should be completed 2 weeks prior to the end of the term, unless pre-approved by the instructor.

- Opportunities for reassessment to attain mastery will be built into class time to allow equitable access to reassessment based on student need.
- All efforts will be made by Skyline staff to help remove barriers to students reassessing.

#### **Classroom Policies:**

**AAPS Definition of Equity:** Equity is the moral responsibility of each member of our learning community to take the intentional actions necessary to create a learning community free of barriers, biases, and disproportionality for each and every person regardless of personal characteristics and social circumstances.

Absence policy: It is the student's responsibility to find out what was missed due to absence and to make up the work as soon as possible. Please communicate with the teacher before any planned absence and upon returning from an absence.

Late Work Policy: Students are expected to complete all classwork and homework assignments by the specified due date. Please communicate with your teacher in advance of the due date to request an extension if you have a problem completing an assignment on time. Interventions such as lunch and parent conferences will be used if missing or late work becomes a problem. Late process assignments may be turned in up until the unit mastery assessment is completed. These late process assignments can earn a grade up to 75%. Late **mastery** (product) work turned in which meets the standards of neatness and completion for this class will be accepted until November 8, 2019. **No late mastery (product assignments) will be accepted after November 8, 2019.**

Extra Credit Policy: According to school policy, there will be no extra credit opportunities.

**Electronics Policy:** School supplied and personal technology (including, but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, smart watches, and laptops) must be turned off in all instructional settings (classrooms, labs,

outdoor classrooms, etc.) during the day unless allowed by the teacher. Teachers will use spotlight system in their classrooms to notify students of the expectation at that time:

**Red:** No tech at this time | **Yellow:** Ask before use | **Green:** Allowed for instructional purposes

Cell phones may be used before and after school hours, and during hall passing in between classes, and/or during lunchtime. However, the device or earbuds must not impede the student from being able to hear directions and inquiries from school personnel and fellow students. Students should have their electronics and earbuds put away before entering the classroom. There should be NO phone use in locker rooms and bathrooms. Photos and videos may not be taken at school without proper authorization.

School personnel reserve the right to confiscate technology when it interferes with instruction. Continued misuse will result in removal of technology to support the student in engaging in the learning environment. First removal - student will forfeit the device until the end of the class period. All subsequent removals - the student will forfeit the device to SLC office until the end of the day.

**Hall Passes:** Instructional time should be preserved. Students may only leave the classroom with the teacher's permission.

- Passes will not be issued for the first and last five minutes of a period.
- Students must sign out and keep a classroom lanyard/bathroom pass visible and with them at all times while out of class.
- A Skyline building hall pass is required for a visit to a counselor or other office. The building hall pass must be completed by a school staff member.
- Students may not be excused from a class to complete work or activities for another course.

Public Meeting Requirement: CMPP students are **required to 1) attend a minimum of 2 public meetings each trimester for at least 90 minutes**, 2) verify attendance on-site by turning in an agenda (or other document from the meeting) signed by council member or commissioner and 3) complete a written public meeting journal entry. Public meetings include: Ann Arbor City Council, Ann Arbor Planning Commission, Ann Arbor Energy Commission and Washtenaw County Commissioners Meeting, school board meetings, township and other meetings/community events as approved, in advance, by Mr. Dunbar. Requirements for the **1st public meeting** will be **accepted any day BEFORE Friday, October 11, 2019**. Requirements for the **2nd public meeting** will be **accepted any day BEFORE Friday, November 8, 2019**. **Public meeting requirements will not, under any circumstances (including absence on due date) be accepted after these due dates.**

Community Service Requirement: CMPP students are **required to complete a minimum of 5 community service hours per trimester**. Community service includes any time served as a volunteer for a non profit organization, service club or service as a Skyline Student Action Senate delegate. Community service hours must be verified by a letter from a supervising adult (on agency letterhead) that indicates date and times of service and a description of the volunteer activities. Community service requirements will be **accepted any day BEFORE Friday, November 8, 2019**. **Community service requirements will not, under any circumstances (including absence on due date) be accepted after this due date.**

CMPP Equipment Rules: CMPP students have access to a dedicated computer lab every day. As CMPP students proceed through the program, they will learn how to use and will ultimately be able to check out professional quality video, audio and lighting equipment. The ability to access this equipment, while critical for success in the CMPP program, is a privilege not a right. Therefore, CMPP students and their parent/guardians must sign a contract that relate to computer and equipment usage.

The following websites will provide useful information for you and your student:

Grades and Attendance: <http://pschool.aaps.k2.mi.us> CMPP Website: [www.skylinecmpp.com](http://www.skylinecmpp.com)

Keep this portion for your records

Dear Skyline and CMPP family:

***We will be teaching your student Introduction to Public Policy.*** Our expectations for students are high but achievable. Our goal is to help each student succeed in class. We have reviewed the syllabus with your daughter or son. We request that you also review this information with your student at home, complete the lower portion of this handout and **return the lower portion ONLY by September 12, 2019 to receive full credit for this assignment.**

Contact Information:

	Room	Phone	Email Address
Ross Dunbar	B308	(734) 994-6515, ext 55325	<a href="mailto:dunbarr@aaps.k12.mi.us">dunbarr@aaps.k12.mi.us</a>
Cate McCraw	B306	(734) 994-6515, ext 55323	<a href="mailto:mccrawc@aaps.k12.mi.us">mccrawc@aaps.k12.mi.us</a>

For more information, visit the CMPP website: <http://skylinecmpp.com>

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RETURN this portion by September 12, 2019

I read and discussed the policies and course requirements for **Introduction to Public Policy** with my child.

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Student Last Name:\_\_\_\_\_ Student First Name:\_\_\_\_\_

Student AAPS email:\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name:\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email:\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone:\_\_\_\_\_

***Please use the space below to provide me with any information that we would need to know in order to help your student to be successful in Introduction to Public Policy:***