This course addresses the major policy areas that are shaping the current political and policy debates at the national level. These issues include but are not limited to the federal deficit, health care reform, the public education system, financial bailouts, and partisan politics. Each policy area will feature a public lecture by a policy maker or expert in the area. In most cases, the guest speakers will meet exclusively with the Public Policy 20 students for a lecture and question and answer session. In other cases, the guests will give a campus address that Public Policy 20 students will be required to attend.

The list of speaker invitees for this year includes several sitting U.S. Senators, prospective presidential candidates, and members of the Obama and Bush Administrations. The course this year will leverage the fact that a presidential campaign cycle will soon be underway.

Course assessment will be based upon writing assignments and class participation. Students will prepare briefs on the week’s topic, questions for the featured speaker, and critiques of the speaker’s themes and responses.

The lead instructor will be Professor Charles Wheelan ‘88, who is visiting from the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. Dartmouth faculty members including Professor Andrew Samwick, Professor Bruce Sacerdote, Professor Deborah Brooks, Professor Dean Lacy, and President Jim Yong Kim have agreed to participate and to lead the course for a specific week. Other faculty members will be invited to participate. The course is intended to be interdisciplinary in content and to encourage collaboration among the contributing faculty across departments.

One course meeting each week will be devoted to preparing for the week’s speaker and discussing the content of the previous week. The second class meeting will be reserved for the guest speaker who will be asked to address an assigned topic. Every effort will be made to keep the invited guests on topic, so as to improve the depth and focus of the course.
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The class will require eight short memos (roughly 1,000 words) summarizing and critiquing the content of the week’s guest lecture. The memo should be modeled in tone and substance on an editorial critique that might appear in a major newspaper or news magazine. The focus of these assignments is threefold: 1) To expose students to the policy issues presented in the course and make them aware of the relevant political context; 2) To train students to think critically about the plans and ideas presented by the guest speakers; 3) To give students repeated opportunities to present their analysis succinctly and persuasively in writing.

Students are also responsible for background reading on each week’s policy topic and for preparing questions in advance of class for each guest speaker.

The course grade will be based on the following: an average of a student’s best five policy memos (80%); class participation and prepared questions for the guest speaker (10%); quizzes on course reading (10%).

COURSE LOGISTICS
Each week, a specific faculty member will “own” the content. This faculty member will be responsible for preparing students on the relevant policy content in advance of the guest lecture, leading the Q and A with the guest speaker, and grading the weekly student memos.

BOOKS
The following books are required for the course. They are available at Wheelock Books:

Wheelan. *Introduction to Public Policy*, W.W. Norton.


WEEK 1
FACULTY: WHEELAN AND PRESIDENT KIM
GUEST: NONE

INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this week is to introduce the students to basic concepts in public policy that will help them evaluate the policy ideas proposed and discussed in the balance of the course.

Readings:
Wheelan. *Introduction to Public Policy*, Chapters 1-4, 15.
OVERVIEW OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE
The purpose of this week is to make students aware of the electoral tenor of the nation in 2012 that will await candidates for office at every level of government, which will in turn allow them to make judgments about the political feasibility of topics discussed in the balance of the course.

Readings:

U.S. FISCAL CHALLENGES
The guest will be asked to address the current state of federal finances and how the nation ought to address those challenges. The talk may also address fiscal challenges at the state and local levels.

Readings:
Donald B. Marron. “Cutting Tax Preferences Is Key to Tax Reform and Deficit Reduction,” Testimony before the Senate Committee on the Budget, February 2, 2011.
Bittle and Johnson. Where Does the Money Go? Your Guided Tour to the Federal Budget Crisis (Collins)
WEEK 4  
FACULTY: TBD  
GUEST: JEFF IMMELT  

ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
The guest will be asked to identify the key domestic and international challenges related to energy and the environment, critique the relevant current federal policy, and propose specific policy changes.

Readings:  

WEEK 5  
FACULTY: TBD  
GUEST: SENATOR SHERROD BROWN  

TRADE AND GLOBALIZATION  
The guest will be asked to address the opportunities and challenges related to an increasingly interdependent global economy and how U.S. policymakers ought to react to this evolving economic landscape.

Readings:  
*Naked Economics*, Chapter 11.  
WEEK 6
IMMIGRATION POLICY AND REFORM

The guest will be asked to critique current American immigration policy, assess its strengths and weaknesses, and propose reforms.

Readings:

*Immigration’s Economic Impact*, Report by the President’s Council of Economic Advisers, June 20, 2007.


WEEK 7

FACULTY: PRESIDENT KIM
GUEST: TBD

HEALTH CARE

The guest will be asked to diagnose the current challenges related to the American health care system, explain the underlying issues, and propose specific reforms.

Readings:


WEEK 8
EDUCATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL
The guest will be asked to discuss the importance of human capital in a modern economy, critique the state of U.S. education policies (from pre-kindergarten to university), and make specific proposals for upgrading the skills of the American workforce.

Readings:

WEEK 9
AMERICA’S PLACE IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD
The guest will be asked to address the key foreign policy challenges for the United States and to make specific proposals for how they ought to be addressed.

Readings:
WEEK 10
FACULTY: SACERDOTE AND/OR WHEELAN
GUEST: ROBERT REICH

THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY: POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS
The speaker will be asked to speak to the current distribution of income in the United States, assess the long-term implications of these trends, and propose relevant policy changes.

Readings:

WEEK 11
FACULTY: ANDREW SAMWICK
GUEST: HANK PAULSON

REGULATION AND GLOBAL FINANCE
The speaker will be asked how American regulators can create an environment that fosters innovation in finance while protecting the system from the kinds of reckless risk that led to the 2008 crisis.

Readings: