

POLITICAL SCIENCE 514: SEMINAR IN PUBLIC POLICY

Washington State University
Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice
Program in Public Affairs
Fall, 2010

Monday Evenings: 5:45-8:30
204 Vancouver Multimedia Classroom Building

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Please contact the Liberal Arts main desk (546-9441) for information regarding official school closures.

University Disability Accommodation Policy: Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability which must be accommodated in order to fully participate in class. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodation needed for the course. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Services located in Student Services (360) 546-9155. Because accommodations may take time to implement, it is critical that you contact Disability Services as soon as possible. Late notification may mean that the requested accommodation(s) may not be available.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar is designed to introduce students to the study of public policy in the United States. As the reading list demonstrates, this course surveys some of the literature from the disciplines of political science, sociology and economics to introduce students to conceptual models and theoretical frameworks used to understand public policy and political life. These books, articles and book chapters represent some of the “classics” as well as some more recent theoretical perspectives about public policy. These models and theories will assist students in how to think about politics and policy; how to identify policy problems; how to discuss formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of public policies; how to place policy-making in its political context; and how to explain the consequences of public policy. While we cannot review all of the major works in the area, or each of the conceptual models used to study public policy, it is my hope that by the end of the course students will have a general understanding of several of the major theories which will provide a framework for studying public policy and the public policy process in the United States. Students will also examine past and current public policies from the perspective of these models and theories throughout the course.

Because this course reviews some of the major works in these social science disciplines, this will be a useful course for students who have been away from the literature, or who have not been introduced to this material. By the end of the course students will be able to discuss who has

power and influence in the policy arena, the making of public policy, the role of government in the policy process, and who wins in the policy process and why. It is an appropriate course for both students pursuing their Masters and Doctoral degrees in public affairs or political science or other programs which study public policy.

This seminar is divided into four parts. The first part of the course introduces you to some of the fundamentals of the public policy process, such as what is public policy, what are the basic steps in the public policy process, who are the major actors and what are the major institutions that play a role in the process, and what are policy tools or governing instruments used to put public policies into effect? After this introduction you will have a basic background about public policy studies and will be familiar with the language political scientists often use when discussing public policy.

The second part reviews several major conceptual models and theories used to explain and understand activities in the policy process. Models and theories allow us to focus on politics and public policy in different ways, which enables us to more clearly think about them. During this section of the course, I ask that you think about their application to contemporary policy areas, including civil rights, criminal justice, health and welfare, education, environment, defense, budgeting, immigration and trade (it is important to note that throughout the course we will be discussing a variety of public policy issues). This exercise will help you think about the group research project at the end. We will begin with some of the classic models used to study public policy, including the process model, which will introduce you to the policy stages, or the “nuts and bolts” of the public policy process in the United States. It will then proceed with some of the classic theories, including incrementalism, rational choice, pluralism and elitism, followed by more recent theoretical developments, including punctuated-equilibrium theory, policy networks and advocacy coalitions.

The third part of the seminar focuses on the ethical evaluation of public policy. While a short part of this course, a discussion of ethics is extremely important to the study of public policy. We begin with a review of a policy evaluation book which looks beyond a mere empirical evaluation of public policy to evaluation which incorporates normative considerations. Next, we will read a number of case studies which will allow you consider how core values in American political culture influence ethical public policy analysis.

The seminar will then end with part four, student-oriented presentations. Depending on enrollment, the class will be broken up into three to four groups, and it will be the responsibility of each group to lead the class discussion on the particular policy area chosen. Each group will have the flexibility to prepare their presentations in a manner decided by the group. Groups may also assign reading material for the class. This part of the course concludes with a look into the future.

The success of this course will depend, to a large degree, on your participation. It is a reading course designed to introduce students to some of the literature in the field in hopes that the reading assignments will encourage lively, thoughtful discussions about public policy in the United States.

The writing assignments in this course are minimal in order to provide students the opportunity to focus on the reading in order to be best prepared to engage in a critical discussion in the seminar.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The following books are *required* course readings and are on sale at the Students Book Corporation located on campus. Additional readings may be handed out or can be accessed on **JSTOR**, the University's on line data base, or the Web. This may appear inconvenient, but asking you to read (and download if necessary) these articles will save you money in the long run as I will not have to assign additional books.

You are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class and to come to class prepared to discuss the material.

Baumgartner, Frank and Bryan Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Bluhm, William and Robert Heineman, *Ethics in Public Policy: Method and Cases* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2007).

Fischer, Frank, *Evaluating Public Policy* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1995).

Kingdon, John W. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd. Ed. (New York: Longman, 2003).

McCool, Daniel C., *Public Policy Theories, Models and Concepts: An Anthology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995).

Sabatier, Paul, ed. *Theories of the Policy Process* (Boulder: Perseus Books, 2007).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All students taking the course for credit are responsible for completing the following four assignments in order to successfully pass the class.

1. Class Participation (10 percent)

Students are expected to attend class regularly, and to contribute to the overall discussion. You should not register for the course unless you are prepared to participate in discussions and attend class on a regular basis.

The success of this seminar will, to a certain degree, be dependent on your participation. This course is not taught in the traditional lecture format--rather, it is designed to encourage a conversation among the seminar participants. As such, I fully expect you to carefully examine the assigned readings and to come to class prepared to discuss the course material. Class

participation will take place in small groups as well as during each lecture; frequently, students will be asked to answer specific questions about the assigned readings. Your level of preparation will significantly factor into your attendance grade for the course. Merely showing up to class each day does not necessarily mean that you will earn a passing grade; you must be prepared to discuss the class material.

2. Short Literature Reviews (30 percent)

On five occasions students will write a short paper summarizing and critically analyzing the book or book chapters and/or articles they have read for the selected session. The paper should not exceed three pages. The review should include the main thesis (or the theses) from the session's reading and a discussion of the major supporting arguments. You should also compare/contrast the material with other readings covered in class. These literature reviews require you to efficiently summarize the assigned reading, and will later assist you in your preparation for the final examination, and later, for your comprehensive Master's exam. Rather than assign weeks when a paper is due, I will leave it up to you to choose 5 sessions from Part II of the course from which to write the papers.

3. Oral Presentation and Paper (30 percent)

Oral Presentation: During the fourth part of the course, two class sessions will be dedicated to student presentations. Each student has the flexibility to design the manner in which he or she will conduct their portion of the class. Students will select a particular policy area, and examine it according to the theories and models discussed in class. They will then make a formal presentation to the class. In order to prepare for the oral presentation, each student will need to conduct additional research, and should also design handouts and/or a power point presentation for the class, as well as lead the class discussion in an innovative manner.

Paper: Students are also required to write a major research paper. Further instructions will be handed out in class.

4. Final Examination (30 percent)

There will be an in-class final examination at the completion of the course. Exam questions will draw equally from material from lectures, readings, and the discussions in class. Please bring several blue books on the assigned exam date. It will be a closed-book exam; you cannot use your text or notes during the exam.

Two weeks prior to the exam you will be provided with a detailed study guide to aid you in your preparation.

Assignment Protocol:

Students must complete each of the four assignments for this course. Failure to complete any assignment will result in a failing course grade. You must also be present for individual student presentations.

Assignments must be typed and spell-checked, and must use proper grammar. The WSUV writing lab is available to assist you in your written work. It is located in the Library Building. The phone number is 546-9650. The lab can be very busy at certain times of the year, so it is a good idea to plan ahead and schedule an appointment with a technician. Another option is to hand in a rough draft to the Instructor. Rough drafts are encouraged. If you select this option, you must hand in the assignment one week before the due date. Your paper will be returned with extensive comments and recommendations for improvement.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day assigned in the syllabus. You must hand in the work personally. If you are unable to come to class on the day the assignment is due, you must contact me and arrange to hand in the assignment at an earlier time. I know email submissions are convenient for some, but you must hand in the assignment to me to ensure that I receive it, and that it be free of viruses or the “I sent it to you as an attachment, didn’t you get it” malady so common on due dates.

There will not be extra credit in this course. Grades are not negotiable unless there is a mathematical error on my part.

A note about absences from exams, and late assignments: My policy on this issue is strict and unyielding. No excuse without documentation that your absence has been excused, or that there are exigent circumstances that make your presence impossible. You must contact me directly within 24 hours after the scheduled due date, otherwise you will forfeit all opportunity to make up the assignment. Incomplete grades and the acceptance of late assignments (which will carry a substantial penalty) are given at the discretion of the Instructor and are not automatic. Please take note of the due dates of the written assignments and exams to ensure that you have not inadvertently fallen into a situation where you have several assignments due at one time.

A note about academic integrity: When a student enrolls in Washington State University, the student assumes an obligation to pursue academic endeavors in a manner consistent with the standards of academic integrity adopted by the University. To maintain the academic integrity of the community, the University cannot tolerate acts of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, falsification, fabrication, multiple submissions, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, complicity or misconduct in research.

I have a zero tolerance policy regarding academic integrity violations. The penalty for any offense, at any stage in the course, on any assignment, is an F grade for the course. Additionally, you will be reported to the Office of Student Services and the Student Conduct Committee as dictated by University Policy. Please consult the student handbook for WSU’s policy.

The following breakdown is used for computation of final grades:

100-98 = A+	88-89 = B+	78--79 = C+	68--69 = D+
93--97 = A	83-87 = B	73--77 = C	63--67 = D
90--92 = A –	80-82 = B-	70--72 = C-	62--60 = D-

Student Protocol:

This course syllabus should be considered a “contract” between the students and the Professor. If you choose to continue with this course, this assumes that you understand my expectations and the course requirements. I strongly believe you are responsible for your own education.

Because this course involves a significant amount of class discussion in both the small group and lecture format, you will be interacting a great deal with your peers. I fully expect students to behave in a professional manner -- you should be willing to engage in thoughtful discussions, encourage participation from your peers, and take care to respect other students' contributions in class. Common courtesy and professionalism are expected.

In order to facilitate a safe and positive learning environment, this passage addresses classroom management:

Membership in the academic community places a special obligation on all members to preserve an atmosphere conducive to a safe and positive learning environment. Part of that obligation implies the responsibility of each member of the WSU community to maintain an environment in which the behavior of any individual is not disruptive. It is the responsibility of each student to behave in a manner that does not interrupt or disrupt the delivery of education by faculty members or the receipt of education by students, within or outside the classroom. The determination of whether such interruption or disruption has occurred will be made by the faculty member at the time the behavior occurs. It is the responsibility of the individual faculty member to maintain and enforce the standards of behavior acceptable to preserving an atmosphere for teaching and learning in accordance with University regulations and the course syllabus.

At a minimum, students will be warned if their behavior is evaluated by the faculty member as disruptive. Serious disruptions, as determined by the faculty member, may result in immediate removal of the student from the instructional environment. Significant and/or continued violations may result in an administrative withdrawal from the class. Additional responses by the faculty member to disruptive behavior may include a range of actions, from discussing the behavior with the student, to referral to the appropriate academic unit and/or the Office of Student Services for administrative review, with a view to implement corrective action, including suspension or expulsion.

A note about recent technological developments in the 21st century: Make sure your cell phone is turned OFF during class. Even phones on "vibrate" are distracting. If there is an impending emergency which requires you to have your phone on, please discuss this with me prior to class. Otherwise, if your phone rings or vibrates, I will assume the call is for me and will answer it. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class, not via email. I know email is convenient for some, but you must hand in the assignment to me personally. This ensures I not only receive it, but that I receive it free of viruses or the "I sent it to you as an attachment, didn't you get it" malady so common on due dates.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION TO COURSE, THE STUDY OF PUBLIC POLICY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

23 August: **Course Overview**

- *Discussion of Expectations, Course Requirements
- *Grading Philosophy

*Review of Syllabus and Major Assignments

30 August: **An Introduction to the Study of American Public Policy: Institutions, Actors and Instruments: Getting to Know the Language**

*What is Public Policy? How is it Studied?

* Major Actors and Institutions in the Policy Process

*Governing Instruments

6 September: **Labor Day (No Classes)**

13 September: **An Introduction to Theoretical Frameworks**

Reading: “The Theoretical Foundation of Policy Studies” in McCool, *Public Policy Theories, Models and Concepts* (section 1).

Sabatier, Paul, “The Need for Better Theory,” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 1).

Hill, Kim Quaile, “In Search of Policy Theory,” *Policy Currents*, vol. 7 (1997). **Available on the Web**

Sabatier, Paul “The Status and Development of Policy Theory: A Reply to Hill,” *Policy Currents*, vol. 7 (1997). **Available on the Web**

PART TWO: CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

20 September: **The Process Model: Policy-Making as Political Activity**

Reading: “The Process of Public Policy Making” in McCool, *Public Policy Theories, Models and Concepts* (section 3).

Kingdon, John, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd Ed. (entire book).

Mucciaroni, Gary, “The Garbage Can Model & the Study of Policy Making: A Critique,” *Polity*, vol. 24, no. 3 (Spring, 1992). **Handout**

Ingram, Schneider and deLeon, “Social Construction and Policy Design” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 4).

Zahariadis, Nikolaos, “The Multiple Streams Framework: Structure, Limitations, Prospects,” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 3).

27 September:

Theories of the Policymaking Process: Rational Choice, Pluralism and Elitism

Reading: “The Scope of Participation in Public Policy Making” in McCool, *Public Policy Theories, Models and Concepts* (section 2).

Theories of the Policymaking Process: Institutions and Institutional Rational Choice

Reading: Ostrom, Elinor, “Institutional Rational Choice: An Assessment of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 2).

Shepsle, Kenneth, “Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, vol. 1 (1989). Available on **JSTOR**

4 October:

Theories of the Policymaking Process: Incrementalism

Reading: Lindbloom, Charles, “The Science of Muddling Through,” *Public Administration Review* vol. 19 (Spring 1959) and “Still Muddling, Not Yet Through,” *Public Administration Review* (Nov/Dec 1979). Available on **JSTOR**

Dror, Yehezkel, “Muddling Through--’Science’ or Inertia?” *Public Administration Review* vol. 24 (Sept. 1964). Available on **JSTOR**

Etzioni, Amitai. “Mixed Scanning: A “Third” Approach to Decision-Making” *Public Administration Review*, vol. 27, No. 5 (Dec., 1967). Available on **JSTOR**

LeLoup, Lance T., “The Myth of Incrementalism: Analytic Choices in Budget Theory,” *Polity* vol. X, no. 4 (1978). Available on **JSTOR**

Wood, Robert S., “The Dynamics of Incrementalism: Subsystems, Politics and Public Lands,” *PSJ* vol. 34 (2006). Available on **JSTOR**

11 October:

Theories of the Policymaking Process: Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory

Reading: Baumgartner, Frank and Bryan Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*.

True, James L, et. al. “Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in American Policymaking” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 6).

18 October: **Theories of the Policymaking Process: Subsystems, Policy Networks and Advocacy Coalitions**

“Policy Subsystems” in McCool, *Public Policy Theories, Models and Concepts* (section 5).

Weible, Christopher and Paul Sabatier, “The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 7).

Adam, Silke and Kriesi, Hanspeter, “The Network Approach” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 5).

25 October **Other Perspectives on Public Policy**

Reading: “Policy Typologies” in McCool, *Public Policy Theories, Models and Concepts* (section 4).

Blomquist, William, “The Policy Process in Large-N Comparative Studies in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 9)

Additional readings to be handed out in class.

PART THREE: ETHICAL EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICY

1 November: **Policy Evaluation: Integrating Empirical and Normative Evaluation**

Reading: Fischer, *Policy Evaluation* (entire book).

8 November: **Ethics and Policymaking: A Framework for Analysis and Case Studies**

Reading: Bluhm, William T and Robert A. Heineman, *Ethics and Public Policy: Methods and Cases* (entire book).

PART FOUR: PRESENTATIONS AND LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

15 November: Individual Presentations

Reading: To be announced

22 November: **Thanksgiving Holiday (No Classes)**

29 November: Individual Presentations

Reading: To be announced

6 December:

Conclusions and Review for Final

Reading: Schlager, Edella, “A Comparison of Frameworks, Theories and Models of Policy Processes” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 10)

Sabatier, Paul, “Fostering the Development of Policy Theory” in Sabatier, *Theories of the Policy Process* (chpt. 11)

and “Conflict and Choice in Policy Theory,” in McCool, *Public Policy Theories, Models and Concepts* (Section 6)

13 December

Final Exam