

**POLICY FORMATION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION
POLS 541, FALL 2005**

Version II of our Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR: Barry S Rundquist

CLASS MEETS: Thursday 6-8:30

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Public policy is governments way of correcting market failures and providing goods and services that markets often will not. In a sense, public policy formation, implementation, and evaluation is a nonmarket process of societal problem solving. In democracies, the form that public policy tends to take is often difficult to predict and explain. The purpose of this course is threefold: 1) to review relevant literature on characteristics of public policies; 2) to probe the extent to which theories of policy making processes can help in understanding and predicting the characteristics public policy may have; and 3) to identify some problems in political science theories and in the research on which they are based with an eye to improving the quality of theory in this area.

The course focuses on whether characteristics of policy making processes help explain why public policies tend to be economically efficient or inefficient, fragmented and incoherent or holistic and coherent, effective or ineffective, promote social equality or promote inequality, and/or bring about change in or maintain the policy status quo? In the United States, the nature of public policies may be determined by how people tend to form their policy preferences, how elections tend to work, and how parties, interest groups, legislative, executive, bureaucratic, and judicial politics tend to shape and modify policy decisions. In other countries and sub-national and international contexts, the way preferences are formed and distributed and the way policy making institutions are configured will also determine the form of government solutions to policy problems.

This course has traditionally welcomed students from a variety of disciplines, including Urban Planning, Public Administration, Public Health, Economics, Education, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Sociology, and Social Work, as well as Political Science. Non-political scientists are always encouraged to make the material in this course as relevant as possible to their graduate programs and research interests. It is fully possible that great insights into the nature of public policy processes will come from students who are troubled that political science theories do not fit their disciplinary worlds. On the other hand, they might find that these theories help them understand characteristics of public policy that their disciplines do not.

The literature review part of the course will be evaluated in an in-class/closed book **midterm and final examinations**.

The readings focus on American politics and especially national level policy making in the U.S., but many of the ideas in the course apply to policy making in other countries and/or governmental settings. Methodologically, there will be readings based on quantitative and qualitative as well as behavioral, rational choice, economic, and sociological research approaches.

Note that “rational choice” in this context refers not to perfect full information (what Lindblom called “synoptic”) decision making, but to analyses that treat individual experts, politicians and citizens as responding to incentives produced by their particular social and institutional settings. It is the incentives and the way they respond to them as well as the nature of the problems they are trying to solve that affects the content of their policy solutions (e.g., see Leavitt on the decline of crime in the 1990s and teachers cheating in Chicago public schools).

This is a seminar. Students in a seminar are expected to provide the major set of intellectual stimuli for consideration, with the instructor guiding and assisting students and, during discussions, assisting in the synthesis of diverse student input. The seminar will be collegial in the sense that there is a genuine search for answers to some of the more vexing intellectual problems associated with the study of public policy. Ultimately, however, the success of the seminar as a learning experience for all participants will depend on the commitment and participation of each class member.

Requirements

Each student will 1) identify a problem, conjecture, or hypothesis about how some characteristic of a policy making, implementation, or evaluation process *causes policy* to have certain characteristics, 2) consider available as well as your own critiques of the hypothesis, 3) create a research design to test the hypothesis and/or your suspicions about it, and 4) obtain and analyze information required to implement your research design. For an example of work employing these four steps, see the Rundquist and Carsey book. Students should prepare a ten minute overview of the problem they propose to study and tell the seminar about it to get their feedback. This can began happening as soon as you come up with something but at least by the sixth week of the course. Feel free to skim ahead in the readings if you want to study an institutional process we have not gotten to. The final paper will be due in the 14th week and presented orally in the 15th week. For each of these presentations you should prepare a two-page summary and give it to other seminar participants a day before we meet.

Students will also be required to lead one class discussion of a book or article and prepare a not-too-long bibliography of recent scholarly work on the topic you are leading the discussion of. For the discussion you should prepare and distribute study questions a day before we meet. For the bibliography of recent scholarly articles, provide the seminar with a list of articles and/or books.

In earlier years, this course has required completion of a policy tracking project using government documents. The policy tracking assignment has been designed to introduce students to the intricacies of federal public policy documents. John Shuler and Amy Quinn at the UIC document’s library have been great about helping locate hard to find government documents. But nowadays, so much of this material is on-line that all one has to do to get (say) a format for a legislative history is to type legislative history into Google. So unless it becomes apparent that you need to know more about federal documents, no legislative history will be required in this class.

Term paper. In addition, each student will pick a theory, hypothesis, conjecture, or question that interests them and design a study to test it. This paper should be in the form of a normal social science convention paper (and maybe will become one, probably after more work). The paper should consist of a) an introduction saying what the paper is going to do; b) a statement of a problem in literature on policy making, implementation, and evaluation that you will address; c) a research question and/or major hypothesis to be examined; d) your research

design; e) at least a preliminary attempt to implement your research design (and/or a detailed consideration of what pattern your findings would have to take in order to confirm or reject your hypothesis); f) a discussion of the findings in terms of the problem you initially identified; and g) a short conclusion saying what you studied and what you found out, the broader implications of your research if there are any, and the limitations of your study. **A proposal for this paper is due at in Week 4 (argue why you think this problem needs studying); a critique of the idea from the literature (along with a bibliography) in week 6; a research design to test the hypothesis you want to consider in Week 7; first rough draft of your paper in week 10; second draft of your paper in week 12, and final draft of your paper in week 14.**

Course grades will be based on the following:

Midterm Exam:	20%
Book/Article Report	10%
Bibliography	10
Final Exam	25%
Class Participation	10%
Term Paper	25
	100%

Reading Material

Several books have been ordered as required books for this course and should be available in the UIC Bookstore. Several other books are ordered as recommended and/or may be purchased from Amazon.Com, Borders.Com or somewhere. Or they can be checked out from the library. These books will be reported on by one or two seminar members. The following books required:

- 1) Bruce Cain, John Ferejohn. and Morris Fiorina, *The Personal Vote*, Harvard 1987. PB Used copies if available. (The bookstore says that the paper back version of this book is no longer in print but used copies are available from Amazon.com and other used book sites.)
- 2) John Aldrich, *Why Parties?* Chicago, 1995. PB Used copies if available.
- 3) Frances E. Lee and Bruce Oppenheimer, *Sizing Up the Senate*, Chicago 1999. PB
- 4) Paul Peterson, *The Price of Federalism*, Brookings 1995. PB Used copies if available.
- 5) Barry Rundquist and Thomas Carsey, *Congress and Defense Spending: The Distributive Politics of Military Procurement* (Oklahoma: 2002). PB
- 6) Bryan Jones, *Reconceiving Decision-Making in Democratic Politics*, Chicago, 1994. PB
- 7) Charles Wolf, *Markets or Governments*, Second Edition, MIT Press, 1993. PB
- 8) Benjamin Page and James Simmons, *What Governments Can Do*, U. Of Chicago (2000) PB
- 9) Morris Fiorina, et al. *Culture Wars?*

The following books are recommended::

- 1) R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*, Yale, 1990. PB **Report**
- 2) James Q. Wilson, *What Government Agencies Do And Why They do It*, (Basic Books, 2000). PB 1989 edition Used copies if available. **Report**
- 3) Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Norton, 1997.
- 4) Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, 1965 **Report.**
- 5) Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan*, 1993 **Report**
- 6) David Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre*, 2002 **Report**
- 7) Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, Editors, *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. of Columbia University, 2002. **Packet**
- 8) Nelson W. Polsby, *How Congress Evolves*, Oxford 2004. **Report?**
- 9) Richard Benzel, *The Political Economy of American Industrialization* (2000) **Report.**

A packet of articles and papers can be purchased from your instructor.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE II

** indicates that something is expected from students.

I INTRODUCTION

Week 1. 8/25 Introductions and the Problem of *explaining* public policy from a Political Science perspective. Lasswell. Public choice/public finance and political science.

II Policy Characteristics: What forms may public policies take?

Values, instruments, Lowi, Government Accounting Categories, etc.

Week 2. 9/1 What are “important” characteristics of Public policy? Have read Theodore Lowi, “American Business, Public Policy ...” from *World Politics*, 1964, pp. 689 to 691 (the whole article is in the packet and it will be useful to read all of it at some point, but not for this week’s seminar); Stone’s Chapter 11 (packet) (and anything else those of you who have read her book remember that you think is relevant here); Mueller’s chapter 17 (packet); Who benefits: the poor, rich, or middle class (or Policy and Equality: the politics of Redistribution. Have read Page and Simmons, *What Governments Can Do*, Chicago 2000, Chapter 3 and 9.

Week 3 9/8. Policy Efficiency. Have read Wolf, *Markets or Governments*. Leavitt and Dubner, *Freakonomics*, (2005),pp 3-85 (packet). Caplan/Wittman exchange from econjournalwatch.org (packet).

Maybe Report on Sam Peltzman’s articles “Voters as Fiscal Conservatives” and “The Growth of Government.”

****Week 4** 9/15 Budgets, accounting, General fund financing, fiscal illusions, CFR and FAADS, unfunded mandates, etc., and other things that we ignore about characteristics of public policies that we shouldn’t. Look again at Mueller, Chapter 17 plus Muellers Chs 23 and 24.

III WHY Does PUBLIC POLICY TEND TO HAVE THESE CHARACTERISTICS?

Week 5 9/22 Is the constitution the cause? If so, how? David Brian Robertson, Madison’s Opponents and Constitutional Design,” *APSR*, May 2005, 225-244. Frances E. Lee and Bruce Oppenheimer, *Sizing Up the Senate* (a part still to be identified). Mueller’s Chapter 5; Muellers discussion of economic theories about the role of constitutions *vis a vis* allocative efficiency and

redistribution.

****Week 6** 9/29 Does the electorate cause them? How? Have read: Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina, *The Personal Vote*,

Report on R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*, Yale, 1990.

****Week 7** 10/6 Do Political parties cause them? How? *Political Parties and Policy Making*. Have read John Aldrich, *Why Parties?* Chicago, Parts I, III, and IV. Also Fiorina, et al., *Culture Wars*

Recommended:

Cox and McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan* (California, 1993).

****Week 8** 10/13 MIDTERM EXAM. Does Congress cause them? How? *Legislating and Policy Making*. Have read Frances E. Lee and Bruce Oppenheimer, *Sizing Up the Senate* and Barry Rundquist and Thomas Carsey, *Congress and Defense Spending: The Distributive Politics of Military Procurement*. Evans, Ch. 7 (packet)..

Recommended:

Tim Groseclose and David King, "Committee Theories Reconsidered," in Dodd and Oppenheimer, *Congress Reconsidered*, 7th Edition (CQ Press, 2001).

Nelson W. Polsby, *How Congress Evolves*, Oxford 2003.

_____ and Huber Essay in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, Editors, *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. of Columbia University, 2002. **A copy will be given to you later.**

Week 9. Agendas and Policy Making. Have read Bryan Jones, *Reconceiving Decision Making in Democracies*, (Chicago, 1994), Chapter 10. The public choice explanation of agenda setting Mueller Chapter 5.

Recommended:

John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*.

****Week 10** 10/20 Executives and Bureaucrats and Policy Making. Have read James Q. Wilson, *What Government Agencies Do And Why They do it*; Mueller on Niskanen, etc. Refer back to Wolf on internalities and Leavitt and Dubner on experts.

Week 11: 10/27 Does federalism do the trick? How? Read Peterson, *The Cost of Federalism*, and Herman Leonard and Jay Walder, *The Federal Budget and the States*, pp. 3-7.

Report on Richard Benzel, *The Political Economy of American Industrialization* (2000)

Daniel Elazar, *American Federalism, The View From the States*

Maybe Report on John Ferejohn and Barry Weingast, eds., *The New Federalism: Can the States be Trusted?*

****Week 12** 11/3 Interest Groups? Olson. Mueller summary of interest groups theory in chapter 16.

Report on Mancur Olson, *Logic of Collective Action*.

Week 13 11/10 Experts (like us?). Look yet again back at Leavitt and Dubner, *Freakonomics*, pp 3-85.

****Week 14** 11/17 Hmmm. Something will go here—maybe by then we'll have some catchup to do. **Maybe a report** on Gillens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare* (Chicago, 1999).

Week 15 11/24 Thanksgiving.

IV CONCLUSIONS

Week 16 12/1. Reports on your research and some concluding thoughts on *Why Public Policies Take the Form they Do* and what research is needed in this area.

Content of Packet

- 1) Lowi article (whole article but only 689-691 and 713 are required for the second week's seminar).
- 2) Stone Chapter, 259-262.
- 3) Mueller Chapter 17, 320-347.
- 4) Leavitt and Dubner Chapters, 3-85.
- 5) Caplan and Wittman exchange
- 6) Mueller Ch. 23
- 7) Mueller Ch. 24
- 8) Robinson *APSR* article, 225-244.
- 9) Evans Chapter, 223-243.
- 10) Mueller Chapter 5, 58-95.
- 11) Mueller Chapter 16.
- 12) Leonard and Walder pages 1-7.