

POLITICAL SCIENCE 500
INTRODUCTION TO POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
FALL SEMESTER 2010

Instructor: Dennis Judd
Office: 1114B BSB
Office Hours: 3-5 T, 2-4 W,
and by appointment

Class time: 6-8:30 Thursday
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This course is assigned a place in the department's graduate curriculum as a required core course offering a comprehensive survey of the scholarly literature on policy and governance. I will be placing emphasis on extensive reading of leading theoretical works in the field. The writing assignments are designed to require students to synthesize the theoretical perspectives in what they have read, and to apply them to a policy topic of their choice. If you would like to compare the syllabus for this course with those used at other universities, you can go to the webpage for University of Washington, Center for American Politics and Public Policy, and follow the links.

Some years ago, I introduced courses on public policy with the following preamble: "As you will soon learn, public policy is hardly a tidy discipline. There is no coherent, well-defined intellectual approach to the study of public policy. As a recent interdisciplinary field, it lacks the intellectual traditions (or the conventional wisdoms) of political science and the other social sciences. Indeed, it is not clear that anyone has even defined policy studies precisely. Nevertheless, almost everyone these days agrees that it is important to analyze policy processes and outcomes, as distinct from the political process."

Happily, since the early 1990s such an observation has become obsolete. An expanding literature on problem definition, agenda-setting, and policy communities, and policy processes has brought some theoretical coherence to the field. Further clarity has been introduced by the so-called neo-institutionalist approach and, more recently, by notions of how punctuated equilibrium can bring the various strands together. I hope that you can arrive at your own approach to the study of public policy through your exposure to the various theoretical perspectives that we will discuss in this course. No matter how much I assign, however, in the space of one semester you can only get a running start towards understanding the literature of the field. If you are in the Ph.D. program, you will have to do much more reading in subsequent courses and on your own to achieve an adequate familiarity with the literature.

Ground Rules.

This course will be run in a seminar format, composed of a mixture of brief presentations by me and a considerable amount of discussion involving every student in the class. No one will be allowed to sit silently for an entire semester, and I may call upon anyone at any time to comment on the readings. Therefore it is essential that you be prepared to participate at all times. To this end, I ask you to observe a few ground rules:

(1) Class attendance is required. If you must miss a class for any reason, please call or e-mail in advance. If you know in advance that you may miss any classes during the semester, see me as soon as possible. An excessive number of missed classes (in fact, more than three, even if excused) may be cause for a failing grade in the class.

If you are a student with a disability requiring some accommodation for participation in this class, please let me know. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (312-413-0123).

(2) You are required to read and be able to thoughtfully discuss the course material assigned for each week's class, according to the schedule outlined in the syllabus. The discussion format means that simply reading the materials for this class would not be sufficient. Students are required to bring to each class a 2-3 page (double-spaced) synthesis of the readings assigned for that class. Class participation counts for a substantial 20% of the course grade; this grade will reflect the quality of the mini-papers and quality of class preparation and discussion.

Course Requirements.

In addition to the weekly mini-papers, three essays synthesizing the course readings are required. The first paper accounts for 20% of the course grade, the next two for 30% each (this gives less weight to the first paper, which gives you an opportunity to learn what's expected without a big penalty). All students will be required to give a presentation and lead a discussion about their research paper near the end of the course. The grade for this presentation will be factored into the grade on the final paper. At least one week in advance but normally much more, I will hand out detailed instructions for the essays, which will be graded according to clarity, thoughtfulness, comprehensiveness, and originality. It is my practice to allow all students one rewrite of each paper. If I hand a paper back to you marked "rewrite", you may, if you choose, decline to do a rewrite and ask me to assign the paper a grade. In that event, the grade is final.

Assignments must be submitted on the dates indicated in the syllabus, unless you have obtained explicit permission from me in advance. When I return papers I use the occasion as a pedagogical opportunity; for that to work, I must have all papers handed in on time. You are free to be late, as long as you understand that assignments handed in late will be graded down one full grade per day after the due date. Being late just isn't worth it.

Free Advice.

I ask you to pay meticulous attention to the writing and production of the papers (no first drafts, and use spell check). The essays should be treated as miniature research papers that synthesize the assigned readings, plus whatever additional materials you may feel you need to read to fully understand the material. A reminder: the web is a wonderful resource for research, but especially at the graduate level it would be impossible to write a competent paper on any subject solely through web sources; a great many books and articles are still not available electronically.

At all costs avoid the reality or appearance of plagiarism; place quotation marks around quoted material, and provide citations for any idea, major concept, or data/information from a source. Intentional plagiarism on any assignment could be cause for failure without a rewrite option. A second plagiarized assignment will result in failing the course, and it could possibly jeopardize your graduate student career. So I implore you: please take care not to plagiarize!

Readings.

The majority of the required readings for this course are available in the bookstore. Nearly all of the books are available as used books on Amazon.com or other outlets such as half.com, and they are not expensive. A few additional required and/or recommended readings may be added from time to time during the semester. A few additional required and/or recommended readings may be added from time to time during the semester, and all of this material will be available on a website, on Blackboard, or placed on library reserve. All readings listed except those specifically designated as “recommended” must be read by the date indicated. Make every effort to read or at least look reading designated as “recommended;” this is your call. In deciding about whether to buy books, keep in mind that most or all of these books will be needed when, someday, you may teach a similar course or need them to study for comprehensive exams.

The following books are *required reading*:

Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago, 1988)
 John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, & Public Policies*, Rev. Ed. (Longman, 2003).
 Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox* (Norton, 2002).
 Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 1993).
 Bryan D. Jones and Frank R. Baumgartner, *The Politics of Attention* (University of Chicago Press, 2006).
 Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton University Press, 2004).
 Andrew Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
 James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers* (Free Press, 1991).
 David Brian Robertson, *The Constitution and America's Destiny* (Cambridge, 2005).
 Charles Lockhart, *The Roots of American Exceptionalism* (Palgrave, 2003).

Required website: www.policyagendas.org. I recommend you log onto this website sometime in advance of the assignment, just to get a feel for it.

Also recommended: “Scientific Integrity in Policymaking;” cf. two websites and links: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_Integrity_in_Policymaking); or Union of Concerned Scientists, Scientific Integrity (www.ucsusa.org/scientific_integrity).

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER: The bookstore returns books to distributors at the end of the 7th week. If you wait to buy books until after that date you will have to do so through Amazon.com or through a special book order. It’s your call; just remember that assignments must be read on time whether or not you’ve purchased the book.

Copies of all or any of the books will be placed on reserve if requested. Sometimes I have an extra copy to loan, but with one stipulation. Believe it or not, many of the personal copies I’ve put on reserve over the years have come back to me marked up. I shouldn’t have to ask, but please *do not write marginal notes in a book placed on reserve!*

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNED READINGS

August 26. Introduction to the class.

I. THE STUDY OF PUBLIC POLICY

September 2. No class (APSA Meeting). Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*; Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Part III.

September 9. Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*. Discussion of Edelman & Stone.

September 16. James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers* (Free Press, 1991).

September 23. Andrew Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy, and the Politics of Expertise*.

Monday, September 27. FIRST ESSAY DUE.

II. THE POLICY CRUCIBLE: AGENDAS, PROCESS, AND STRUCTURE

September 30. John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, & Public Policies*, Rev. Ed.

October 7. Frank Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas & Instability in American Politics*, chs. 1-9. (You should also go to www.policyagendas.org to examine data used for this book.

October 14. Baumgartner and Jones, *Agendas and Instability*, chs. 10-12 & Appendix A; also Bryan D. Jones and Frank R. Baumgartner, *The Politics of Attention*, chs. 1-3.

October 21. Jones and Baumgartner, *The Politics of Attention*, chs. 4-end. (In connection with this reading, an additional assignment is to www.policyagendas.org and look at the data used for this book. Surf this site carefully; it contains data on a great variety of policy issues and explains the methodology of the project.)

Monday, October 25. SECOND ESSAY DUE

III. THE PERSISTENCE OF POLICY SYSTEMS

October 28. Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*.

November 4. David Brian Robertson, *The Constitution and America's Destiny*.

November 11. Charles Lockhart, *The Roots of American Exceptionalism*.

IV. STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

November 18. Student presentations and discussion I. (Readings to be circulated one week in advance.)

November 25. Thanksgiving Day.

December 2. Student presentations and discussion II. (Readings to be circulated one week in advance.)

Monday, December 6. FINAL ESSAY DUE.