

Making Public Policy, POSC 386

Prof. Jessica Green

Spring 2015

MW 3-4.15PM, Mather 225

(Note: I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus to accommodate scheduling exigencies.)

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Office Hours: MW 10-11:30AM

Course Overview

This course introduces students to the study of public policy. It focuses on how public policy is made, and in that way is a branch of political science. Students will find that the field also includes many analytic tools from other disciplines, but that the political perspective is central to understanding their work. Students whose interest is more in politics and less in policy will find that this course provides a different way of understanding politics.

The concepts in this course – such as agenda-setting, the importance of implementation, and conflicts about value and fact – can be used to analyze action in any group or organization or community. For example, they can be applied to discussions of American politics, with its extremely complicated division of formal authority into competing institutions. But they also can be applied to British politics, with its much simpler structure of formal authority; to international politics, in which there is relatively little formal authority; or to Case Western Reserve University.

The first thing to remember about any decision for a group of people is that it is likely to involve disagreement about what to do, or even what the problem is. The first section of this course therefore focuses on values, some of the reasons for disagreement, and how people argue about collective choices. For this section we will read one of the most influential books in the field, Deborah Stone's *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-Making*.

A second key point about policy-making is this: politicians (and bureaucrats, and corporate managers) not only assert influence, but they also “puzzle.” That is, they try to figure out what actions (such as a law or a business plan) will accomplish what goals. Therefore you can look at any policy process as a series of components, such as the definition of problems, generation of alternatives, assessment of alternatives, adoption of a policy, implementation of a policy, and feedback about the new problems the policy creates. How analysis actually enters into decision-making varies with the organizational circumstances, and understanding that is part of understanding how any decision process “puzzles.” For this section we will read one another very influential book in the field, John Kingdon's *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, as well as other articles and case studies. We will also examine the various actors involved in the “puzzling” process, and their myriad interests and motivations.

A third key point is that there are numerous ways to achieve the same goal (or at least, to try to achieve it). As such, we examine various types of *actual* policies,

specifically, command and control (or regulation), market-based policies, policymaking at the global level and self-regulation.

Course Requirements

Readings

You are expected to complete *all* of the readings for *every* class. If you must triage, read the textbooks first and additional readings later. If the textbooks are not assigned that week, go in descending order. Doing some of the reading is always better than doing none of it. In order to guide you through the readings, each week has a “key question”, which you should be able to answer after completing the readings.

Participation and conduct

Classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion. You are expected to participate in discussions, and this will be **significant** part of your final grade (see below). Simply sitting in the class sessions will not earn you full marks on participation; coming to class with questions and comments will. I will take attendance on an unannounced basis. You will be granted one “freebie”—a class you may miss without penalty. Thereafter, each absence will result in a reduction in your participation grade.

Exams

There will be **two in-class exams on 4 March and 15 April**. These are “review” exams. They will test whether you have done the readings and understand the basic arguments. They will also cover concepts discussed in class.

Research projects

This semester, we are fortunate to have a real policy client – the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability – for whom you will be conducting research and making policy recommendations. This is a chance for you to engage in real world problems and potentially, influence policy decisions. You will work in groups of 3-4 on a specific issue outlined in the City of Cleveland’s Climate Action Plan. You will have an opportunity to consult with Matthew Gray, the Director of the Office of Sustainability, and Cathi Lehn, the Coordinator of Sustainable Cleveland. At the end of the semester, each group will formally present its findings and recommendations to them. Although this is a group project, there are also individual assignments. These are further detailed in a separate document on Blackboard. **Final presentations are scheduled for 8 April.**

Graduate Students

Graduate students will have additional assignments, to be decided jointly.

Grading

Participation: 20%

- You will receive full credit if you come to class **and participate**. This means attending ALL classes and participating in ALL classes.

Review Exams: 30%

- These will be a combination of IDs, short answers and essays, which aim to evaluate whether you have done the reading and understand the basic concepts that we are discussing.

Research Project: 50%, broken down as follows

Project Journal (10%)

- This will be evaluated based on **prompt submission** and evidence that you have done **substantive work on the project**. Each project journal submission should end with **three bullet points that outlines your next steps and/or questions** that you feel need to be addressed as you move forward. These three bullet points will be the basis of the evaluation of the memo.

Policy memo (25%)

- This is the final written product of the project. It should be no more than 1000 words. It is due on **15 April**. There are additional details on this assignment posted on Blackboard (BB).

Presentation (15%)

- This is the final oral product of the project. You will be evaluated both on your oral presentation skills as well as the quality of the PowerPoint presentation. There are additional details and a rubric on this assignment posted on Blackboard (BB).

Legal

1. **All deadlines are final.** For each day an assignment is late, a half grade will be deducted. This means if an A- paper is one day late, it will be a B+. If a B paper is two days late, it will be a C. THE ONLY exception to this rule is if you have a note from the Dean. Unless you have a note from the Dean, no extensions will be granted.
2. An unexcused absence for an exam will result in a failing grade for that exam.
3. I reserve the right to consider extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
4. Re-grade requests for exams will be honored only if accompanied by a comprehensive written explanation of why you deserve a higher grade. Note that if accepted, a request for re-grading may result in the raising *or lowering* of your grade.

Plagiarism

Please read the policy on academic honesty and plagiarism

(<http://students.case.edu/handbook/policy/integrity.html>)

Academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating on examinations, etc.) **is a serious offense that can result in loss of credit, suspension, and possibly expulsion from the university.** All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

The Case handbook defines plagiarism as follows: “Plagiarism includes the presentation, without proper attribution, of another's words or ideas from printed or electronic sources. It is also plagiarism to submit, without the instructor's consent, an assignment in one class previously submitted in another.”

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, PLEASE ASK ME! I also recommend the website www.plagiarism.org.

Other Class Policies

1. Please save paper; **submit everything to me electronically.**
2. **Please PUT YOUR CELL PHONES AWAY. TEXTING IS NOT PERMITTED.** If I observe you texting, you will be considered absent for that class session.
3. Unless you have permission from ESS, **laptops are not permitted.** (The exception is the days that you will be working on group projects.) Here's why:

“Experimental tests of immediate retention of class material have also found that Internet browsing impairs performance. Moreover, recent research suggests that even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing.” Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer, “The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard.” *Psychological Science*, Forthcoming. DOI: 10.1177/0956797614524581.

4. During the semester I am prepared to meet by appointment with any and all students enrolled in this course. I would like especially to meet with students with disabilities who are registered with the Coordinator of Disability Services (368-5230) and who may need individual arrangements.

Books to Purchase

Kingdon, John W. 2002. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. New York: 2nd ed. Longman.

Stone, Deborah A. 2004. *Policy Paradox and Political Reason*. New York: Scott Foresman & Co.

These are available at the bookstore, but you may also purchase them used online. The edition doesn't matter.

Week 1: Introduction

12 Jan: Introduction. *Sign up for research groups*

14 Jan: NO CLASS

Week 2: Market and Polis

What are the two main spheres of society and how do they differ?

19 Jan: NO CLASS. MLK Day.

- Suggested reading, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by MLK. Available at: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

21 Jan: Market and Polis. Stone, Intro and Chap 1. Please also read Federalist Paper #10. Available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp.

Week 3: Agenda Setting, part 1

What are the major goals of government and what are the tradeoffs among them?

26 Jan: Equity vs. Efficiency. Stone Chaps 2&3

28 Jan: Security vs. Liberty. Stone Chaps 4&5

First project journal due

Week 4: Class Projects

2 Feb: Meet with your group to discuss projects

4 Feb: Speaker Matt Gray, Mayor's Office

Week 5: Agenda Setting, part 2

How do we understand the causes of problems? What are the challenges to doing so?

9 Feb: Numbers, Symbols: Stone Chap 7 and Herbert Simon, Chapter 3 in

Administrative Behavior, "Fact and Value in Decision-Making." **On BB.**

11 Feb: Causes and the Challenges of Causality. Stone Chap 8. Also read, Kelly, M.

2000. "Inequality and Crime". *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 82(4): 530-9.

Available on campus and through VPN at:

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/003465300559028>. You may skip Section 5.

- In reading this paper, ask yourself: 1) What are the hypothesized causes of crime? 2) What variables does she find actually explain crime?

Second project journal due

Week 6: The policy process: Challenges of Collective Action

What are the challenges of collective action and how do they affect decisionmaking in a democracy?

16 Feb: Mancur Olson, Chapter 1 from *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. **On BB.** Anthony Downs, Chapter 3 from *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. **On BB.** (You may skim the last section on multiparty countries)

18 Feb: NO CLASS

Week 7: The policy process: Models of policymaking

23 Feb: Kingdon, Chap 4. Michael Munger, Chapter 1 of *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices*. **On BB**.

25 Feb: Kingdon, Chaps 6-8 & Hacker, Jacob 2010. "The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Reform Happened." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(3): 861-75.

Problem overview with data due

Week 8: Actors

How do different types of actors affect the policy process? What resources do they utilize and how do these vary across actors?

2 Mar: Bureaucrats: James Q. Wilson, Chapters 1&2 in *Bureaucracy*. **On BB**. Michael Lipsky, Chapters 1&2 in *Street-Level Bureaucracy*. **On BB**. Briefly review data on Stop-and-Frisk in NYC:

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/09/19/nyregion/stop-and-frisk-is-all-but-gone-from-new-york.html?_r=0.

4 Mar: FIRST REVIEW EXAM

Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10: Actors, Part 2

How do different types of actors affect the policy process? What resources do they utilize and how do these vary across actors?

16 Mar: John Zaller, Chapter 2 of *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*

On BB and Burstein, Paul. 2003. "The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and Agenda" *Political Research Quarterly* 56(1): 29-40.

18 Mar: Preliminary presentations with group peer review

Week 11: Contemporary Approaches: Regulation

The question for this week is: How do different regulatory approaches enhance the likelihood of policy success?

23 Mar: David Levi-Faur, "Regulation and Regulatory Governance"

<http://levifaur.wiki.huji.ac.il/images/Chapter1hrp.pdf>. George Stigler, "The theory of economic regulation" *Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science*. **On BB**

25 Mar: Lori Benneer and Cary Coglianese "Flexible Approaches to Environmental Regulation," available at

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1998849. Please also read this brief case study on the regulation of GMOs, available at:

<http://www.cfr.org/agricultural-policy/regulation-gmos-europe-united-states-case-study-contemporary-european-regulatory-politics/p8688>

Week 12: Contemporary Approaches: Markets

How are markets used as a policy tool?

30 Mar: Charles Lindblom, *The Market System*. Chaps 1-4. **On BB**.

1 Apr: Michael Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy*. Chaps 1-2. **On BB**. Milton Friedman. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chaps 1-2. **On BB**

Week 13: Global Public Policy

How does globalization affect what we consider domestic policy?

6 Apr: David Vogel, *Trading Up*. Chap 1. **On BB**. Please also skim through the following websites: "What is the WTO?" See

http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/what_we_do_e.htm and

<http://www.cfr.org/international-organizations-and-alliances/world-trade-organization-wto/p9386>.

8 Apr: Final Presentations

Week 14: Review and Exam

13 Apr: Review

15 Apr: Second Review Exam

Week 15: Sundry

20 Apr: Career Day!

22 Apr: Case Study. Readings TBA

Week 16: Sundry

27 Apr: Wrap up