

Making Public Policy (POSC 386)

Prof. Jessica Green

Spring 2011

T/Th 11.30-12.45

(as of 06 January 2010; I reserve the right to amend the readings)

Office Hours: T/Th 4-5PM Mather 01.

Email: jfg38@case.edu

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 who choose to pursue the field further, such as in a graduate program, 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 very 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*, other articles, and look at some case studies.

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. Many people think that this process should follow what is known as “the rational model.” They are sometimes wrong. 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.

A third key point about policy-making is that it rarely leads to “success,” at least not if “success” is defined as everybody is happy and not fighting any more. In most policy areas, the topics of

debate are contested continually. The policy process is never over. “Success” and “Failure” are rarely if ever absolute (though failure appears to be more common – life is hard). The third section of the course therefore focuses on why policy-making processes are successful, or not. This includes both whether they can come to an agreement (agree to pursue a policy) and whether the policy achieves the desired ends (assuming there is actually agreement on ends!). Political structures matter here – both agreeing to and implementing policies involve different conditions in the U.S., French, or international arenas. Yet other factors, such as the nature of the problem that has been defined, matter too. For this section we will read a series of articles and look at case studies. The case studies will both illustrate aspects of the challenges and offer students an opportunity to think about how the concepts from earlier in the course apply to the cases.

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.

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. You will be granted one “freebie”—a class you may miss without penalty. Thereafter, each absence will result in a one-percentage point reduction in your participation grade.

Case studies: There are a number of case studies that we will examine in the context of the theoretical readings that week. Please come prepared with questions and comments. You may be asked to defend a point of view that is not necessarily your own, so be sure to consider both sides of the issue.

Exams: There will be two in-class exams on 15 February and 28 March. 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.

News analysis: As part of the class you should read the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* or other international newspaper regularly. You will be asked to write **three news analyses** in response to an article you read. These will be papers 1-2 pages in length (i.e. between 300 and 600 words) that use the articles to describe one to two ways that the policy issue is being politicized. You may discuss how the problem is being framed, the solutions being put forth, how facts are being used in the service of an opinion, or what values are at stake.

Presentation and Paper: At the beginning of the semester, each student will select a policy issue from among a number presented. S/he will be required to give an in-class presentation on

the issue based on readings assigned by me and in consultation with the student. The presentation should cover the following:

- The agenda-setting process, and hypothesized reasons for its success in reaching the agenda
- The underlying values or reasons for government(s)' intervention
- The construction of the problem, and how this affects proposed solution
- The main interest groups and their framing of the issue
- An assessment of whether the political outcome was a success, and for whom.

The accompanying paper will present these same issues in written form, in 5-7 pages (between 1500 and 2000 words).

Graduate students will have additional assignments. The paper accompanying the presentation will be an in-depth analysis of the policy issue, presented in a paper between 15-20 pages in length. In lieu of the news analyses, they will have to write two position papers on the policy issue of their choice. These papers, 5-7 pages each, will analyze the problem, assess the options and present a solution.

Grading

Participation: 20%

Exams: 35%

News Analysis: 15%

Presentation and Paper: 30%

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. **Please read the policy on academic honesty and plagiarism.** (<http://www.case.edu/provost/ugstudies/acintegrity.htm>). **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.
3. An unexcused absence for an exam will result in a failing grade for that exam.
4. I reserve the right to consider extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
5. Re-grade requests 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.

Other Class Policies

1. Please save paper; submit everything to me electronically VIA DROPBOX. Assignments that are emailed to me may disappear in the morass of my inbox, and thus may be considered late. Make things simple for both parties: **submit via Dropbox.** Assignments that are not in my Dropbox by the end of the day they are due will be considered late.

2. **Please turn off your cell phones.**
3. I greatly prefer that you do not use a laptop in class. If it is obvious that you are not using it for purposes directly related to class, you will be asked to turn it off.
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. 1988. *Policy Paradox and Political Reason*. New York: Scott Foresman & Co.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Part 1: Facts, Values, Decisions

Week 1, January 11 & 13: Introduction

1. **Read the syllabus carefully.**
2. Stone, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-34
3. Lloyd S. Etheredge, "The Case of the Unreturned Cafeteria Trays". Accessible at: <http://www.policyscience.net/ws/case.pdf>.
 - a. **Instructions:** For the Etheredge piece, you may skim the different theoretical approaches. The goal is to get a sense of the breadth of ways there are explain the causes of a problem.

Week 2, January 18 & 20: Values

1. Stone, Chapters 2-5, pp. 35-130
2. **Case study #1: Affirmative Action** "Erasing Race", *The Economist*, 26 Feb 2009. Accessible at: <http://www.economist.com/node/13185552>.
3. **Case study #2: The war on drugs** Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy, "Drugs and Democracy: Towards a Paradigm Shift." Accessible at http://www.drogasedemocracia.org/Arquivos/declaracao_ingles_site.pdf.

Week 3, January 25 & 27: Facts

1. Stone, pp. 131-157 (you can skim the section on "Metaphors"), Chaps 7-8, and pp. 210-227.

Week 4, February 1 & 3: Facts AND Values: Can We (They) Put Values Aside?

1. Herbert Simon, "Fact and Value in Decision-Making," Chapter 3 in *Administrative Behavior* (4th ed. 1997), pp. 55-71 **On Blackboard**
2. Stone, Chap 13.
3. **Case study #3: The IPCC** Browse the "Organization" section of the IPCC website, at <http://www.ipcc.ch>.
 - a. Jane Lubchenco, "Entering the Century of the Environment: A New Social Contract for Science" *Science* Vol. 279 no. 5350 pp. 491-497. Accessible at <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/279/5350/491.full>.
 - b. "The Independent Climate Change E-Mails Review." Read the Executive Summary, pp. 10-18. Accessible at: <http://www.cce-review.org/pdf/FINAL%20REPORT.pdf>.

Week 5, February 8 & 10: Decisions

1. Anthony Downs, "Why the Government Budget is Too Small in a Democracy." *World Politics* 12:4 (1960), pp. 541-563 **On Blackboard**
2. Mancur Olson, Chapter 1 from *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (1965), pp. 5-52. **On Blackboard**
3. **Review or Reread:** Stone, Chapter 1.

Part 2: Policy and Analysis

Week 6, February 15 & 17: The Rational Model and its Critics

--FEB 15: First Review Exam--

1. Kingdon, Chap 4, pp. 71-90.
2. Michael Munger, Chapter 1 of *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices*. **On Blackboard**
3. Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 63:3 (1969), 689-718. **On Blackboard**

Week 7, February 22 & 24: Problems and agenda setting

1. Kingdon, Chap 5, pp. 90-115
2. David A. Rochefort and Roger W. Cobb, "Problem Definition: An Emerging Perspective," in Rochefort and Cobb eds., *The Politics of Problem Definition*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-31. **On Blackboard**

Week 8, Mar 1& 3: Actors in the policy process

1. Kingdon, Chaps 2-3, pp. 21-70
2. Mathews, Jessica T. 1997. "Power Shift." *Foreign Affairs* 76(January/February): 50-66. **On Blackboard**

3 March: Guest lecture by Prof. Elliot Posner

Week 9, Mar 8 & 10: SPRING BREAK

Week 10, Mar 15 & 17: Organizational Entrepreneurship, Networks, and Gatekeepers

1. Finnemore, Martha. 1996. *National Interests in International Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, Chapter 3. **On Blackboard**
2. Keck, Margaret E, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond borders: advocacy networks in international politics*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, Chapter 1. **On Blackboard**
3. Carpenter, R. Charli. "Studying Issue (Non)-Adoption in Transnational Networks." *International Organization*. Vol. 61, No. 3. (Summer 2007). **On Blackboard**

Week 11: Mar 22 & 24: The policy soup

1. Kindgon, Chaps 6-8, pp. 116-196.
2. **Case study #4: Don't Ask, Don't Tell**
 - i. See: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/dont-ask-dont-tell-timeline/>
 - ii. [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0610_gatesdadt/DADTReport_FINAL_20101130\(secure-hires\).pdf](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0610_gatesdadt/DADTReport_FINAL_20101130(secure-hires).pdf), pp. 1-17

Part 3: Outcomes of the Policy Process and Outcome of Policy

Week 12, March 29 & 31: Success, Failure, and Problem Succession

--MARCH 29: Second Review Exam--

1. Anthony Downs, "Up and Down With Ecology: The Issue-Attention Cycle." *The Public Interest* 28 (1972). **On Blackboard**
2. Dunlap, Riley. "Public Opinion and Environmental Policy." In Lester, James P. 1995. *Environmental politics and policy: theories and evidence*. Duke University Press. **On Blackboard**

Week 13, April 5 & 7: What Governments Can (Should?) Do

1. Gordon Tullock, "Social Cost and Government Action." *American Economic Review* 59:2 (1969), pp. 189-97. **On Blackboard**
2. Charles L. Schultze, *The Public Use of the Private Interest*, pp. 1-27. **On Blackboard**
3. Additional debate: TBA

Weeks 14-15, April 11-22: Case Studies and Wrap up

Presentations on student work.