

POSC 386/486
MAKING PUBLIC POLICY
"SPRING" 2017
(Syllabus as of December 31, 2016)

Tuesday/Thursday
10:00 – 11:15 p.m.
Clark Hall 308

Office Hours Tues/Thurs 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course introduces students to the study of public policy. That has two meanings. From a political science perspective, the question is how public policy is made, and why some policies are made rather than others. But public policy analysis has developed into a separate field, taught in many Masters and Ph.D. programs and sending graduates out to improve the world. From the public policy field's perspective, the questions are what policies should be, how they should be chosen, and why they succeed or fail.

I think both questions are important. The *policy process view* provides a useful way to understand politics, a way that is different from the usual approach that involves studying institutions and their powers. At the same time, efforts to understand policy success or failure which ignore politics are unfortunately common but usually badly flawed. In this course we will explore both kinds of questions and discuss why they need to be asked together.

Policy-making, as studied in this course, is basically a form of decision-making. 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 equally well to U.S. politics, with its extremely complicated division of formal authority into competing institutions, and to British politics, with its much simpler structure of formal authority. It can be applied to international relations, in which nobody is "in charge," and to Case Western Reserve University or the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

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. It then is going to involve both consideration of facts and persuasion about both facts and values: people pitching arguments at other people. One 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 major theme in both this section and the rest of the course will be what "rationality" could actually mean. Many discussions of decisions in all walks of life, including making public policy, are influenced by a "rational model" that, as many fine scholars have shown, does not fit either how individuals or collectives can make decisions most of the time.

A second key point about policy-making is this: politicians (and bureaucrats, and corporate managers) not only assert influence, or "power," but they also "puzzle." That is, they try to figure out what actions (such as a law or business plan) will accomplish what goals. Therefore you can look at any policy process as a series of components that look a bit like cogitation but are social rather than individual, 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 programs the policy creates. What kind of analysis occurs, and what it manages to consider, then varies with the problem and the organizational circumstances. The stages above sound like the "rational model" but, as we will see, rarely fit that model.

Understanding how policy cogitation occurs should begin with sensitivity to the issues Deborah Stone raises. But it has at least two other dimensions. One is the role of *policy communities* in the various "stages" of the process, from problem definition to feedback, summarized above. The other is how an individual analyst, the professional policy analyst whom all those Policy Schools are trying to train, may fit into this process. For a second section of the course, therefore, we will read excerpts from two other classic works, John Kingdon's *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies 2nd ed.*, and the first version of Eugene Bardach's *The Eight-Step Path of Policy Analysis*. We will also consider some of the actors normally involved in the "puzzling" process, and their myriad interests and motivations.

A third key point is that there are numerous ways to try to achieve policy goals. As such, we will examine various types of policies, such as direct provision of services by government, command and control attempts to direct the behavior of other parties (regulation), attempts to manipulate markets to cause desired results, and various other efforts to shape individuals' behavior to achieve somebody's notion of public ends. The choices among these goals rarely are driven by good evidence about effectiveness; instead, various tribes of analysts and politicians tend to favor certain approaches due to ideological or professional biases. Hence a third topic in this class will be the tools of policy.

All three topics – bases for decisions, processes of decisions, and the means available – influence a fourth concern for this course: why policies succeed or fail. We will consider that question throughout the course. One key reading will be something I wrote, and I won't claim it's a classic like Stone or Kingdon or Bardach, but I think it's fairly useful. We will do other readings, focusing especially on *implementation*. If students learn nothing else in this course, I hope they at least will develop an appreciation for why policy success can be so difficult: namely, there usually are people whose cooperation is needed for success, but either don't want to or don't know how to make the policy succeed.

There are many things I hope that students will learn from this course but, if the Higher Learning Commission were to go ahead with its demand that all syllabi include "learning objectives,"¹ then I would list:

¹ This is an example of a private policy with significant power. Post-secondary institutions (e.g. universities) are accredited in 19 states, including Ohio, by the Higher Learning Commission, which thereby exercises a quasi-governmental power over Case Western Reserve University. At one stage during our last accreditation round there were reports that HLC would expect all syllabi to list "learning objectives." College faculty, however, have not been required to implement that policy. I have no idea what happened, but figure I might as well get in the habit, just in case...

- * Students should develop a sense of what the "policy process" involves and how that relates to "politics."
- * Students should understand the controversy about the "rational model."
- * Students should develop an understanding of the range of tools of government, and the controversies about how they can or should be used.
- * Students should have a much better sense than many policy-makers do about what questions to ask in order to assess whether a policy proposal is likely to "work" – that is, attain the goals its promoters claim it will attain.

I hope that students will learn through reading, discussion, lectures (that is, listening to me talk. I can hope and will try to be useful), and through their own study of one policy issue. I will assess learning from readings and classwork through three in-class exams. These will be a combination of ID's, short answers, and maybe one essay in each exam. Your own study will be a policy analysis of one of the following issues. They are selected to offer a wide range of topics and therefore of political/institutional contexts, relevant knowledge, and practical challenges:

- * Opioid overdoses in the United States
- * Unwanted robocalls.
- * Threats to the survival of elephants
- * Affordability of college education.
- * What the mission of NASA should be.

More information about the research project is below.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Readings

You are expected to complete all the readings for every class. The readings are the most important part of the class. As one guide through the readings, I have provided for each class day includes 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. The class appears to be large enough that I cannot expect everyone to participate every day; but I expect students to be prepared to talk about the readings if I ask them a question, and I will occasionally direct questions to individual students (especially if nobody is volunteering). I will take attendance most if not all days, and if a student misses more than three classes without an approved reason, that could reduce their participation grade. **Participation will count for 10% of your grade.**

Exams

The three in-class exams will be held on February 16, March 28, and April 2. They will each count for 15% of your final grade, so **the exams will count for 45% of your final grade.**

Research projects

As mentioned above, you will be writing a policy analysis on one of five issues. **We will do choice of projects no later than the third class, on January 24.** My goal is to have roughly equal numbers of

students doing each topic. During the first week of class we will discuss students' attitudes towards making these some form of team projects. For the moment I am assuming they will be individual projects, but students could investigate more material if they collaborated.

The product of these projects should be a policy memo. This memo should be between 2000 and 3000 words long. Please note that this is actually a bit unrealistic – if you were a policy analyst working for some clients you might be expected to tell your story in fewer words! The memo should be delivered to me by e-mail, at joseph.white@case.edu, by **May 7 at Noon**.

As intermediate steps, you should submit project journals on four occasions: February 14, March 7, March 30 and April 25. These will be evaluated based on **timely submission** and evidence that you have done **substantive work on the project**. Each project journal submission should state what you think you have learned since your last submission; why you have reached that conclusion; and what you plan for your next steps and/or questions. I will provide feedback that will be designed to both encourage and challenge your work, as seems appropriate to me.

The grading for **your research projects will account for 45% of your grade**. That will be divided into 5% for each of the four project journals, and 25% for the final paper. This grading metric is intended to very strongly encourage students to make progress on the paper rather than do the work in a rush at the end of the class.

So, to summarize, grades for POSC 386 students will be calculated as follows:

Participation: 10%
First exam: 15%
Second exam: 15%
Third exam: 15%
First Project Journal: 5%
Second Project Journal: 5%
Third Project Journal: 5%
Fourth Project Journal: 5%
Final Policy Memo: 25%.

POSC 486 students, if there are any, will be required to do extra work for their policy memos. This work will consist of a literature review paper that critiques some of the sources used for the project. Timing and length of this paper will be worked out individually with POSC 486 students.

I do all my grading during a course on a numerical scale that I will explain, which can also be expressed as letter grades including minuses and pluses. The final grades for POSC 486 will be with pluses or minuses (if that's how it works out) but, for POSC 386, the A minus minus still will be an A.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance Exceptions. I understand that conflicts arise which may make it sensible not to attend class. You may have religious obligations, or have to travel for sports teams. There are occasional

situations when a student needs to travel for research or a presentation, or for job interviews. I would not want to interfere with that kind of opportunity. Students who wish to miss class due to such conflicts should let me know, in writing, and with documentation if I ask for it (e.g. a note or e-mail from a coach). I will normally approve, but reasons like "I'm behind in my other work" will not do. Managing your time so that doesn't happen is part of your job. Please also inform me if you are ill. If you are sick enough to have to inform me that you missed class due to illness twice in a row, you should go to the health service, get looked at, and then bring me a note from them.

Deadlines are serious. For each day a project journal report is late, the grade on the journal will be a third of a grade lower. So, for example, an A- report that is two days late will receive a B. If students believe in advance that they have to miss an exam, they should discuss that with me. If they miss an exam without prior approval I will arrange a make-up, but with substantial penalty – at least one and a half grades. Students should understand that missing an exam creates a severe policy problem for the professor, who has to give a different exam in order to ensure students do not learn the questions from the original exam from other students. I will make exceptions without penalty for a good reason, but it has to be a good reason, and that is for me to judge.

The final policy memo is due at Noon on May 7. Papers received after 5 p.m. on that day will incur a reduction of 1/3 of a grade (e.g., from B+ to B). Papers received after Noon on May 8 will incur a 2/3 point reduction (e.g. from A- to B). Papers received after Noon on May 9 will have a full grade deducted (e.g. from A- to B-). Papers received after Noon on May 10, but before Noon on May 11, will incur a 1 and 1/3 grade reduction (e.g. from A- to C+). If I receive any paper after Noon on May 11, I will need to give a grade of Incomplete for the class, as I cannot promise that my schedule will allow me to complete the grading on time.

Please understand that, if a student has good reasons for delay and is best served by taking an Incomplete, my policy is to accommodate students without penalty in that situation. But I need to be informed in advance and to talk with the student about the circumstances. I also reserve the right to make exceptions to the sanctions defined here on a case-by-case basis if the student can show extraordinary circumstances.

Academic integrity includes both not cheating (e.g. plagiarism) but also making it possible for any reader to track down your sources. So please document all sources you use in writing your papers according to an accepted style guide. A good standard approach is in the Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), but any standard format will be fine for this class.

Please read the undergraduate handbook policy on academic honesty and plagiarism <http://students.case.edu/handbook/policy/integrity.html> . Plagiarism of any form will be punished by referral to the appropriate university judicial proceedings, as well as by a failing grade in the assignment on which the plagiarism occurs. Plagiarism includes, according to the MLA Handbook (New York: MLA, 1988), two related activities: repeating “as your own someone else’s sentences, more or less verbatim,” and “paraphrasing another person’s argument as your own, and presenting another’s line of thinking as though it were your own.” Proper citation of sources will allow you to incorporate others’ analyses without committing plagiarism. ***If you have questions about these rules, PLEASE ASK ME!***

Other class policies. Please put your cell phones away during class. Texting or any other use of the phone is not permitted. If I observe you using your cell phone, I will record you as absent from that class session. Please also close your laptops. Using a laptop has three disadvantages. First, if the student is taking notes, it appears to encourage just typing more than listening and selecting. Second, it appears to discourage the kind of attention to other people that leads to good discussion (this is something that has become an issue in regard to physicians having to fill out electronic medical records and so not looking at patients as they talk). And last but hardly least, of course, too many students surf the net rather than pay attention to the class. Laptops will be allowed, of course, for students who have permission from ESS.

I am happy to meet with any and all students enrolled in this course. I also am especially interested in meeting with any students with issues that involve ESS or Disability Services and who may need special arrangements. **I have regular office hours posted at the top of this syllabus, but I am very willing to meet at other times.** Please just contact me so we can schedule time, as you need it. Please also remember that this syllabus is supposed to be a resource to help you understand what I hope we accomplish with the course. As you do reading you should consider both the individual things to "think about" and the essay topics that you will be asked to answer based in part on each reading.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The following books should be purchased or otherwise legally obtained. The University bookstore will have copies. Used copies are fine.

Alex Prud'homme, *Hydrofracking: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2014

Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. 2nd or 3rd edition (2nd should be less expensive). W.W. Norton, 2002 or 2012.

David Vogel, *The Politics of Precaution: Regulating Health, Safety, and Environmental Risks in Europe and the United States*. Princeton University Press (2012; Paperback 2015).

I did not want to require purchase of more texts, due to the expense. But if this is a field in which you are really interested, and if you can afford to do so, I strongly recommend that you purchase, used:

John W Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* 2nd ed. (any version you can find, though the most recent, which is also the most expensive, has some interesting thoughts on the 2010 health reform legislation).

Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington Are Dashed in Oakland; Or, Why It's Amazing that Federal Programs Work at All, This Being a Saga of the Economic Development Administration as Told by Two Sympathetic Observers Who Seek to Build Morals on a Foundation of Ruined Hopes*. Preferably 3rd edition, University of California Press, 1984.

Other readings will be available on Blackboard, unless a link is provided in this syllabus.

Part I: Disagreement

- Jan 17 **Introduction to the class.**
Some of the perspectives I introduce can be reviewed in a manuscript posted on Blackboard, titled "Models of Policy"
- Jan 19 Market and Polis (1):
Stone, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Jan 24 Market and Polis (2):
Michael Munger, Deciding How to Decide: "Experts," "The People," and "The Market." Chapter 2 in Munger, *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices* (W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. 30-53.
Gordon Tullock, Social Cost and Government Action. **The American Economic Review** Vol. 59, No. 2 (1969): 189-197
We will select or if necessary assign paper topics today.
- Jan 26 An Example of an Issue: Hydrofracking (1)
No class, but there is reading.
Prud'homme, through page 69
Professor White will have to miss the class to attend a conference.
- Jan 31 Hydrofracking (2)
Prud'homme, pages 70 to end.
Discussion will emphasize the range of challenges involved for an individual in deciding the "right" policy about fracking, and then the social or collective decision-making challenge.
- Feb 2 Success and Failure (1)
Joseph White, "Three Meanings of Capacity"
Discussion will include how these concepts might be applied to hydrofracking issues.
- Feb 7 Equity and Efficiency
Stone, Chapters 2, "Equity" and 3, "Efficiency"
For equity, think about what would be the "fair" way for medical schools to select students. For efficiency, think about whether this is a value for choosing policies or administering them.
- Feb 9 Security and Liberty
Stone, Chapters 4-5 ("Liberty" and "Security") in 2nd edition, or 4-6 ("Welfare," "Liberty," and "Security" in 3rd edition.
How might the concepts or values in these chapters apply to hydrofracking?
- Feb 14 Facts and Value
Stone, Chapters on "Symbols" and "Numbers" (6-7 in second edition; 7-8 in 3rd edition.

Herbert Simon, Fact and Value in Decision-making. Chapter 3 and Commentary from *Administrative Behavior*, 4th ed.

How do people identify facts? How might they agree about facts?

*** First project journal due**

Feb 16 **First in-class exam**

Part II: Decision Processes

Feb 21 The Analyst's Role (Perhaps)

Eugene Bardach, Part 1 of **first edition** of *The Eight-Step Path of Policy Analysis: A Handbook for Practice* (Berkeley Academic Press, 1996), pp. 1-65.

How can this approach apply to your project assignment?

Feb 23 Causes and Interests

Stone, Chapter on "Causes" (8 or 9) and Chapter on "Interests" (9 or 10).

How are notions of cause or effective notions of interest constructed?

Feb 28 Politics and the "Garbage Can"

Stone, Chapter on Decisions (10 or 11).

John W. Kingdon, Chapter 4, "Processes" and Chapter 5, "Problems" from *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies 2nd ed.* (published multiple times), pp. 71-115.

Are you willing to believe this material? Does it make you uncomfortable? Is it a description you could "follow" like advice?

Mar 2 Applying Kingdon's Analysis (planning to fill the garbage can?)

John E. McDonough, "Agendas and Children's Health Care." Chapter 7 in McDonough, *Experiencing Politics: A Legislator's Stories of Government & Health Care* (University of California Press, 2000), pp. 237-284.

Think about "path dependency" and what a "policy entrepreneur" can do (McDonough being a "policy entrepreneur.")

Mar 7 Policy Communities and Politics

John W. Kingdon, chapter 6, "The Policy Primeval Soup" and chapter 7, "The Political Stream," pp. 116-164 from *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies 2nd ed.*

What ideas are "floating around" in the policy area you are studying? What does the "political stream" look like?

*** Second project journal due**

Mar 9 Decisions During Implementation

Michael Lipsky, "Preface" and Chapters 1 & 2 in *Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* (30th Anniversary edition; Russell Sage Foundation, 2010) pp. xi – xx, 3-25

Does the account here seem like it would be more or less relevant to policies about fracking than about, say, policing?

March 14 and 16: Spring Break

- Mar 21 Parties, Advocacy Coalitions and Policy Change
William R. Freudenburg & Robert Gramling, "How crude: Advocacy coalitions, offshore oil, and the self-negating belief." *Policy Sciences* Vol. 35 (2002), pp. 17-41.
Vogel, Chapter 7, "Public Risk Perceptions and the Preferences of Policy Makers," pp. 219-251.
How might either the advocacy coalition framework, as described, or partisanship apply to the fracking debate?
- Mar 23 Organizations
James Q. Wilson, Chapter 1, "Armies, Prisons, Schools" and Chapter 2, "Organization Matters," from *Bureaucracy: What Government Actors Do and Why They Do It* (Basic Books, 1989) pp. 3-28.
How might you incorporate these considerations into your own thinking for your policy memo?
- Mar 28 **Second in-class exam**

Part III: Policy Tools and Policy Success or Failure

- Mar 30 Changing Behavior (1)
Stone, Chapter on "Inducements" (Chap 11, 2nd ed.) or "Incentives" (Chap 12, 3rd ed.);
Chapter on "Rules" (12 in 2nd ed., 13 in 3rd ed.)
Where does cheating fit in, and what can be done about it? Think about this in relation to your policy memo!
*** Third project journal due**
- Apr 4 Changing Behavior (2)
David Levi-Faur, "Regulation and Regulatory Governance," Jerusalem Papers in Regulation & Governance Working Paper No. 1 (February 2010) at <http://levifaur.wiki.huji.ac.il/images/Reg.pdf>
What is required for regulation to be effective? You might consider how this reading fits into White's analysis.
- Apr 6 Changing Behavior (3)
Gwyn Bevan and Barbara Fasolo, "Models of Governance of public services: empirical and behavioural analysis of 'econs' and 'humans'" with response by Charitini Stavropoulou. In Adam Oliver ed., *Behavioural Public Policy* (Cambridge University Press: 2013), pp. 38-68.
Who determines how well organizations perform? How?

- Apr 11 Implementation Again
 Excerpts from Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington Are Dashed in Oakland... 3rd ed.* "Preface to the First Edition" (pp. xix – xxv); "Appearances" (pp. 1-6); "Two Smaller Programs: Business Loans and the Health Center" (pp. 70-86); "Acknowledgments" (pp. ix-xii).
 Gordon Chase, Introduction and Parts I and II of "Implementing A Human Services Program: How Hard Will It Be?" *Public Policy* Vol. 27, No. 4 (Fall 1979), pp. 385-420.
 What are the implementation steps for your policy area?
- Apr 13 Less Direct Methods?
 Stone, Chapter on "Facts" (13 in 2nd edition, 14 in 3rd).
 Cass Sunstein, "Nudging: A Very Short Guide." *Journal of Consumer Policy* Vol. 37 No. 4 (2014), pp. 583-588.
 What do you think Stone would say about the arguments for "nudges"?
- Apr 18 Engineering Change by Reallocating Power?
 Stone, Chapters on "Rights" and "Powers" (14-15 in 2nd edition, 16-17 in 3rd edition).
 Can you think of other examples of these approaches? What are the weaknesses in defining issues as matters of "rights"? Consider, for example, a "right" to health care: how would that be implemented?
- Apr 20 **Third in-class exam**
- Apr 25 "National Styles" or Political Winds? (1)
 Chapter 1, "The Transatlantic Shift in Regulatory Stringency," and Chapter 2, "Explaining Regulatory Policy Divergence," in David Vogel, *The Politics of Precaution* (Princeton University Press: 2012, 2015), pp. 1-42.
 What do you think of the Precautionary Principle? To what issues, in your view, would it best be applied? Where not?
 * **Fourth project journal due**
- Apr 27 "National Styles" or Political Winds? (2)
 Vogel, Chapter 3, pp. 43-102
 Who's right?

**Voluntary Discussion of Class Material in Case It Might Help You Write Your Papers
 May 2, time and place TBD**

Policy Memos due by Noon on May 7, by e-mail to joseph.white@case.edu