

THE POLITICS OF POLICYMAKING IN THE UNITED STATES

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SCOPE OF THE COURSE:

The United States separation-of-powers system necessitates close consideration of the interactions among the branches as they work to shape law and implement policy. These conflicts have important implications with respect to the laws that pass through Congress and the ways in which those laws are structured, the laws that are signed versus vetoed by the President, and upheld in the federal judiciary, as well as the stability of these laws over time. Moreover, given increasingly prevalent conditions of partisan conflict and legislative complexity, it becomes all the more important to consider not just the underlying laws, but also the real-world effects on matters of public policy that we ultimately observe and that endure.

This course is a survey that is aimed at introducing students to the history as well as the major theories, concepts, and methodologies that scholars have employed to seek a greater understanding of policymaking processes over time in the US. We will examine a number of different influences on policymaking broadly – including Congress, bureaucracy, courts, and civic organizations – with some particular attention paid to the mobilization around the American welfare state. We will evaluate both policy development and deregulatory processes across a range of substantive issues. Students should take away from the course a greater grasp of the dynamic interplay between American politics and policy processes in shaping and reshaping the nature and scope of the modern American state.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be expected to come to class having read the material and being prepared to engage in the political and policy arguments that they present. Readings are listed below for each class, and will be made available online on CourseWorks. There are no textbooks required for the class, but for those with more limited backgrounds in American politics, I will gladly recommend introductory texts. You will notice that there are many readings in the course, and I will notify you in advance if some are skim-worthy. Attendance and active participation will count for 15% of the grade.

The assignments for this course will not be fact-based, but rather force you to think like policy analysts, considering sets of facts and applying to them your knowledge of policy and political science theories we've read and discussed in the course. This should provide you with a strong background in both the academic and more applied skills in thinking about the political and policy problems of today.

Due Monday of Week 3:

- 3-4 page paper on Congress & bureaucracy (10%)

Due Friday of Week 4:

- 3-4 page paper on framing & agenda-setting (10%)

Due Monday of Week 6:

- Long paper (25%)

Friday of Week 6: Final exam (40%)

- One week in advance, I will distribute a list of 7 essay questions that are cumulative from across the course material. 6 of these 7 questions will appear on the exam, and students will write mini-essays on 5 of them for the exam. Students are encouraged to prepare outlines in advance (and in groups, if you wish), but may not bring notes to the exam itself. I will provide a review session before the exam, and you may discuss questions with me during office hours as well. Bluebooks will be provided.

Papers may be submitted via email *before* class or handed in as hard copies during class.

Policy Regarding Late Assignments: Because this is a summer class and thus moves at a particularly fast pace, it is imperative that students turn in work at the specified deadlines. Failure to do so will result in a letter grade reduction unless you have requested and received an extension in advance (granted for medical or family emergencies only). Work will not be accepted at all after the next scheduled class unless said extension was granted in advance. All students must sit for the final exam at the assigned day and time, with the only exception of university-approved absences.

Columbia University is committed to ensuring that all members be able to engage fully in the academic opportunities and services provided, regardless of disability status, and to that end accommodations to this course can be made if necessary. Please feel free to discuss with me any concerns you may have.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Columbia University holds firmly that maintaining academic integrity is a requirement of all members of our intellectual community. It is expected that all students will work in accordance with the student honor code. Thus, plagiarism, cheating, and receiving unauthorized assistance with the work in this course will not be tolerated. Should a student violate academic integrity in this class, the matter will be reported to the university administration.

READINGS

For those wishing to brush up on American politics more generally, *American Government* by James Q. Wilson & John DiIulio is helpful, as is *The New American Democracy* by Morris Fiorina & Paul Peterson.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION, ANALYZING POLICYMAKING

Class 1a: Introduction

- Introduction to the course – objectives, expectations, requirements
 - Discussion of history of US regulatory state from Interstate Commerce Act forward
 - Basic core concepts of the following lectures
- Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (1959), ch. 1 (“Prologue: The Hundred Days”)
 - William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (1963), chs. 2, 3, 5-7
 - Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (1986), ch. 2 (“The Cycles of American Politics”)
 - Eugene Bardach. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*

Class 1b: Analyzing Policymaking: The Case of Welfare Reform

- Discussion of growth of American welfare state and the developments it has undergone
 - Consider policy implications of alternative approaches to problems
- R. Kent Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It*
 - Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State* (2002), Introduction & chs. 1-6
 - Kenneth L. Kusmer, “An American Tradition: Governmental Action to Promote Equality in American History,” *Amerikastudien* 34 (1989), 263-89

WEEKS 2-3: INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS

Class 2a: Congress and Political Parties

- Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*, chapters 1-6
- Sarah Binder, “Can Congress Promote the General Welfare?”
- Gregory J. Wawro & Eric Schickler, “Where’s the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-cloture Senate,” *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (2004), 758-74.

- Morris P. Fiorina, "Parties as Problem Solvers?"
- James L. Sundquist, "Needed: A Political Theory for the New Era of Coalition Government in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 103 (1988-89), at pp. 616-24.
- E. Scott Adler, *WHY CONGRESSIONAL REFORMS FAIL: Reelection and the House Committee System* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Class 2b: Bureaucrats, Judges, and Lawyers

- J. Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*
- Robert A. Kagan, "Adversarial Legalism and American Government," in the *New Politics of Public Policy*, Marc Landy and Martin Levin, eds., Johns Hopkins Press, 1995.
- Mathew McCubbins, Roger Noll and Barry Weingast, "A Theory of Political Control and Agency Discretion," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 33, No. 3, August 1989, pp. 588-611.
- Terry M. Moe, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure," pp. 267-329 in John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson, eds., *Can the Government Govern?* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1989): pp. 267- 329.

Class 3a: Public Opinion and Civic Mobilization

- Christopher Wlezien, "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending," *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (1995), 981-1000.
- Arthur Lupia, "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994), 63-76.
- Larry Bartels, "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind," *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2005), pp. 15-31.
- Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Abandoning the Middle: The Bush Tax Cuts and the Limits of Democratic Control," *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2005), 33-53.
- Theda Skocpol, "Advocates without Members," *The American Prospect*, August 1, 1999.
- A.S. Gerber & D.P. Green, "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment," *American Political Science Review* 94 (2000), 653-63

SHORT PAPER 1 DUE

Class 3b: Political Influence: Issue Framing, Strategic Manipulation, and Policy Design

- Gary McKissick, "Strategic Manipulation of Issue Dimensions"
- Rogan Kersh, James Morone, "How The Personal Becomes Political: Prohibitions, Public Health, And Obesity," " in *Studies in American Political Development* Volume 16, Issue 2

- Eric Patashnik, Putting Trust in the U.S. Budget, chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 10

WEEEEK 4: POLICY DYNAMICS

Class 4a: Agenda Setting

- Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*
- John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: LittleBrown, 1984).
- Deborah Stone, “Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 104, 1989, pp. 281-300.
- Bryan D. Jones et al., “Policy Punctuations: U.S. Budget Authority, 1947-1995,” *Journal of Politics* 60 (1998), 1-33

Class 4b: Implementation

- Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation*.
- Eric Patashnik, *Reforms at Risk*
- McLaughlin, “Learning from Experience: Lessons from Policy Implementation”
- Bovens, Hart, & Kuipers, “The Politics of Policy Evaluation”

SHORT PAPER 2 DUE

WEEK 5: APPLICATION AND EVALUATION

Class 5a: Policy Feedback and Path Dependence

- Paul Pierson, “The Study of Policy Development,” *Journal of Policy History*, 2005
- A. Campbell, “Self-Interest, Social Security, and the Distinctive Participation Patterns of Senior Citizens,” *American Political Science Review* 96 (2002), 565-74
- Joss Soss and Sanford Schram, “The Promise of a Public Transformed: Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback”
- Eric Patashnik, “After the Public Interest Prevails: The Political Sustainability of Policy Reform,” *Governance*, April, 2003, pp. 203-34
- Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, 94, 2 (June, 2000): 251-267.
- Maltzman, Forest & Charles Shipan. 2008. “Change, Continuity, and the Evolution of the Law.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 252-267.

Class 5b: Deregulation and Policy Retrenchment

- Martha Derthick and Paul J. Quirk, *The Politics of Deregulation*

- Thomas H. Hammond, Jack H. Knott, “The Deregulatory Snowball: Explaining Deregulation in the Financial Industry, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 1. (Feb., 1988), pp. 3-3
- Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State*, chapters 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7
- Mark A. Smith, *American Business and Political Power: Public Opinion, Elections, and Democracy* (2000)

LONG PAPER DUE

WEEK 6. POLICY ANALYSIS

Class 6a: Policy Analysis and Public Problems

- Alan Gerber and Eric Patashnik, “Introduction: Missing Opportunities to Do Good”
- David L. Weimer and Aiden Vining, “Policy Analysis in Representative Democracy”
- Clifford Winston, “Government Failure in Urban Transportation”
- Alan Gerber and Eric Patashnik, “Sham Surgery: Market Failures, Government Failures, and the Problem of Inadequate Medical Evidence”

Final exam review session/Q&A to be held between classes this week, at a time TBD.

Class 6b: FINAL EXAM