

University of Wisconsin-Madison
La Follette School of Public Affairs

Spring 2012

PA 874: Public Policy Process
Wednesdays 1:20-3:15 pm; Office Hours Wed. 12:00-1:10 pm
Class Location: SOC SCI 6104

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Course Information

This is a graduate seminar on the policymaking process considered in a very broad context - from evolution of an idea, to enactment of legislation, to program implementation. The course is a gateway course for students pursuing a master in public affairs or a master in international public affairs. We will focus on public policymaking in the context of American political institutions. The course will not focus on a specific area of public policy, but we will discuss substantive policy areas to illustrate important concepts. We will pay particular attention to the constraints that operate on policy makers, and the circumstances in which policy makers can overcome these constraints to change the direction of public policy.

The course has two primary learning objectives. First, we will examine the moving parts of the policy process in the United States, including the primary actors and institutions involved in each stage of the policy making process (agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation) and the core theories and concepts for understanding these stages. We will explore these topics through reading and discussion of both scholarly work and case studies. Second, the course will provide you with some of the tools necessary to successfully negotiate the policy process. In particular, you will develop the communication skills and strategies to participate in the policy process through a combination of writing and oral presentation assignments.

Projects and Evaluation

Legislative Policymaking Process Research Report and Presentation

I will randomly divide students into 12 groups of three or four students (with some flexibility depending on the number of students in the class) to research a piece of national legislation of the group's choice. The group may choose any piece of legislation that was either signed or vetoed by the President within the last 12 years. The assignment consists of a report, presentation, and peer evaluation.

(1) Report

Students will turn in one copy of a legislative research report consisting of:

Title Page: Title, authors, class information

Abstract: A 150-word summary of all parts of the document

Introduction: Provide a description of the policy, its evolution, and importance. The introduction should also provide a "roadmap" to inform the reader with an overview of the report as a whole (2-3 double-spaced pages).

Chronological Narrative: Next, you will provide a chronological narrative of the legislative process. In this section you answer the "who, what, when, where, and why" questions of your

legislation in a descriptive and well-organized style. You may also want to attach a table listing important dates as an appendix to the report (8-12 double-spaced pages).

Analysis: In this section, you will discuss the relevance of the course readings to understanding the legislative process for this particular policy. You will want to focus on one theory of the political process -- for example, punctuated equilibrium theory -- and discuss how the readings on this stage relate to your case. [You will also need to go beyond the course's assigned theoretical readings to better familiarize yourself with the general argument.] The analytical section of the report is pivotal-- it requires you to critically evaluate how the course's theoretical ideas apply or do not apply to your case (8-12 double-spaced pages).

Conclusion: This section will highlight important findings and discusses their implications for the policymaking process (e.g. How has the policy design of the American with Disabilities Act affected the capacity of people with disabilities to influence public policy?) and/or the particular policy area (e.g., Does success/failure of Patriot Act to prevent future terrorism?) This section must answer the important "so what?" question. Stated differently, now that you have completed this legislative research, what does it tell us about the American policymaking process? (2-3 double-spaced pages).

References: Students will need to document sources carefully and provide full citations for all cited works. Bibliographic information should allow another person to replicate your research. All direct quotes should be in quotation marks with parenthetical reference format and page number, e.g., (Yackee 2009, 19) and all use of another's work should be in parenthetical reference format, e.g., (Yackee 2009). If you use websites then be very careful about knowing your source and being able to judge the veracity of the information, especially any data sources. For this project, it is best to start with government sources and then move to a search of journal articles and books. After exhausting those sources, only then should you use Internet search engines. For style information, refer to the American Political Science Association website at:
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>.

(2) Presentation

Each group will present a synopsis of the report to the class. These presentations must be well organized in order to highlight the key issue and findings of the written report. The presentation will be graded based on content, communication skills, and style (professionalism and organization). Each presentation should take 12-13 minutes (no more), followed by five minutes for class Q&A. The presentation will take place either during section or during the regular the class meeting time. You should plan to use PowerPoint for the presentations. Professional dress is appropriate. Please practice and time your presentations ahead of time!

(3) Peer and Self Evaluation

After you have completed your presentation, you will receive a peer and self evaluation form. On this form you will rate yourself and group members on a scale and these rankings may affect a student's paper and/or presentation grade. The peer evaluation score for each individual will be averaged based upon the peer evaluation forms from all group members. The instructor will not reveal the names associated with ratings.

Exams

There will be two in-class course exams. The exams will likely include T/F, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. These exams will assess recall and application of course materials. The exams will not cover material from the Smith text.

Discussion Leaders

This class will live and die by the quality of discussion. Student participation is necessary to make it a lively and engaging educational experience. Discussion leaders will be assigned most weeks (nine total

opportunities). Discussion leaders ought to coordinate with each other to plan a class activity or discussion that has students applying the concepts of the reading (or video). There will be 4-5 students assigned to each opportunity. This activity ought to be approximately 13-15 minutes in length (but no more). You may use PowerPoint, but it is certainly not required. I encourage creativity in the activity. You will receive a short email from our TA with feedback and a team grade within one week.

Participation

I expect noteworthy discussion and participation from all students within each class meeting, including sections. If participation or attention to the course's readings falls below an acceptable level, then I will hold unannounced pop quizzes. These quizzes cannot be made up due to course absences. Participation can also be earned by providing excellent feedback other students' presentations.

Letter Grade Equivalents		Grading Standard		Assignments	
A	95	>=94	A	Exam 1 =	22.5%
AB	90	89-93	AB	Exam 2 =	22.5%
B	85	84-88	B	Group Paper =	25%
BC	80	79-83	BC	Presentation =	12.5%
C	75	70-78	C	Participation =	10%
D	65	60-69	D	Diss. Leader =	7.5%
F	50	<=58	F		
No Credit	0				

Other Course Information

Expectations for Academic Integrity

I expect a full adherence to UW's code of academic integrity. I also expect that you will acknowledge all ideas that are not your own through proper citation. Please put all direct quotes in quotations or provide some clear form of acknowledgment. Any accepted format for citation may be used as long as it is used consistently. You may want to follow the style format of a major academic journal, such as the *American Political Science Review*. There is to be no cheating in this course - be it via plagiarism or some other form of falsification. I may run all student papers through the software that checks for academic violations. Students who do not adhere to the highest levels of integrity may receive zero credit on assignment or exam, fail the course, or suffer some other consequence, depending on the action.

Other Expectations

I expect that you will not show up late to class consistently. I expect that you will treat your fellow classmates and me with respect and dignity.

Disabilities

People with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please inform me if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. Confidentiality of the shared information will be strictly maintained. Certain accommodations may require the assistance of the UW's McBurney Disability Office - <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Email

I will return emails from students within three business days. Do not email shortly before a class, presentation, or exam with the expectation that I will be able to respond immediately to your concern. All class email communication will be through the class (DoIT) email and class list serves.

Late Assignments and Make Up Policy

All assignments that are not provided to me at the beginning of class (or when I request them in class) will be reduced by 20% automatically. Assignments will then be deducted by another letter grade for each additional day late (beginning at 8 AM the next day). I do not accept late assignments in my

mailbox or under my door. Also, I do not accept assignments via email unless otherwise indicated by me. Late presentations (or other assignments) due to illness will be handled on a case-by-case basis and may also result in deductions. Make up assignments are at my discretion and may not match the assignment provided in class.

Readings. There is a strong expectation that all assigned readings will be completed in a timely fashion and that enough time will have been spent to properly consider the text assigned. This is a graduate course, and thus, my expectations are that all students will come to class prepared.

1. Panagopoulos, Costas and Joshua Schank. 2007. *All Roads Lead to Congress*. CQ Press. ISBN: 9780872894617
2. Smith, Catherine. 2009. *Writing Public Policy* (2nd Edition). Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195145076
3. Stone, Deborah. 2011. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (3rd Edition). Norton. ISBN 9780393912722
4. Kerwin, Cornelius and Scott Furlong. 2011. *Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy* (Third Edition). CQ Press. ISBN: 9780871879936
5. The KSCS case studies are available for purchase at: <http://www.ksgcase.harvard.edu/>. Locate the appropriate case, pay the small fee, and download the information.

All other readings are available on Learn@UW or directly from me.

Class Schedule

1/25 Course Overview and Sign-Ups

No section this week. TA available to meet.

2/1 Policy Politics and Goals

Read

*Stone, Policy Paradox, Introduction & Chapters 1-5 (Discussion Leaders)

*KSCS - Breaking the "Circle of Poison": Senator Patrick Leahy and Pesticide Export Controls

Section

Discuss materials

2/8 Policy Problems and Solutions

Read

*Stone, Policy Paradox, Chapters 7-Conclusions (Discussion Leaders)

*Smith, Chapters 1-3 (Discussion Leaders)

Section

Discuss materials

2/15 Public Policymaking Theories

Read

*Lindblom, The Science of Muddling Through

*Baumgartner and Jones, Agendas, Pages 3-38 and 59-82 (Discussion Leaders)
 *Sabatier, Towards a Better Theory

Watch

*Building a Case for the Second Iraq War (Discussion Leaders)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/>

Section

Discuss materials

2/22 Agenda Setting - Focus on Political Campaigns

Read

*Smith, Chapters 4-8

Section

Discuss materials

2/29 Policy Formation

Read

*Schneider and Ingram, Social Construction
 *Campbell, Self-Interest, Social Security, and the Distinctive (Discussion Leaders)
 *KSCS: Against All Odds: The Campaign in Congress for Japanese American Redress

Listen

*The Facts Don't Matter (Archive #260, <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/>)

Section

Discuss materials

3/7 Exam 1

No section this week. TA available to meet.

3/14 Policy Adoption in Legislatures

In-Class Sign-Up

Final Presentation Date

Read

*Panagopolous and Schank, All Roads Lead to Congress (Discussion Leaders)

Section

Discuss materials (possibly review exams)

3/21 Policy Adoption in State Legislatures

In-Class Speakers

Read

*Berry and Berry, State Lottery Adoptions (Discussion Leaders)
 *Gerber, Elisabeth. 1999. *The Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and the Promise of Direct Legislation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 5-7.

- Section**
Discuss materials (possibly review exams)
- 3/28** **Legislative Simulation**
- *Smith, Chapters 9-Conclusion & Appendix B
- Section**
Discuss materials
- 4/4** **No Class-Spring Break**
- 4/11** **Policy Implementation [Note Possible Schedule Change]**
- Read**
*Furlong and Kerwin, Rulemaking
- Section**
[Note Possible Schedule Change]
- 4/18** **Policy Implementation**
- Read**
*Yackee and Yackee, A Bias Towards Business (Discussion Leaders)
*Yackee and Yackee, Is Rulemaking Ossified?
- Listen**
<http://www.npr.org/2011/11/28/142721675/obama-office-alters-more-federal-rules-than-bush>
- Section**
Discuss materials
- 4/25** **Exam 2**
- No section this week. TA available to meet.**
- 5/2** **Presentations**
- Section**
Presentations
- 5/9** **Presentations**
- Section**
Review exams
- 5/11** **Group Papers Due**