Course Objectives

This is a graduate seminar on the policy making process. The course begins by examining the political, social, and economic contexts that shape and are shaped by policy making processes. Though the focus is on the US, international comparisons will be made, and students are encouraged to think about the American context through comparative and international perspectives. Next the course familiarizes students with dominant theories and models of policymaking process and policy change, starting with the model of the policy cycle. Third, the course focuses in on key topics and issues in policy making, specifically, agenda setting, implementation, and the relationships between policymaking and democracy. Finally, the class reflects on contemporary and emerging issues and dilemmas of the politics of policy making. Throughout, attention is paid to the profoundly and inherently political nature of policymaking process and to the ways in which policy processes emerge through interactions between ideas, institutions, and actors. Students will participate in short presentations in small groups, actively engage in class discussion sessions, and write a final paper.

Course Credit Information

This class meets for the equivalent of three 50-minute class period each week over the fall semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, online engagement, studying, etc) for about 2 hours out of classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Required Texts


Other readings for the course will be chapters, articles, or excerpts from books provided online (Canvas), as links, or distributed as hardcopies. Please check Canvas regularly. The weekly schedule included here (see below) provides a guide for weekly readings and bibliographic information for the sources. The back pages of the syllabus include a further list of useful sources for essays etc.


**Learning Goals**

Students will demonstrate comprehension of important contextual aspects of policy making processes, of dominant theories, models and conceptual frameworks of policy processes, and of key issues and topics in policy making.

Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills. This means examining theories and evidence presented in readings and demonstrate understanding of debates past and present surrounding public policy making processes.

Students will read and comprehend academic research, data, and writing as well as journalistic writings on relevant issues of public policy processes and politics.

Students will communicate summaries and analyses of topics, issues and key readings in class discussions, presentations, and writing assignments. They will use clear written language and draw on theories, concepts, and evidence to support their arguments and ideas.

Students will demonstrate the ability to maintain fidelity to objective social science-based research methods.

Students will prepare a high-quality presentation and demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively as a speaker.

**Course Requirements**

1. *Complete assigned readings before class meetings.* Each week there will be some readings designated ‘essential’ and some ‘further/background’. In addition, some may be starred to flag especially important readings. Some weeks involve somewhat heavy reading loads. Please read cover as much as you can and aim to extract the key arguments, theories, and concepts.

2. *Attend classes and discussion sessions regularly and participate.* Contributions to the class discussion will be considered in the calculation of the final grade for the course.

3. *Submit short online non-graded responses to readings.* Over the course of the semester each student is required to submit ten, non-graded responses to assigned readings. Each response may: (a) offer a concise summary of the main point in the article or chapter(s); (b) raise questions about problems with the author’s argument or evidence; AND/OR (c) draw comparisons and contrasts with other things you have read (ideally, but not necessarily, for this course) or instead applies the argument to other cases. Responses must not exceed 1000 words, submitted online before the class. No late responses will be accepted.

4. *Complete five (5) short in class quizzes covering key concepts and issues in the readings and material.* Quizzes are intended to help you learn by asking you to briefly explain points from the readings in your own words. They will consist of 2-3 short answer questions. There will be no right/wrong answer; credit will be given for how well students are able to draw on the readings and engage with them thoughtfully.

5. *Present on a selected reading to lead class discussion.* We will choose the groups and assign topics for presentations in the first meeting. Students will present for NO MORE THAN 15 minutes. See guidance below. A grading rubric will be provided.
6. **Write and submit one final paper.** Students will submit a final paper on a question of their choice related to diversity & public management. You should get approval in advance from the instructor as to your topic and sources. See guidance below. A grading rubric will be provided.

**Guidance for presentations**

Students will present on a specific issue or topic covered in the schedule for no more than 15 minutes. The presentation must include:

1. **A critical analysis and discussion** of key arguments, conclusions, and concepts. Where research is involved in the readings, it is important to explain the methods used and the type of evidence drawn on. This means that only a very brief summary is needed; instead, the focus should include, but is not limited to, a discussion of how the topic/issue/reading relates to other readings, arguments, issues, topics and/or perspectives encountered in the course and the strengths weaknesses of the argument/reading. It is helpful to explain in your own words the key issues that you think are most important and relevant for public policy and public management. It is also helpful to identify issues or questions for class discussion or point to areas of confusion or lack of clarity.

2. **A one-page handout** summarizing the points above and including a bibliography. Powerpoint slides or other presentational materials may be used but are not required.

**Guidance for the final research paper**

Students will write a final paper that demonstrates their comprehension of course material and their ability to think critical and analytically about the practical applications of the topics and issues covered in the readings and in class. **Topic:** The final paper requires students to choose a policy area (any area, there is a lot of freedom here) and ask a question related to processes of its development, making, and/or communication. This is a very open-ended project BUT the topic must be formulated as a specific question that can be addressed through your own independent research. The topic **must be approved by the midterm.** The paper must incorporate theory and concepts and empirical research.

**Research:** Students must use sources from the course syllabus, but they also must conduct their own research. This may involve any range of sources of evidence, including an interview, documentary sources, and it may be qualitative or quantitative or both. **Sources and References:** the paper must make use of at least five (5) sources that are included as part of the core required readings. In addition, the paper must include at least five (5) sources of independent research. Sources **must be cited** using in text citation plus a bibliography OR endnotes OR footnotes.

**Length:** 7,500 words or about 15 pages double-spaced (see format below)

**Submission:** must be via email by midnight on the due date

A grading rubric will be provided.

**Format for paper:** All submissions must be typed, double-spaced with standard margins, in a standard font. The student’s name must appear in the header. The question must be clearly stated at the top of the page. **References** must be cited using a standard system, the style does not matter as long as it is consistent.

Please pay attention to clarity of language and grammar. There are many handbooks that can help with citations, grammar, and style, for example here are some links:


http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html
Grading
Your maximum score for the entire course is 100 points. These points may be earned as follows:

Course Requirements:
Class Participation: 10%
Online Contributions: 15%
Presentation: 15%
Quizzes: 25%
Final Paper: 35%
TOTAL: 100%

Grading Standard
93-100 A
88-92 AB
83-87 B
78-82 BC
73-77 C
69-72 CD
63-68 D
59-62 DF
<59 F

Academic Integrity
Failure to cite, or otherwise present written material prepared by others as your own work, will be considered plagiarism and treated accordingly. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own ideas, the words, writings, music, graphs/charts, etc that were created by another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. It does not matter from where the material is borrowed—a book, article, material off the web, another student’s paper—all constitute plagiarism unless the source of the work is fully identified and credited. Plagiarism is cheating and a violation of academic and personal integrity and will not be tolerated. It carries extremely serious consequences. To avoid plagiarism it is necessary when using a phrase, a distinctive idea, concept or sentence from another source to reference that source in your text, a footnote, or endnote. I reserve the right to use search tools such as turnitin.com to examine student’s work for plagiarism. By turning in memos and papers you will be giving me your permission to examine that work for plagiarism. Please note that unless otherwise explicitly specified all of the assignments are intended to be completed by individual students, without aid from other members of the class.

American with Disabilities Act
The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please advise the instructor.
Respect
Students will demonstrate sensitivity, tolerance, and respect towards each other, themselves, and the instructor.
**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*Week 1, Sept 6: Course Overview*
Essential Reading:
**THE COURSE SYLLABUS**

**PART I: CONTEXTS OF POLICY MAKING PROCESSES IN THE US**

*Week 2, Sept 13: Policymaking as Politics*
Essential Reading:

Further Reading:

*Week 3, Sept 20: Power and US Policymaking*
Essential Reading:

Background & Further Reading:
**For further background see useful sources attached.**

*Week 4, Sept 27: The Changing Shape of the State*
*Soss, J. Hacker J. and Mettler, S. Eds. 2007. Remaking America. Ch 2, 10, 11*

**PART II: MODELS & THEORIES OF POLICY MAKING PROCESSES**

**Week 5, Oct 4: Policymaking, Decision-making & the Policy Cycle**
*Rational-Comprehensive Decisions, Bounded Rationality, Incrementalism*

**Essential Reading:**

**Further Reading:**


**Week 6, Oct 11: Policymaking, Agenda Setting, & “Multiple Streams”**

**Essential Reading:**
*Kingdon, J. 2014. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public*, Ch Intro, 1, 4, 9, 10, Conclusion

**Further Reading:**


**Week 7, Oct 18: Actor & Issue Centered Theories of Policy Processes & Change**
*Advocacy Coalitions (ACF), and Punctuated Equilibrium Models*

**Essential Reading:**
*Soss, J. Hacker J. and Mettler, S. Eds. 2007. *Remaking America*. Ch 3

**Further Reading**

**Week 8, Oct 25: Institutionalist Approaches, Path Dependency & Policy Feedback**

**Essential Reading:**
*Peters & Zittoun, 2016. *Contemporary Approaches to Public Policy*, Ch 4
*Soss, J. Hacker J. and Mettler, S. Eds. 2007. *Remaking America*. Ch 4, 5

**Jacobs & Mettler S. 2018.** When and How New Policy Creates New Politics: Examining the Feedback Effects of the Affordable Care Act on Public Opinion. *Perspectives on Politics*

**Further Reading**


**Week 9, Nov 1: Discursive, Constructivist & Interpretive Approaches to Policy Processes**

**Essential Reading:**


*Soss, J. Hacker J. and Mettler, S. Eds. 2007. *Remaking America*, Ch. 8, 9, 12*

**Further Reading**


**PART III: CONCEPTS & ISSUES IN POLICY MAKING PROCESSES**

**Week 10, Nov 8 –GUEST SPEAKER (TBA) & READING WEEK**
**Week 11, Nov 15: Implementation and Bureaucratic Politics**

**Essential Reading:**
* Soss, J. Hacker J. and Mettler, S. Eds. 2007. *Remaking America*, Ch 4

**Week 12, Nov 22 – NO CLASS FOR THANKSGIVING**

**Week 13, Nov 29: Policy Tools, Democracy & the (Re)Making of the Public Citizenship, Participation, The Public?**

**Essential Reading:**
* Soss, J. Hacker J. and Mettler, S. Eds. 2007. *Remaking America*, Ch 6, 7

**Further Reading:**

**Week 14, Dec 6: Activism, Political Polarization, & Policy Change/Stability**

**Further Reading**

**Week 15, Dec 13: Conclusions: Policy Making Processes in (Ab)Normal Times**

**READINGS TBA**
**Bibliography and Useful Sources**

**General Public Policy**


**Federalism**


*Gary Gerstle, “Federalism in America: Beyond the Tea Partiers,”* *Dissent* (Fall 2010):

**Groups, Parties, Lobbying**

*Past and Present, Causes and Consequences*


**Social Construction**

**Gender/Race/Class, Social Divisions and Inequalities**