

## **Introduction to Public Policy (P11.1022.01), Spring 2007**

**Course Schedule:** WEDNESDAYS, JANUARY ..... – MAY...

Class Time: 6:20–8:30 PM

Location: Tisch Hall #LC4 (40 West Fourth Street)

**Professor:** Kieke G.H.Okma, Adjunct Associate Professor

Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

New York University

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Office Hours: By Appointment or before class

**Course description:** The Introduction to public policy provides a basic vocabulary of concepts and approaches to understand processes of public policy making. Its main focus is the United States, but it will also address issues of (international) comparison. The course provides students with an intellectual framework for developing their own answers to the following questions:

Why, when, and how should government intervene in our lives?

What are public policies and how are they made?

How can systematic analysis play a constructive role in policy making?

What are the most effective roles of non-governmental organizations, markets, and the state in the policymaking process?

**Auditors:** There is no room for auditors in this section.

**Weekly Participation** Class participants are expected to come prepared for class discussion. That means having read the weekly assigned readings and showing an active interest by framing questions and/or comments. Small groups of students will present issues on a regular base (see below).

**Handout memo:** Each week, two small groups of students will be asked to prepare a brief presentation (max 15 minutes) and a 2 page handout or memo about a public policy issue (on housing, health, education, public transportation or defense) that appeared in the news media (New York Times or other). The handout will describe the issue, describe at least two different perspectives, the main stakeholders and their positions on the issue, the reaction of government or political leaders, possible solutions and policy options (including no action), and the likely outcome. The handout will also use the class reading to reframe the issue in terms of theoretical approaches from the reading materials. (For example, the stakeholders in terms of Alford, or Pross or Sabatier; the policy action as categories of policy instruments as defined by Doern and Phidd etc)

Examples of recent issues that have received ample coverage in the NYT:

The obesity epidemic (series of articles Spring 2006);

The eminent domain controversies/ the Keno case;

Gay marriage (several articles);

Faith based government funding and tax exemption for not for profit organization;

Estate tax

Medicare Part D

Public housing in NYU: the changing face of Harlem and the Bronx (gentrification versus rent control and low income family housing)

Iraq: what next?

Charter schools

**In-Class Midterm (week 6)**

The in-class midterm exam will contain factual questions and short-answer essay questions based on the class readings.

**Essay 5-6 pages (due week 8)**

This written analysis of a policy issue selected from recent events will use concepts discussed in the course.

**Final Exam (week 14)**

The final will be a 48-hour take-home exam composed of essay questions aimed at integrating material from the whole course.

**Grading:** This course will abide by the Wagner School's general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. For more info please see NYU Wagner's policy on incomplete grades (<http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/current/pol5.html>) and academic honesty and plagiarism (<http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/current/pol3.html>).

The main components of the grading are:

- class attendance: 10 points (minus 2 points per missed class)
- active participation in class discussion and presenting policy memos: max 20 points
- mid-term exam: 20 points
- essay: 20 points
- final exam: 30 points

**50-55 points: C-; 56-61 points C; 62-67 points C+; 68-73 points B-; 74-79 points B; 80-85 points B+; 86-91 A-; 92-95 A, and >95 points A+ (and below 50 points, fail).**

**Writing Resources**

Writing is an integral part of this course. All written work is expected to follow the standards of "good" English. This includes proper grammar and spelling as well as a clear argumentation, substantiation of claims and appropriate source referencing. Written assignments are to be completed by students individually, unless the assignment is part of the team project. Students should keep a copy of each assignment in the event of a loss. There are a range of resources available to improve your writing, including:

Booth, W., Colomb, G. and Williams, J. *The Craft of Research* (Chicago University Press)

Roman, K. and Raphaelson, J. *Writing That Works* (HarperCollins)

Munter, M. *Guide to Managerial Communication* (Prentice Hall)

The Writing Center, New York University, 269 Mercer Street, 2nd floor. For an appointment call: (212) 998-8866. (This is a free service available to Wagner students).

Wagner Writing Tutors (ask receptionist for their weekly schedule)

**Readings and references**

Apart from the class material, students are encouraged to follow the daily news and collect clippings or files covering current social policy disputes. Further, there are many websites of interest to the student of public policy, journals and general textbooks. Books most used in the program.

Graham Allison: *Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*; (2nd edition) 1999

Kraft, Michael E and Scott R Furlong. *Public Policy. Politics, Analysis and Alternatives.*

Washington DC: CQ Press. (this book also contains useful further references and websites)

Michael C. Munger: *Analyzing Policy* (NY: W. Norton & Company, 2000) (basics of cost benefit analysis)

Deborah Stone, *The Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002, revised edition)

Copies of the texts will be placed on reserve at Bobst Library with a 2-hour checkout and are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore or online. If you purchase online, I suggest you look at [www.addall.com](http://www.addall.com) which reviews over 30 online retailers to find you the best price.

**Class Topics:**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>SECTION I</b>			
<b>Roles of government, markets and nonprofits</b>			
<b>Class 1</b> <b>January 17</b> <b>2007</b>	Introduction to public policy, power and politics	Munger: preface p xii-xvi, ch 1 Kraft ch 1 Stone: Intro, ch 1: 1-34, and Conclusion: 376-383	Discuss course outline and assignments
<b>Class 2</b> <b>January 24</b> <b>2007</b>	The role of ideas, interests and institutions	Klein and Marmor (Oxford Handbook)	Group presentation and handout 1, 2
<b>Class 3</b> <b>January 31,</b> <b>2007</b>	Agenda setting, policy choice and policy framing	Stone: ch 6, 8 pp 137-209 Kingdon: Pross	Group presentation and handout 3,4
<b>Class 4</b> <b>February 7,</b> <b>2007</b>	Government versus Markets	Arrow, 1963 Munger: ch 4 and 8 Stone: ch 3 Efficiency; Ch 15 Powers Wilson: Bureacracy, ch 7, 17 and 18	Group presentation and handout 5,6
<b>Class 5</b> <b>February 14,</b> <b>2007</b>	Civil society, NGOs: The changing role of voluntary organizations in national and international decision-making	... outsourcing public services Bloche	Group presentation and handout 7,8
<b>Class 6</b> <b>February 21,</b> <b>2007</b>	Mid term exam		
<b>Section II</b>			
<b>Decision-making: interaction of governments and stakeholders in the shaping and outcome of public policy</b>			
<b>Class 7</b> <b>February 28,</b> <b>2007</b>	The process of policy-making	Kraft: ch 3 (the policy process model) Stone: ch 9 Interests, 6 Symbols and 9 Causes	Group presentation and handout 9,10
<b>Class 8</b> <b>March 7,</b> <b>2007</b>	Decision-making	Allison: Introduction p 1-12. Lindblom: The Science of Muddling Through Stone: ch 10 Decisions, ch 13 Facts	Group presentation and handout 11, 12
<b>Class 9</b> <b>March ??,</b> <b>2007</b>	Budgeting as policy making	Peters: ch 6 pp 127-166 Stone: ch 12, pp284-3580	Group presentation and handout 13, 14
<b>Section III</b>			
<b>Analysis versus Advocacy</b>			
<b>Class 10</b> <b>March ??,</b> <b>2007</b>	Ethics in public policy	Stone: ch 2 Equity ch 14 Rights	Group presentation and handout 15, 16
<b>Class 11</b>	Evaluation, learning, and the policy process	Richard Rose Richard Freeman	
<b>Class 12</b>	The 'good governance' debate	Corporate Social Responsibility. Special section NYT Nov 8, 2006	
<b>Class 13</b>	Guest speaker		
<b>Class 14</b>	Structured class debate		

## **Weekly Class Description and Assigned Readings**

### **Section I      The Role of Government, markets and non profits**

This section explores ideas about the proper role of the state, the market and voluntary organizations in society. Markets serve as mechanisms to allocate economic goods and services. Governments have to mediate conflict (sometimes with the use of power), and allocate public goods and services. Voluntary organizations serve to strengthen social networks, and can provide both public and private services in society. The borderlines between the roles and functions of the three groups are far from clear; they may overlap and shift over time.

### **Class 1            Course Outline; Introduction to Public Policy, Power and Politics**

Successful policymaking involves identifying good ideas, generating political support, and ensuring effective implementation. The parts are inter-connected and often harder than they might appear at first. In the next few weeks we develop ways of thinking about key constraints, incentives and opportunities that are at the heart of these processes and ask questions including: How do we relate policy, politics, and power? What model of society and politics do we use and why does it matter? What role do institutions, ideas and interests play in shaping policy and the impact and influence of policy analysis?

#### **Required Readings:**

Freeman, Donald. The Making of a Discipline. *The Theory and Practice of Political Science*. William Grotty (ed). Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991:15-39.  
Munger, Michael C. 2000. *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts and Practices*. New York: W.W.Norton & Company. Ch 1: 3-29.  
Stone, D. *Policy Paradox*, : Intro, ch 1 p 1-34 and Conclusion, pp 376-383

#### **Further reading:**

Kraft and Furlong, Ch 1

### **Class 2            The Role of Ideas, Interests and Institutions**

The core concepts in public policy making fall under three headings: Ideas, Interests and Institutions that determine the shaping and outcomes of public policies. Ideas (or values) affect the style of policy making; organized interests or stakeholders may seek to thwart or veto government policy and institutions channel the interaction between government and interests.

#### **Required readings:**

Rudolf Klein and Theodore R.Marmor: Reflections on Policy Analysis: Putting it together again. *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, 2006, ch 44:890-910.

- Okma, Kieke G.H. 1997. *Studies in Dutch Health Politics, Policy and Law* (PhD Thesis, University Utrecht): ch 2( theoretical frameworks): 29-44.
- Pross, Paul A. 1992. Types of Groups. *Group Politics and Public Policy*. (see also Okma, 1997): 87-113.
- Sabatier, Paul and Hank Jenkins-Smith. *Policy Change and Learning. An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Westview Press, 1993: ch2: 13-39.
- Wilson, Graham K. 1990. *Interest Groups*. Basil Blackwell. ch 2: Interest Groups in the United States. 38-76.

### **Class 3 – Agenda Setting, Policy Choice and Policy Framing**

In his seminal book *Agendas*, Kingdon analyses the processes by which certain issues gain salience in public policy debate. He observes how under certain conditions, ‘windows of opportunity’, change may occur but that does not happen very often. That process also includes the framing (and reframing) of issues and policy choices.

#### **Assigned Readings:**

Robert Henry Cox. The Social Construction of an imperative: Why Welfare Reform happened in Denmark and The Netherlands, but Not in Germany. *World Politics*, April 2001, 53:463-98.  
John W. Kingdon. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. NY: Longman, 2002 (2nd Ed): 16-20; ch 8: The Policy Window, and Joining the Streams: 165-165-195.  
Peters, B Guy. *Agende Setting and Public Policy. American Public Policy*. Washington DC: CQ Press, 2004. ch 3: 48-74.

#### **Further reading:**

Kraft and Furlong, Ch 4

### **Class 4 Government versus Markets**

Market allocation of goods and services is the dominant decision-making mechanism in many spheres of life. At the same time, a large number of public policy debates emerge in response to dissatisfaction with outcomes of the private market (fraude and corruption, environmental concerns, fairness and equity. Why, when, and how do markets “fail”? When is public action called for and likely to be most effective in addressing market failure? Moreover, markets require a certain degree of government intervention to function properly, e.g. monitoring and supervision of the financial sector.

Government has unique powers, but also, its own limits. As Wilson shows, those limits (e.g., “red tape”) are often the flip-side of valued features (e.g., accountability and transparency). Policy thus often involves choosing between imperfect alternatives. Wilson describes common constraints and incentives in bureaucracies.

#### **Assigned Readings:**

Kenneth Arrow 1963  
Charles Lindblom “The Science of Muddling Through”  
Munger, Michael C. 2000. *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts and Practices*. New York: W.W.Norton & Company. Ch .3: 54-88.  
Stone, Chapter 3, “Efficiency”: 61-85; ch 15 “Powers”: 354-375.  
James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*. Basic Books, 2000 Chapter 7: “Constraints” (pp. 113-136).  
World Bank, “Addressing Information Failures in India’s Milk Market,” *World Development Report: Knowledge for Development 1998/99*. Oxford University Press. Box 5.1, p. 73.

## **Class 5      Civil Society and NGOs: the Changing role of voluntary organizations**

In many countries, voluntary organizations are providing public services. For example, in Germany, the large voluntary welfare organizations, often with religious backgrounds, offer a wide range of social services including child care, health services, education and housing. They are embedded in government regulation and receive government funding. The last decades have seen a rapid increase in the contracting out of public social services by the US government to voluntary organizations, often blurring the borderlines between public and private activities (prison services, emergency relief, special housing, child care).

### **Assigned Reading:**

Hall, Michael and Keith Banting. The Nonprofit Sector in Canada: An Introduction. *The Nonprofit Sector in Canada*. Keith Banting (ed). Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2000:1-28.

Boris, E and C Steuerly, Nonprofits and Government. Urban Institute, 2005

....non profits and contracting out.....

[www.ncrp.org](http://www.ncrp.org): discussion over gift Warren Buffett to Bill Gates Foundation June 2006.

Pross, Paul A. 1992. Models of Interest Representation. *Group Politics and Public Policy*. ch 9: 218-243.

Smith, Steven Rathgeb and Micheal Lipsky. Nonprofits for hire. *The Welfare State in the Age of Contracting*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP1993. 3-19 and 233-244.

## **Class 6      Mid term exam**

## **Class 7      The Process of Policy Making**

Several political analysts have framed ideas about the 'policy cycle', a model that distinguishes several consecutive stages of policy-making (see e.g. Kraft and Furlong, ch 3).. For analytical purposes, tis model is useful even while in reality, the 'policy stages' may not be visible at all. The stages overlap, and some policy ideas take (much) time to 'mature'. For example, ideas for new policies sometimes are tested in political speeches, and they may gain importance by a wider spread via newspapers, magazines or television. Why do just a small fraction actually make it onto political agendas? A key dimension of agenda-setting is framing grievances or issues as a problem that is amenable to being addressed by a policy. Also at stake is the struggle to engage in efforts of "agenda denial" whereby certain issues are systematically excluded from the policy agenda. We look at the interaction between agenda setting, problem definition, framing, and agenda denial and at various major theories on the policymaking process.

### **Assigned Readings:**

Kingdon

Adolino, Jessica R and Charles H Blake. *Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices in Six Industrialized Countries*. Washington DC: CQ Press.2001. Ch 1 The Policy Process:9-30.

Sabatier, Paul and Hank Jenkins-Smith. *The Study of Public Policy Processes. Policy Change and Learning. An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Westview Press, 1993: chCh 1: 1-9.

Stone: Chapters 6 "Symbols", ch 8 "Causes" and 9 "Interests".

James True, Bryan Jones and Frank Baumgartner. "Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in American Policymaking," Chapter 5 in *Theories of the Policy Process*. (TN: Westview Press, August 1999).

## **Class 8 - Decision-making**

Are policymakers rational? What explains the shaping and outcome of government policy? In the late 1960s, Harvard political scientist Graham Allison met with a small group of colleagues to study the Cuban missile crisis (see the movie “13 Days”). He was intrigued by the question why the two superpowers of that moment, the US and the USSR, almost caused a global nuclear war over a relatively trivial matter (the building of missile silos on Cuba). How can one explain the policies of both sides?

### **Assigned Readings:**

Graham Allison (1971): *Essence of Decision-making*, Introduction  
Lindblom *The Science of Muddling Through*  
Stone, Chapters 10 and 13, “Decisions” and “Facts”  
Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, “Abandoning the Middle: The Bush Tax Cuts and the Limits of Democratic Control,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1), March 2005.

## **Class 9            Budgeting as Policy Making**

### **Assigned Readings:**

Peters, B Guy. *Budgeting: Allocation and Public Policy. American Public Policy.* Washington DC: CQ Press, 2004. ch 6 pp 127-166  
Stone: ch 12, pp 284-358.  
Wildavsky, Aaron. *The Rise and Fall of Entitlements. The New Politics of the Budgetary Process* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed).1992. ch 8: 309-363.

## **SECTION III            ANALYSIS VERSUS ADVOCACY**

## **Class 10            Ethics in Public Policy**

Policy-making occurs within an ethical frame. As we saw at the start of the semester, there are typically multiple ways to frame particular issues – and thus, not surprisingly, multiple ways to describe the ethical principles involved. In this lecture, we consider moral principles and philosophies.

### **Assigned Readings:**

Stone, Chapters 2 and 14: “Equity”, “Rights.”  
Additional readings to be added  
Okma IRPP 2002: (debate about Good Governance and Stewardship)  
Newspaper clippings.

## **Class 11            Evaluation, Learning, and the Policy Process**

The past decade has seen the rise of “evidence-based” policy-making (at least, on paper). The formation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation ([www.mcc.gov](http://www.mcc.gov)) is one example. The readings provide an opportunity to consider the broad scope of the policy process, possibilities, and limits.

**Assigned Readings:**

Robert Bollen, Evaluation of USAID, *American Journal of Evaluation*.

Steven Radelet, “Aid Effectiveness and the Millennium Development Goals,” Center for Global Development Working Paper 39, April 2004.

Steven Radelet, “Will the Millennium Challenge Account be Different?” *Wilson Quarterly* 26 (2): 171-187.

Robert Boruch, “Better Evaluation for Evidence-Based Policy: Place Randomized Trials in Education, Criminology, Welfare, and Health,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (May 2005): 6-18.

**Class 12            International Comparison in Social Policy**

Adolino, Jessica R and Charles H Blake. *Comparing Public Policies: Issues and Choices in Six Industrialized Countries*. Washington DC: CQ Press.2001. Ch4 The Policy-Making Context:76-98.

Okma, Kieke G.H. *What is the Best Public-Private Model for Canadian Health Care?* Montreal: Institute for Research of Public Policy, 2002: 8-29.

Ted Marmor, Richard Freeman and Kieke Okma. Comparative Perspectives and Policy Learning in the World of Health Care. *J of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 2005, vol 7 no 4:331-348.

Richard Rose, Richard. *What is Lesson-Drawing?* SPP paper 190. University of Strathclyde, 1991:2-40.

**Class 13**

**Class 14 Structured Class Debate**