NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE
CORE-GP 1022 – Introduction to Public Policy – Spring 2016

Section 001: Mondays 6:45-8:55pm, Silver 520
Instructor: Professor Anthony Bertelli (bertelli@nyu.edu)
Office Hours: By appointment, contact Christian Hansen to arrange (christian.hansen@nyu.edu)

Recitations: Section 001: Mondays 5:30-6:30pm, Waverly 367
Section 002: Mondays 9:00-10:00pm, Goddard B06

Teaching Colleagues: Lanthy Truong (lanthy@nyu.edu)
Corey Rittvo (corey.rittvo@nyu.edu)

Course Description

This is a course about the public policy process and the role you – in many different capacities – can have in shaping policy outcomes. This class introduces you to analytic frameworks for thinking about various aspects of this process. We do not study a single context or policy, but, rather, seek to understand how policy actors succeed (or fail) in obtaining their objectives. You will learn to think carefully about institutions and present your analysis (in person and in writing) to policymakers. You should complete this course with a better sense of the challenges facing you and opportunities you have to make a durable impact.

Course Objectives

1. To understand core theories of the process of making public policy
2. To understand the politics of policy arguments
3. To understand the decision making tools and strategies of policymakers
4. To learn how to conduct an institutional analysis for a policy proposal in a variety of institutional contexts.
5. To learn how to write a memorandum presenting an institutional analysis.

Teaching Approach

To build a sophisticated understanding of the policy process you will need to engage in all components of the course. It is expected that you will complete all required reading in advance of the session for which they are listed, take notes on the material, and be prepared to summarize and critically evaluate it. You will help guide the discussion in our class meetings; your classmates are counting on you to bring your own perspective to small-group conversations. I encourage the expression of diverse viewpoints in class and in your writing assignments; you should work within the framework presented, but always think for yourself.
Assignments

**Institutional Analysis Memorandum.** This is the main writing assignment and will be the basis for a separate (short) presentation on your topic as discussed below. Full details on the assignment will be provided via NYU classes.

- On February 22, our teaching colleagues will be available in the recitations to provide answers to questions you have about the assignment.
- The memorandum will be due on February 29 by 5:00pm via NYU classes.
- On March 7, our teaching colleagues will review the assignment during the recitations.
- If you are happy with your performance on the memorandum assignment, it is complete. If you would like to resubmit the assignment for another graded assessment, you may do so via NYU classes by midnight on Sunday, March 13. If you do this, please be aware that your grade can either increase or decrease.

**Presentations Workshop.** Students in this course are required to participate in a two-part presentation skills training. All students will need to attend the Introduction to Policy Presentation Skills “Bootcamp” held on February 11, 2016 from 5:30-6:30 pm in the Puck Building, Rudin Forum, led by Will Carlin, Adjunct Professor of Project Management & Communication.

Later in the semester, students will create a very short presentation based on their memorandum assignment due on February 29. Students will deliver their individual presentations (and provide feedback on others' presentations) in 60-minute sessions held during the recitations in April. These sessions will be led by a trained facilitator. Details on signing up for a time will follow via the NYU Classes site.

Attendance at the Presentation Skills Bootcamp and participation in the presentation groups is mandatory. Each will count for 5 percent of your final grade for a total of 10 percent. Attendance and participation will get you full credit, but non-attendance or participation will result in no credit.

**Take-Home Final Examination.** A final examination will be distributed at the end of our last class session on May 9 with your answers due via NYU Classes at 11:59pm on May 15.

**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Bootcamp and Workshop</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Analysis Memorandum</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final (Take-Home) Examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Attendance**

Because students in this class value high levels of class attendance and participation, I have an attendance policy. Participation grades will be lower for those with frequent absences from class. Major professional obligations or personal emergencies do not count under this policy, but you should let me know of such unavoidable absences in advance by email. Please do the same for absences due to religious observance.

Please note that recitation sections only meet on the dates provided in the course calendar below.
NYU Classes

All announcements will be delivered through NYU Classes. Please check the course page regularly. Furthermore, we may add additional required course readings to the website that are not listed on the syllabus. Required additional readings will be clearly distinguished from informational or supplementary reading.

Academic Integrity

The students and faculty at NYU are very concerned about academic integrity. Each student should have the assurance that the rules of the game are understood by everyone and enforced equally. Students are encouraged to learn and study together. Individual assignments are just that, but mutual assistance is appropriate. The Wagner School has an academic code that is available at http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/academic-code. Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me.

Additional Administrative Details

- You are responsible for obtaining any materials distributed in or outside of class.
- Please silence cell phones while in class.
- I reserve the right to revise this syllabus as the term progresses.
- Laptops and smartphones may only be used in class with my permission.

Policy Regarding Disability Services and Programs

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980). Reasonable accommodations can be made for students with qualified disabilities, but only for students who have registered with the Moses Center and provide documentation from that office. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me in the first week of the term.

Required Readings

There is one book required for the course - available in print and e-book format:


You can likely find very inexpensive used copies online. All other readings will be posted on NYU Classes and are subject to change with notice via NYU Classes.

Course Calendar

Week 1: (Jan. 25)  
*Introduction to the Policy Process*

**Objective:** Provide an overview of the study of the public policy process and the intellectual outline of the course.

No assigned reading for week 1.
Week 2: (Feb. 1)       *Intellectual Foundations – Systems of Policymaking*

Objective: Frame the intellectual inquiry into the policy process as something systematic, observable, predictable, and similar across policy domains. Answer this question: what is the relationship between policymaking and politics?


Selection from Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*.

Week 3: (Feb. 8)       *The Policy Machine – The Stages Heuristic & ACF*

Objective: Begin to formulate a model of policymaking by looking at two (intellectually) structured alternatives, the stages heuristic and the advocacy coalition framework. How might one describe how policymaking works? You should be able to evaluate benefits and limitations of these concepts.


Selections from Bardach, *The Eightfold Path*.

**President's Day (Feb. 15) – No Class**

Week 4: (Feb. 22)       *Computational Limits – Information Processing, Framing, Stories*

Recitation sections: 5:30pm (TC Lanthy Truong) and 9:00pm (TC Corey Rittvo)

Objective: Explore limitations on the policy process (on systems, on ordinary people) – and the consequences (for policymaking).


Week 5: (Feb. 29)       *Individual Purpose and Strategic Interaction*
Institutional Analysis Memorandum Due by 5:00pm

Objective: Focus on the role of individuals and their strategic behavior. What should one expect other participants to do in a particular situation? How can one use that knowledge to change policy outcomes?

Sinclair, J. Andrew and Anthony M. Bertelli. 2015. An Introduction to Basic Games for Public Policy.


Clinton Welfare Reform Memorandum

(Optional) Policy Brief Samples

Week 6: (March 7)  Institutional Analysis & Institutional Change

Recitation sections:  5:30pm (TC Lanthy Truong) and 9:00pm (TC Corey Rittvo)

Objective: Explain how purposeful behavior interacts with institutions in the policy process. What is the link between politics and policy? Why do policies change? Why don’t they?


Optional rewrite of memorandum due by 11:59pm on Sunday, March 13

Spring Break (March 14) – No Class

Week 7: (March 21)  Policy Design Options

Objective: This week focuses on tactical decisions (in policy design) to change outcomes without changing preferences. How do policy design decisions influence the politics of institutional change? If you have an opportunity to shape the formation of new institutions, what should you consider trying?


Selection from The Power Broker, pp. 172-177.
Week 8: (March 28)  

*Nonsense and Impossibilities; Diffusion, Convergence, Voting*

**Objective:** Can incentives create long-lasting “bad” outcomes? Can unsuccessful policies spread? Can voters even sensibly express opinions about policy?


Week 9: (April 4)  

*Bureaucracy, Representation, and Accountability*

**Recitation sections:** Presentations Workshop

**Objective:** Examine where public administration fits into the policy process. Think about organizational structures that house policy workers. What powers do the different types of participants possess? And what role is left for voters?


Week 10: (April 11)  

*What can you do? Policy Windows & Information Cascades*

**Recitation sections:** Presentations Workshop

**Objective:** This week explores the options available to many different types of participants – ranging from street protestors to policy analysts – to change policy outcomes.


Week 11: (April 18)  

*Prohibition: Policy Formation*

**Recitation sections:** Presentations Workshop

**Objective:** Analyze a policy change, prohibition. How did it happen? Did the means ruin the end?

Selections from Okrent, *Last Call*.
Week 12: (April 25)  
*Unintended Consequences in Public Policy*

**Recitation sections:** Presentations Workshop

**Guest Lecturer:** Timothy Naftali, Clinical Associate Professor of History and Public Service

Week 13: (May 2)  
*Review Sessions in Class and Recitation*

**Objective:** This week is reserved to review theoretical material covered throughout the course in preparation for the case to follow and the final examination. Schedule to be announced via NYU Classes.

Week 14: (May 9)  
*Prohibition: Policy Implementation*

**Final Examination distributed at the end of this class session**

**Objective:** Continue the prohibition case, a study in “what can go wrong, will go wrong.” How can we apply these lessons to current policy debates?

Selections from Okrent, *Last Call.*

**Final examination due via NYU Classes on Sunday, May 15 by 11:59pm**