Introduction to Public Policy  
Spring 2009 - Course # P11.1022.01

Course Information:

Meeting Dates: Thursdays from January 22\textsuperscript{nd} through April 30\textsuperscript{th} (no class on March 19\textsuperscript{th})  
Class Time: 6:45 – 8:55 pm  
Location: Silver Center, Room 208 (100 Washington Square East)

Instructor:

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Overview:

Public policy affects every aspect of our lives and our work in a wide variety of ways. This course provides students with an intellectual framework to begin developing their answers to several key questions:

- Why, when, and how should government intervene in our lives?
- What is public policy and how is it 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?

This course is divided into two sections. First, we will consider the forums in which policy decisions are made, the actors involved in these decisions, and the decision making process itself – essentially questions of “where,” “who,” and “what” in the journalist’s classic set of questions. Secondly we will consider the ways that policy options are developed and the reasons some are selected and others not – essentially questions of “how” and “why”. The final common question of “when” has a simple answer - policy is always being made, enforced, evaluated, and changed in an ongoing cycle.

Class Policies:

Grading:

There is no curve in this course. Everyone may receive an A or everyone may receive an F (although I doubt the last will happen!). 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).

Auditors & Visitors:

As this course is already enrolled beyond the standard enrollment cap, there will be no room for auditors in this section. If you would like to bring a visitor with you to class, please feel free to do so – just let me know in advance. We may also be joined on occasion by a prospective student or two looking to get a sense of Wagner’s classroom environment.
Late Assignments

Life happens and this can on occasion require an extension for assignments. Such extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This is out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Late papers without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade (IE - B+ to a B) per day.

Writing Quality

Writing is an integral part of this course, both as a process (one method of actually learning the concepts we discuss in class) and as an outcome (a measure of evaluation of how well you – and I – have done our jobs). All written work is expected to follow the standards of “good” English. This includes proper grammar and spelling. Written assignments are to be completed by students individually, unless the assignment is part of the team project. Sources must be clearly and appropriately referenced using any standard citation method such as MLA, APA, or the Chicago style. 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)
- The Writing Center, New York University, 269 Mercer Street, 2nd floor. (Free for Wagner students).
- Wagner Writing Tutors (ask receptionist for their weekly schedule)

Readings

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings; they are essential for full participation in class. Readings are either from the texts below, available online, or (possibly) handed out in class.


Copies of the texts are on reserve at Bobst and available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore. If you purchase online, I suggest you look at www.addall.com which reviews over 30 online retailers to find you the best price.

Assignments & Grades

Your grade in this course is based on 5 components. More details will be provided in class.

1. **Class Participation – 10%** - Your participation grade is yours to loose. You will be evaluated based on your attendance and attentiveness in class and active engagement in class discussions and question sessions.

2. **Issue Reflections – 10% total (6 memos)** – You will choose a single policy issue to track and reflect on over the course of the semester. Every other week, you will complete a 2-page memo reflecting on how the topics of the two weeks relate to current developments around your issue. You will attach a news article, report executive summary or other new information source about your issue that informs each reflection.

3. **Midterm – 20%** - On March 5th we will have an in-class midterm that will include identifications and short essays. A study guide will be distributed one week in advance.

4. **Final Exam – 30%** - On April 30th, you will be given a take home final exam including both short and long essays. You will have one week to complete the final exam.
5. **Final Policy Paper – 30%** - Building on your tracking of a single policy issue, your final paper will give you the chance to make your own case for the best solution. What are the dynamics of the issue? What are the most viable options? And which one is best? More details will be given several weeks in advance and the paper is due on April 30th.

**Weekly Topics and Readings:**

Each week we will be explore a single topic through readings from the core texts and through an example issue. Two to three short readings about each issue example will be assigned one week in advance to keep them relevant to the latest policy developments.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 22nd</td>
<td>Introduction to public policy &amp; course review</td>
<td>Munger 3-29, Stone Intro &amp; ch 1</td>
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<td>Jan 29th</td>
<td>Where is policy made? Understanding policy levels and venues</td>
<td>Munger 162-199</td>
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<td>Feb 5th</td>
<td>Who makes policy decisions? The Deciders</td>
<td>Munger 30-53, Stone ch 9</td>
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<td>Feb 12th</td>
<td>Who affects policy decisions? The Influencers</td>
<td>Munger 134-161</td>
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<td>Feb 19th</td>
<td>Models of policymaking - 3 views on policy process rationality</td>
<td>Sabatier 21-128</td>
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<td>Feb 26th</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Mar 5th</td>
<td>Key models continued - 3 views on networks and time + midterm review</td>
<td>Sabatier 129 - 222</td>
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<td>Mar 12th</td>
<td>In-class midterm</td>
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<td>Mar 19th</td>
<td>No class for Spring Break</td>
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<td>Mar 26th</td>
<td>Why do we pick the actions we do? The role of values and beliefs</td>
<td>Munger 238-279, Stone ch 2-5</td>
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<td>April 2nd</td>
<td>How do we develop policies? The basic rationale choice model and critiques</td>
<td>Bardack xiii-106, Stone ch 10</td>
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<td>April 9th</td>
<td>How do we identify &amp; define problems and solutions?</td>
<td>Bardack 123-132, Stone ch 6-8</td>
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<td>April 16th</td>
<td>Comparing choices based on risk and time</td>
<td>Munger 280-351</td>
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<td>April 23rd</td>
<td>Comparisons cont. - Using cost benefit analysis and understanding its limits</td>
<td>Munger 352-382, Stone conclusion</td>
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<td>April 30th</td>
<td>Closing reflections &amp; final exam review and distribution</td>
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