The critical issues addressed in public policymaking inevitably involve political and moral choices. Public Policy has long been a signature course of Wagner’s MPA program in part because this is where those choices—and the core values of public service and good governance informing them—are confronted most directly.

Our attention to the values and choices central in policymaking will proceed in four stages. The initial weeks comprise an overview of public policy in a constitutional democracy—primarily as practiced in the contemporary U.S., but with reference to other places and times. The second segment takes up the making of public policy, addressing how complex systems of governance actually function. Third, we’ll explore the practice of policy analysis and evaluation. The course’s final weeks place these themes and processes in broader contexts, including ethical and global; along the way we’ll trace some of the principal tensions in democratic public policymaking.

Course Requirements: Attendance at all classes, given our limited time together, is essential: if you must be absent, let your TC know in advance. Grading is as follows: 2 short policy memos (30%); midterm exam (30%) and a final exam (40%). We’re a large group, but we’ll hold regular class-wide conversations; please arrive in class prepared to discuss readings and (especially) case studies. Optional outside-class discussions will also be available, as will on-line forums for exchanging your ideas and opinions.


Late Assignment Policy: Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, out of respect to those who abide by deadlines despite equally hectic schedules. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized ½ letter grade per day (B+ to B, e.g.)

Students with disabilities: Any students requiring accommodations should contact me to make proper arrangements. Please be prepared to share your documentation from the NYU disabilities office regarding appropriate accommodations.
Note: *readings are from books you buy; others are posted on course Blackboard site [indicated as BB on syllabus] or included in course reader.

Sept. 14  “Public Policy” Introduced
Readings (Please complete this 1st assignment before arriving in class on the 14th).
*D. Stone, Policy Paradox (2002). Intro., ch. 1, Conc. (pp. 1-34, 376-83).
*E. Bardach, Practical Guide to Policy Analysis (2009), Appendix B.

I. Ideas/Models

Sept. 21  Democratic Governance & Policymaking: An Overview
Readings: *D. Stone, Policy Paradox, chs. 2 (“Equity”), 14 (“Rights”).

Sept. 28  Markets, Non-Profits, & Public Policy
Readings: *D. Stone, Policy Paradox, ch. 3 (“Efficiency”).
*E. Bardach, Practical Guide, Appendix C (“Pub/Nonprofit Institutions”)
J. Kurlantzick, “The Malawi Model” (2009) [BB]

Assignment 1 (Policy Ideas) due by 6 PM, Monday, October 5.

Oct. 5  Models of Policymaking: How Does Change Occur?

II. Making Public Policy

Oct. 12  Problems: Framing/Agenda-Setting
Readings: D. Stone, Part III intro. (pp. 131-35), chs. 6 (“Symbols”), 8 (“Causes”).
Oct. 19  **Early-term Exam**: In-class; essays/IDs.

Oct. 26  *Responses: Policy Formation & Analysis*

**Readings:**  
*E. Bardach, Practical Guide*, ch. 1, Appendix A.  
*D. Stone, Policy Paradox*, ch. 10 (“Decisions”).  

Nov. 2  *Solutions I: Policy Adoption & Institutions.*

**Readings:**  
*D. Stone, Policy Paradox*, Part IV intro. (pp. 261-64), ch. 12 (“Rules”).  

Nov. 9  *Solutions II: Policy Adoption & Interests.*

**Readings:**  
*D. Stone, Policy Paradox*, ch. 9 (“Interests”).  

Nov. 16  *Action: Policy Implementation*

**Readings:**  

*Assignment 2 (Policy Brief) due by 6 PM, Monday, Nov. 23.*

Nov. 23  *Impact: Policy Evaluation & Feedback*

**Readings:**  
S. Mettler, “Policy Feedback Effects of the GI Bill” (2002). [BB]  

Nov. 25  *Optional Session: Budgeting Simulation*  
No readings: policy simulation of US budget process for those interested!
## IV. Themes in Democratic Policymaking

### Nov. 30  Ethics, Accountability, and Policymaking

**Readings:**  
A. Day, “Donald Rumsfeld-Prisoner Abuse/Abu Ghraib” [Case Study]  
B. Graham, “Rumsfeld in Repose” (2009) [BB]

### Dec. 7  Behavior, Emotion and Policymaking

**Readings:**  
*D. Stone, Policy Paradox, ch. 11 (“Inducements”).*  
Thaler & Sunstein, “Privatizing Marriage” (from Nudge, 2008).  
Foer & Scheiber, “Nudge-o-cracy” (2009) [BB]

### Dec. 14  Reforming Public Policy

**Readings:**  
*D. Stone, “Policy Paradox in Action” (Policy Paradox, pp. 384-414).*  

### TBD  Final Exam [24-hour in-class or take-home final; determined by class]