The critical issues addressed in public policymaking involve political and moral choices, along with analytic and administrative aspects. Introduction to 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 three stages. The initial weeks comprise an overview of public policy in a constitutional democratic capitalist system—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.—along with explicit detail to the practice of policy analysis and evaluation. Third, we will address these themes and processes in broader contexts, including ethical and behavioral; 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 me know in advance. Grading is as follows: 2 short policy memos (30%); midterm exam (30%) and a final exam (40%). 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.

Course Readings: Two books are required: Deborah Stone’s Policy Paradox (Norton, 2002 ed.) and Kraft and Furlong’s Public Policy: Politics, Analysis and Alternatives (CQ Press, 2010). Additional readings for each week will be posted on our Blackboard course site. The readings below are subject to change but student will be notified well in advance of an proposed changes.

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.
PART 1. PUBLIC POLICY OVERVIEW: ACTORS, INFLUENCES & MODELS

Week 1

Sept. 9  “Public Policy” Introduced

Readings  (Please complete this 1st assignment before arriving in class on the 9th).
D. Stone, Policy Paradox (2002), Intro., ch. 1, Conc. (pp. 1-34, 376-83).
Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 1

Week 2

Sept. 16  Models of Policymaking

Readings:  Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 3

Week 3

Sept. 23  Democratic Governance & Policymaking: Public Sector

Readings:  D. Stone, Policy Paradox, chs. 2 (“Equity”), 14 (“Rights”).

Week 4

Sept. 30  Markets, Non-Profits, & Public Policy

Readings:  D. Stone, Policy Paradox, ch. 3 (“Efficiency”).
Harvard Case Review. “New Dehli Water and Power” [BB]
J. Kurlantzick, “The Malawi Model” (2009) [BB]

*Assignment 1 due by 6 PM, Monday, October 7.
PART II. MAKING PUBLIC POLICY

Week 5

Oct. 7 Framing/Agenda-Setting

Readings: D. Stone, Part III intro. (pp. 131-35), chs. 6 (“Symbols”), 8 (“Causes”). Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 4

Week 6

Oct. 14 Policy Alternatives and Decision-making

Readings: Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 5 & 6
D. Stone, Policy Paradox, ch. 10 (“Decisions”).
[Selected reading to be posted on blackboard]

Week 7

Oct. 21 **Midterm Exam (In class essays & IDs)**

Week 8

Oct. 28 Legislatures & Policy Adoption.

Readings: D. Stone, Policy Paradox, Part IV intro. (pp. 261-64), ch. 12 (“Rules”).
[Selected reading to be posted on blackboard]

Week 9

Nov. 4 Executives, Courts, & Policy Adoption.

“Obama’s Executive Leadership Style” (2010). [BB]
Week 10

Nov. 11  Interest Groups & Policy Adoption.

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

*Assignment 2 (Policy Brief) due by 6 PM, Thursday, Nov. 18.*

Week 11

Nov. 18  Policy Implementation & Evaluation

Readings:  Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 10

Week 12

Nov. 25  **NO CLASS SCHEDULED: Thanksgiving Recess**

PART III: THEMES IN DEMOCRATIC POLICYMAKING

Week 13

Dec. 2  Behavior, Emotion and Policymaking

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

Week 14

Dec. 9  Ethics, Accountability & Reforming Public Policy


Week 15

Dec. 23  **Final Exam** [In-class: 8-10 PM. Also will be 24-hour take-home option.]