Participatory Policy Making: Knowledge Production, Competing Interests, and Advancing Inclusive Policy Outcomes in the Public Sphere

Course Number: P114116

Professor: C. Nicole Mason
Fall 2009
Time: Wednesdays, 6:45 p.m.-8:25 p.m.
Office: Puck 3084
Phone: 212.992.9881
Nicole.mason@nyu.edu

Location: Bobst Library Room LL151
Location: Bobst Library Room LL151
Location: Bobst Library Room LL151

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description: The policy making process is complex with a host of actors and competing interests. Often, there is a gap between the needs of communities and policies enacted at the local, state and federal levels. In this course, we will explore the challenges as well as opportunities for creating and enacting effective public policies. Specifically, we will examine what counts as knowledge or evidence in the policy making process; how the opinions and experiences of marginalized groups are taken into account or consideration; and the ways in which communities and non-profit organizations mobilize to have their needs met and voices heard in the public sphere.

The main objective of this course is to expose students to current and relevant policy discussion and debates. Upon completion of this course, students should: (1) have gained a more thorough understanding of the co-production of knowledge and organizing frameworks used by advocates and non-profit leaders to have their needs met in the public sphere; (2) an understanding of the significance of public opinion, framing, and agenda setting to the policy making process; (3) understand the role of discrimination and historic inequalities in the distribution and allocation of resources in society; and (4) be better prepared to analyze, discuss, and write about key issues in public policy.

For this course, we will rely mainly on articles, text of legislation, and writings of policy analysts, practitioners, and advocates. Additionally, we will use case studies, articles, and other materials to help gain a deeper and fuller understanding of how and under what circumstances advocates, citizens and communities are able to secure public policy wins.

Course Format

There are seven classes over the course of the semester. As such, student involvement and engagement is crucial to the success of our time together. Students will be expected to attend all classes and participate in the class discussion.

We will engage the weekly material through interactive discussions, summary lectures, and group presentations.

Course Texts
There is no assigned textbook for this course. A course packet with relevant reading will be made available to purchase. Supplemental course materials or articles will be available to you by the professor. Whenever possible, I will email you the article or direct you to the website where it is available.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The material to be covered in this course is extensive. You are expected to prepare for class by completing weekly reading assignments, watching local newscasts, and reading the daily newspaper. Feel free to bring in any interesting articles, opinion polls, or websites that you might find.

Required Assignments/Tests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers (5)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response Papers: Each student will be required to write six 4-5 page response papers on the week’s readings. Papers should focus on relevant issues raised in the readings, analyze the policy issues involved, and the challenges to winning on the issue. Only five papers will count toward your grade.

All response papers should be posted on blackboard prior to the beginning of class so that your colleagues may read or respond to your papers. A hard copy of the paper will be due at the beginning of class. I will not be responsible for papers submitted to my mailbox, under my office door, or electronically. Students may submit papers in advance electronically with prior permission.

Group Presentations: Each group will take one of the policy case studies or another approved topic to analyze and examine relevant public policy issues. Each presentation should last 15-20 minutes. You should prepare a one-page handout for colleagues on the issue/topic.

Final Paper: Your final paper will be due one week following the last day of class. Papers may be submitted electronically, but I will not be responsible for files that are unable to be read or those not received by the 5:00 p.m. deadline. The paper will be 12-15 pages in length. You should submit a one-page topic summary to me by September 30, 2009. Your paper topic must be approved.

Except for a valid excuse, there will be no make ups for papers or presentations.

The grade scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ATTENDANCE

It is highly recommended that students adhere to New York University’s attendance policy. Students are expected to attend all lectures and submit the required papers.

COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIRED READING:

September 9, 2009

Introduction: Review of syllabus, overview of course and Expectations


September 16, 2009

Identity Politics, Organizing Models and Difference in Modern Democracies

- What role does identity play in shaping organizational advocacy and policy priorities?
- Mono-causal v. Multi-causal organizing frameworks and models
- How do marginalized groups address issues of difference and diversity in attempting to make policy change?


September 23, 2009

Issue Framing and Agenda Setting: Who gets a Voice

- Who sets the public agenda?
- How do community-based and advocacy organizations get their issues on national, state, or local agendas?
- What is a frame and why is it important to winning on an issue?


**Supplemental public opinion polls and other relevant articles will be distributed before or during class.

**September 30, 2009**  
**Welfare Reform and TANF Reauthorization**

- What role, if any, did current and former welfare recipients play in Welfare Reform?
- How does the representation of groups and individuals in society impact public policy outcomes at the federal and state levels?
- How is/was the issue of welfare framed in the public sphere? Why is framing so important in terms of moving legislation?


"Welfare Reform After 5 Years: Through the Eyes of Former Welfare Recipients & Reporters,” (Brookings 2001)


**Supplemental public opinion polls and other relevant articles will be distributed before or during class.

**Group Presentations

**October 7, 2009**  
**Same-Sex Marriage and Proposition 8**

- Do referendums hurt or support participatory policy making?
- What happens when there are resources and access on both sides of a policy issue?
- What role does/can effective coalition-building play in winning or losing on a public policy issue?


“No on Proposition 8: Debunking the myths used to promote the ban on same-sex marriage.” Los Angeles Times. November 2, 2008

Cannick, Jasmyne. “No-on 8’s white Bias: The right to marry does nothing to address the problems faced by both black gays and black straights.” Los Angeles Times. November 8, 2008


**Supplemental public opinion polls, exit polls, and other relevant articles will be distributed before or during class.

**Group Presentations

**October 14, 2009**  **Immigration Reform**

- What happens when there are competing items on the national agenda?
- What role does the representation of immigrants in the dominant culture and in the media play in immigration reform?
- How do community-based and non-profits organizations mobilize a constituency to act when there is a high risk of deportation or backlash?


Hing, Bill and Bacon, David. “Rights, Not Raids.” The Nation. April 29, 2009

Polls Show Most Americans Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform: To download the full document, visit: http://amvoice.3cdn.net/ad908a806f9a2997e8_6om6b9tju.pdf


Hing, Bill Ong. 2006 Deporting Our Souls: Values, Morality and Immigration Policy. New York: Cambridge University Press. Selected Chapters


**Group Presentations

October 21  

The Obama Administration and Participatory Policy Making

**Last Day of Class

➤ How does Obama’s approach to policy making differ from past presidents?
➤ Has he been effective in including groups, advocates, and community-based organizations in policy decisions?

**Group Presentations