INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY  CORE-GP 1022 04
FALL, 2012  PROFESSOR DENNIS SMITH
TEACHING COLLEAGUE: COSMO FUJIYAMA

MONDAYS 1:00-3:10PM  SECTION 004  7 E. 12TH STREET  LL23

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Office hours: Dennis Smith Tuesday 4:00-5:30, and by appointment, at the Puck
Cosmo Fujiyama 3:10-4:10 (location: TBA)

Course Objectives:

This course provides students with an intellectual framework for developing their own answers to the following questions about public policy at the constitutional, institutional, and operational level:

- Why, when, and how should government intervene in our lives?
- Why, when, where and how are decisions to intervene made?
- What are the “stages” of the policy process?
- What are tools of public intervention?
- What are the most effective roles of non-governmental organizations and markets?
- What is policy analysis?
- What role does systematic analysis play in policy debates, policy making, policy implementation?

The course also uses these perspectives and tools to examine and debate a selected list of contemporary public policy issues.

The primary system of reference is the Federal level of the United States government but where possible comparisons between levels of government in the US, and with other forms of governments will be made. Students with backgrounds in different levels of American government, and in different governments are encouraged to share those experiences, and to raise questions regarding similarities and differences.

Course Requirements:
You must have access to the class Blackboard site at http://classes.nyu.edu/
All announcements and class related documents (extra readings, discussion questions, class handouts, answers to assignments etc.) will be posted here. If you have not activated your NYU net account or have forgotten your password, you can activate or change your password at http://start.nyu.edu. Your account must be activated to access Blackboard. Some class announcements will also be distributed via e-mail. Thus, it is important that you actively use your NYU e-mail account, or have appropriate forwarding set up on NYUHome https://home.nyu.edu/

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the class. **Note:** NYU policy permits members of any religious group to absent themselves from classes without penalty when required for compliance with their religious obligations.

The assignments are described in the weekly course outline below and will be described more fully in the first class meeting.

**Readings**

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings (AR) before the class meeting; this is essential for full participation in sections. It is recommended that students purchase the following texts (correct editions are indicated):


All of these titles can be purchased online from various distributors and have been ordered for the NYU bookstore.

NB Additional readings will distributed in class, on Blackboard, or available on the web.


**Assignments:** The assignments are a mid-term examination, a paper proposal, a policy debate, and a final (policy memo) paper.
Final grades will be determined by:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation:</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short paper</td>
<td>Reviewed w/comments, but not graded</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take Home Mid-term exam:</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Week 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy proposal paper</td>
<td>Reviewed w/comments, but not graded</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
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<td>Policy debates</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Weeks 12-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper:</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Week 15 (No class)</td>
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Participation: Comments each week on any one of four questions based on the assigned reading or issues in the New York Times relevant to the subject of the class for that week posted by students of Friday, taking turns, on Blackboard Discussion, with response submitted by 6pm the night before class. This rotating assignment will be explained in class.

The take home mid-term examination master list of questions will be distributed two weeks prior to the examination date (Week 7), and the actual examination list will be distributed one week (Week 8) before the due date (Week 9).

The Final paper will be a policy memorandum with the student taking the role of a policy analyst working for an actual policy maker or participant in the policy process (advocate, nonprofit leader, party leader, etc.) researched and written on an issue, selected by the student, related to the one of the policy debate topics covered in the Issues for Debate reading, possibly but not necessarily the same issue which you debate as part of a team with the class. With permission the policy memo can address an issue not included in the set of debate topics in the Congressional Quarterly reading. A short paper, ungraded, proposing the memo topic will be required before proceeding to the Final Paper.

The class will be divided into teams, to the extent possible accommodating student preferences, to debate policy topics introduced in the Issues for Debate required reading. In the 13th edition the topics are

**Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy**
1. Rising Tension Over Iran
2. Foreign Aid and National Security

**Environment, Science, and Technology**
3. Fracking Controversy
4. Water Crisis in the West
5. Space Program
Business and the Economy
6. Financial Misconduct
7. Reviving Manufacturing
8. Attracting Jobs

Education
9. Digital Education
10. Student Debt
11. Youth Volunteerism

Social Welfare
12. ‘Occupy’ Movement
13. Child Poverty
14. Immigration Conflict

Healthcare
15. Preventing Disease
16. Aging Population

Course schedule

Part 1: The Politics of the Policy Process

9/10 Class 1—Introduction to Public Policy: The Constitutional Level of Public Policy

Some of my questions for you for Class 1: What in the US Constitution did you find that you did not know was there? 2. How does the Constitution shape US presidential campaigns and impact election results? 3. How does the US Constitution affect a policy issue of interest to you? Why is public policy always “political”? What are the differences between constitutional level, collective level and operational level public decisions? How to institutional differences affect public policies? What environmental factors affect public decisions? When and how does policy analysis play a role in public decisions?

Assigned Reading (AR): Constitution of the United States (see, for example, http://constitutionus.com/), Stone, Chapter 2 (Equity)

Recommended: Lecture slides on US Constitution, Peters—Chapter 1. (in Blackboard Course Documents)

Due Week 2: Short (2-3 pages, double spaced) paper that addresses the question: Select one specific provision of the US constitution that directly affects your life? The answer should include some discussion of the origin of that provision in the constitution.

9/17 Class 2—Institutional Structures and Processes of Decision-Making
My questions for you for Class 2: What were the Founding Fathers intending to create with the American constitution? Did they intend to create a democracy in America? What are the
enduring features of the American policy system design? What are the biggest changes in the American system since the days of Founding Fathers?

Stone, Chapter 10 (Interests)
Recommended: Lecture slide on institutions in Peters, Chapter 2, 3

9/24 Class 3—Agenda Setting, Developing the Framework
AR. Kingdon, Chapters 1-5. Stone, Chapter 7(Symbols)
Recommended: Peters slides for Chapter

My questions for Class 3: What determines what issues are addressed by public decision makers? What are the major differences between different models of the policy making process? What is the multiple stream model of agenda setting? What role does evidence play in defining public problems? What cautions does Stone introduce regarding the use of numbers in policy debates?

10/1 Class 4—Agenda Setting 2
AR. Kingdon, Chapters 6-10. CQ Debates Chapter 10, Tea party
The process of agenda setting, and the example of health care reforms: Clinton and Obama
My questions for the class are, How, when and why do multiple streams converge? What are the key differences between Clinton’s failed and Obama’s successful health reform policies? How well does the multiple stream model illuminate the health reform policy process?

10/8 Class 5 Health Care Reform: Clinton and Obama through the Kingdon Prism
AR. Kingdon, Epilogue; CQ Debates, Chapter 16, Health Reform.

My question for Class 5: Does the Kingdon multiple streams model of policy agenda setting provide useful insights into the Clinton/Obama policy stories comparison? What questions are left unanswered by his approach?

10/15 No class Fall Break

10/22 Class 6 Alternative Centers of Policy Making: the case of smoking policy
AR Derthick, Chapters 1-6; Bardach, Appendix B (Things Governments Do).

My questions for this week include, How do the different policy arena vary in the way they address policy issues? Why would might one arena be chosen over another? Are these arena choice variable over time?

10/29 Class 7 Alternative Centers of Policy Making: the case of smoking policy
AR Derthick, Chapters 7-12.
My question for this week is, How does Derthick’s policy story depart from the traditional image of checks and balances as the main function of separation of powers in American policy making?

11/5      Class 8    Policy analysis: Bardach’s Eightfold path
AR Bardach, Part 1 and 2; Stone, Chapter 8 (“Causes”, in Blackboard documents)
    Take home Midterm Examination questions distributed

11/12 Class 9    Evaluating Programs and Policies (Happy Halloween!)

Take Home Mid term Examination  Due

Part II. Understanding Substantive Policy Issues

11/19 Class 10    Guns policy
AR   “NRA Gun Control Politics” (in Blackboard documents).
(Mayor Bloomberg has made control of illegal guns a national issue. A representative of the City government will be invited to speak)

11/26 Class 1    Public official debate Topic TBA (Possible topics will be proposed by the class)
AR. TBA based on topic selected

12/3 Class 12— Student policy debates: Topics chosen by class members
AR. TBA based on topic selected

12/10 Class 13— Student policy debates: Topics chosen by class members
AR. TBA based on topic selected

12/12 (NYU extra Monday) Class 14— Student policy debates; Summing up

    Final paper (Policy memo) due. Monday, 12/21
## GRADING CRITERIA

Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

**A Excellent:** Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

**A- Very Good:** Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

**B+ Good:** Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

**B Adequate:** Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

**B- Borderline:** Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

**C/-+ Deficient:** Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

**F Fail:** Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

## STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As members of the NYU Wagner community, we are all expected to adhere to high standards of intellectual and academic integrity. An example of how NYU describes academic integrity is available at [http://www.nyu.edu/cas/map/integrity.pdf](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/map/integrity.pdf). This is a good resource for issues of academic honesty.