New York University
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY  CORE-GP 1022 004
FALL, 2013  PROFESSOR DENNIS SMITH
TEACHING COLLEAGUE: ELIZABETH GILLROY

MONDAYS 1:00-3:10PM  SECTION 004  7 EAST 12TH ST  LOWER LEVEL 23

295 Lafayette (The Puck Building) Room 3073  212-998-7425
e-mail: dennis.smith@nyu.edu
ejg267@ny.uedu

Office hours:  Dennis Smith Tuesday 4:00-5:30, and by appointment, at the Puck
Elizabeth Gillroy ejg267@ny.uedu  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 shared Classes 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 Classes.
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):


Martha Derthick, *Up in Smoke: From Legislation To Litigation In Tobacco Politics*, 3rd

Congressional Quarterly Researcher, *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy*
(Congressional Quarterly Press, 14th edition, 2013)

edition, 2012; the 3rd., 2009 edition, can also be used.

Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-making*, WWNorton, 3rd

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 Classes, or available on the web.

Recommended Background: B. Guy Peters, *American Public Policy: Promise and
Performance* (Congressional Quarterly Press, 2010, Eighth Edition) Relevant notes from
chapters of this book are posted on Classes for the week to which they pertain.

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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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Op-ed</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 five 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 Sunday, taking turns, on Classes Discussion, with responses submitted by 6pm, Sunday, 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 14th edition the topics are

**National Politics**
1. Changing Demographics
2. Social Media and Politics
3. Farm Policy

**The Environment**
4. U.S. Oil Dependence
Course schedule

Part 1: The Politics of the Policy Process

9/9  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)

Please note: Both the Constitution and Stone’s chapter on Equity will be used for in class exercises, so it is especially important to read both before class.
Recommended: Lecture slides on US Constitution, Peters—Chapter 1. (in Classes Course Documents in Resources)

Due Week 2: Short (2 pages, double spaced) op-ed for the New York Times or Wall Street Journal that addresses a public policy of interest to you. (We recognize that you are not an expert but a concerned citizen). Examples of Op-eds will be provided.

9/16 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, Chapters 10 (Interests), and Issues for Debate (13th ed) chapter 8 on Attracting Jobs (in Classes, My Resources)
Recommended: Lecture slide on institutions in Peters, Chapter 2, 3

9/23 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?

9/30 Class 4— Agenda Setting 2
AR. Kingdon, Chapters 6-10. CQ Debates
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?

10/7 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?

10/14 No Class

10/21 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 choices variable over time?

10/28 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?

11/4 Class 8 Policy analysis: Bardach’s Eightfold path
AR Bardach, Part 1 and 2; Stone, Chapter 8 (“Causes”, in Classes documents)

Take home Midterm Examination questions distributed 11/4

11/11 Class 9 Evaluating Programs and Policies

Take Home Midterm Examination Due 11/11

Part II. Understanding Substantive Policy Issues

11/18 Class 10 Guns policy: Policy Implementation
AR Issues for Debate: Gun Violence; “NRA Gun Control Politics” (in Classes, documents in My Resources). (Mayor Bloomberg has made control of illegal guns a national issue. A representative of the City government will be invited to speak)
AR: Stone, Rules, Chapter 13.

11/25 Class 11 Public official debate Topic TBA (Possible topics will be proposed by the class)
AR. TBA based on topic selected

12/2 Class 12— Student policy debates: Topics chosen by class members
AR. TBA based on topics selected

12/9 Class 13— Student policy debates: Topics chosen by class members
AR. TBA based on topics selected
12/11  Class  14— Student debates. Summing up

12/18  Policy memo(Final Paper) due. Wednesday 12/18
Submit as Word document attached to an email.

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<th>GRADING CRITERIA</th>
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<td>Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Excellent:</strong> 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.</td>
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<td><strong>A- Very Good:</strong> 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.</td>
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<td><strong>B+ Good:</strong> 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.</td>
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<td><strong>B Adequate:</strong> 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.</td>
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<td><strong>B- Borderline:</strong> 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.”</td>
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<td><strong>C/-/+Deficient:</strong> 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.</td>
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<td><strong>F Fail:</strong> 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.</td>
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<td>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 <a href="http://www.nyu.edu/cas/map/integrity.pdf">http://www.nyu.edu/cas/map/integrity.pdf</a>. This is a good resource for issues of academic honesty.</td>
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