

**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**  
**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

**CORE-GP 1022 – Introduction to Public Policy –Spring 2015**

Section 001: Thursdays 12:30-2:40pm, 4 Washington Place, Room 102

Professor Anthony Bertelli

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Office Hours: by appointment, Puck 3030, contact Christian Hansen,  
christian.hansen@nyu.edu, to arrange.

Section 002: Tuesdays 6:45-8:55pm, Silver Center for Arts and Science, Room 411

Professor J. Andrew Sinclair

Email: j.andrew.sinclair@nyu.edu

Office Hours: by appointment, Puck 3016, contact by email to arrange.

**Course Description**

The public policy process is structured argument and decisionmaking within institutional contexts. This class introduces you to analytic frameworks for thinking about various aspects of this process. We do not study a single context or policy, but, rather, seek to understand how policies might succeed (or fail) in one context or another. Our principal framework will be that of institutional analysis, or the way in which formal and informal rules shape policies and their outcomes. You will learn to perform institutional analysis as well as write a memorandum presenting such an analysis to a policymaker. The course helps students understand how policies can achieve durable impact, and how progress made through policies can be defended amid institutional pitfalls.

**Course Objectives**

1. To understand core theories of the process of making public policy
2. To understand the politics of policy arguments
3. To understand the decisionmaking tools and strategies of policymakers
4. To learn how to conduct an institutional analysis for a policy proposal in a variety of institutional contexts.
5. To learn how to write a memorandum presenting an institutional analysis.

**Teaching Approach**

You will help guide the discussion in our class meetings. I expect you to actively participate. It is compulsory that you complete all required readings in advance of the session for which they are listed. Read them thoroughly and carefully to understand the

key claims being made; you will be asked to participate fully in all discussions. Your participation in class discussions accounts for 10 percent of your final grade.

## **Assignments**

Midterm Examinations. You are required to sit for two in-class examinations, each of which account for 30 percent of your final course grade. Exams draw from all material introduced before their scheduled date. Each closed book examination will be comprised of a mix of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer items.

Institutional Analysis Memorandum. The principal writing assignment required in this course is an institutional analysis memorandum with a maximum length of 800 words. The goal is to inform a key decision maker about the environment surrounding the problem by analyzing various influences and to what degree each has an impact on the likelihood that the proposed solution will be adopted. The influences you describe must be drawn from the theories and perspectives we discussed in the class as a whole. Your memorandum concludes with a recommendation to the decision maker about the likelihood of success that the proposed policy enjoys given your analysis. Evidence to support your analysis and assertions should include a mix of class material and other relevant sources such as scholarly literature, policy and popular media reports. Grades will be determined on clarity of writing, appropriateness and quality of the analysis, use of facts, and organization of the memorandum. The memorandum will account for 30 percent of your final course grade. Your memorandum will relate to Case II in the course outline below and the assignment will be provided in class on week 12.

## **Grading**

Class Participation	10%
Midterm Examinations (Total)	60%
Institutional Analysis Memorandum	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

## **Attendance**

Because students in this class value high levels of class attendance and participation, I have an attendance policy. Participation grades will be lower for those with frequent absences from class. Major professional obligations or personal emergencies do not count under this policy, but you should let me know of such unavoidable absences in advance by email. Students who are frequently late to class or late returning from the break; who violate applicable policies in the “Additional Administrative Details” section of this syllabus; or who leave early or return late from breaks should also expect to have their participation grade reduced.

## **NYU Classes**

All announcements will be delivered through NYU Classes. Please check the course page regularly. Furthermore, we may add additional required course readings to the website that are not listed on the syllabus. Required additional readings will be clearly distinguished from informational or supplementary reading.

## **Academic Integrity**

The students and faculty at NYU are very concerned about academic integrity. Each student should have the assurance that the rules of the game are understood by everyone and enforced equally. Students are encouraged to learn and study together. Individual assignments are just that, but mutual assistance is appropriate. The Wagner School has an academic code that is available here: <http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/academic-code>. Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me.

## **Additional Administrative Details**

- You are responsible for obtaining any materials distributed in or outside of class.
- Please silence cell phones while in class.
- I reserve the right to revise this syllabus as the term progresses.
- Laptops and smartphones may only be used in class with my permission.

## **Policy Regarding Disability Services and Programs**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980). Reasonable accommodations can be made for students with qualified disabilities, but only for students who have registered with the Moses Center and provide documentation from that office. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me in the first week of the term.

## **Required Readings**

There are two required books for the course that are available in print and e-book format:

Okrent, Daniel. 2010. *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. New York: Scribner.

Bertelli, Anthony M. 2012. *The Political Economy of Public Sector Governance*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

All other readings will be posted on NYU Classes; what we have listed on the syllabus below is subject to change with notice provided by email.

## Course Calendar

Week 1: Jan. 26-30: Introduction to the Public Policy Process

Objective: Provide an overview of the study of the public policy process and the intellectual outline of the course.

- No assigned reading.

Week 2: Feb. 2-6: Intellectual Foundations

Objective: Review and understand classic frameworks for understanding the policy process.

- Bachrach, Peter and Morton Baratz. 1962. The Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review* 56: 947–52.
- Downs, Anthony. 1972. Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle. *Public Interest* 28: 38–50.
- Cobb, Roger W., and Charles D. Elder. 1971. “The Politics Of Agenda-Building: An Alternative Perspective For Modern Democratic Theory.” *Journal of Politics* 33(4): 892-915.

Week 3: Feb. 9-13: The Stages Heuristic and the Games Policymakers Play

Objective: Present a traditional framework that the policy process proceeds sequentially in stages. Show that it is more descriptive than analytically powerful by relating it to common strategic situations policymakers face. These situations will be important throughout the remainder of the course.

- Sinclair, J. Andrew and Anthony M. Bertelli. 2015. “Simple Games for Discussions of Public Policy.” Course Notes (Version I). This handout covers the following topics:
  - Equilibrium
  - Coordination and the Prisoner’s Dilemma
  - Democratically Dividing the Dollar
  - Public Goods Provision
- Bertelli, Anthony M. 2012. *The Political Economy of Public Sector Governance*, ch. 2.
- Caro, Robert. 2001. [1974]. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Random House, pp. 639-77.

#### Week 4: Feb 16-20: Introduction to Institutional Analysis

Objective: Introduce an institutional perspective for the study of public policy. Understand its strengths and weaknesses; and discuss generally what it claims, what it doesn't, and how to be able to evaluate the credibility of those claims.

- North, Douglass C. 1998. "Five Propositions about Institutional Change." In Knight and Sened, eds. *Explaining Social Institutions*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 15-26.
- Royko, Mike. 1971. *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*. New York: Signet, pp. 1-29.

Further reading (optional):

- Gorton, Gary. 1985. "Clearinghouses and the origin of central banking in the United States." *Journal of Economic History* 45(2): 277-283. (About central banking.)
- Gambetta, Diego. 1994. "Inscrutable markets." *Rationality & Society* 6(3): 353-368. (About the mafia.)
- Kuran, Timur. 2003. "The Islamic Commercial Crisis: Institutional Roots of Economic Underdevelopment in the Middle East." *The Journal of Economic History*, 63(2): 414-446. (About economic development.)

#### Week 5: Feb 23-27: The 'How' of Policy Design

Objective: Introduce ways of thinking about how policies are designed to change the status quo. Use a sophisticated perspective on institutions to understand tactical decisionmaking; in other words, how to change outcomes without changing the underlying preferences of stakeholders involved.

- Weimer, David L. 1992. "Claiming Races, Broiler Contracts, Heresthetics, And Habits: Ten Concepts For Policy Design." *Policy Sciences* 25: 135-159.
- Riker, William H. 1986. *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, pp. 103-113.
- Caro, Robert. 2001. [1974]. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Random House, pp. 173-77.

Further reading:

- Caro, Robert. 2003 [2002]. *Master of the Senate*. New York: Random House, pp. 557-614.

### **Week 6: March 2-6: Midterm Examination I**

Week 7: March 9-13: Policy Implementation and Public Administration

Objective: Review analytic perspectives on the implementation of public policies and the political problem of designing incentives for implementing chosen policies. Discuss these perspectives in the context of mass reorganization of independent administrative agencies in the United Kingdom.

- Fukuyama, Francis. 2012. “Why Public Administration Gets No Respect But Should.” *The American Interest* (<http://goo.gl/pyDRPF>).
- Bertelli, Anthony M. 2012. *The Political Economy of Public Sector Governance*, pp. 43-48 and chs. 4-5.
- Sinclair, J. Andrew and Anthony M. Bertelli. 2015. “The Politics of Mass Reorganization.” Course Notes (Version I).

### **Spring Break: March 16-20**

Week 8: March 23-27: Information: Framing, Rigidities, Networks, and Cascades

Objective: Introduce four different problems of information in the policy process.

Choose two of the following:

- Berinski, Adam J., and Donald R. Kinder. 2006. Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis. *Journal of Politics* 68, 3 (August): 640–56.
- David, Paul A. 1985. Clio and the Economics of QWERTY. *American Economic Review* 75: 332–37.
- Lohmann, Susanne. 1994. The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–1991. *World Politics* 47: 42–101.

- Lazer, David. 2005. "Regulatory Capitalism As A Networked Order: The International System As An Informational Network." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 598(1): 52-66.

And then read:

- Caro, Robert. 2001. [1974]. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Random House, pp. 196-201.

Week 9: March 30-April 3: All Together Now: Synthetic Approaches to the Policy Process

Objective: Just like the stages heuristic with which we began, current frameworks for studying the public policy process are unsatisfactory in at least some respects, leaving scholars with competing theories and no clear framework to offer to practitioners. This "big picture" session critically examines attempts at a synthetic framework.

- Weible, Christopher M., Paul A. Sabatier, and Kelly McQueen. 2009. "Themes and variations: Taking stock of the advocacy coalition framework." *Policy Studies Journal* 37(1): 121-140.
- Workman, Samuel, Bryan D. Jones, and Ashley E. Jochim. 2009. "Information processing and policy dynamics." *Policy Studies Journal* 37(1): 75-92.
- Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Longman, chs. 4, 9.

Week 10: April 6-10: Stories and Ideas in the Policy Process

Objective: Many of us have ideas about how policies should be designed or implemented interact with institutions to create paradigms for understanding and addressing particular policy problems that are at once technocratic and ideological. Policies are also diffused from one jurisdiction to another by copying, learning, and adaptation. This session discusses these ideational and diffusion mechanisms.

- Stone, Deborah A. 1989. Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas. *Political Science Quarterly* 104, 2 (Summer): 281-300.
- Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. "Policy diffusion: seven lessons for scholars and practitioners." *Public Administration Review* 72, no. 6 (2012): 788-796.

- Blyth, Mark. 2001. “The Transformation Of The Swedish Model: Economic Ideas, Distributional Conflict, And Institutional Change.” *World Politics* 54(1): 1-26.

**Week 11: April 13-17 – Midterm Examination II**

Week 12: April 20-24: The Institutional Analysis Memorandum

Objective: The analytic tools we have built thus far can be used to inform policy decisionmakers about the impact of an institutional context on a policy proposal. We present the structure and content of institutional analysis memoranda, a skill that students will master at NYU Wagner beginning in this session.

Sinclair, J. Andrew and Anthony M. Bertelli. 2015. “The Institutional Analysis Memorandum.” Course Notes (Version I).

Week 13: April 27-May 1: Case Analysis I – The Passage of Prohibition

Objective: We apply the tools earned in this class to analyze the formation of a major change in public policy in the United States. We review a sample institutional analysis memorandum.

- Selections from Okrent, *Last Call*.

Week 14: May 4-May 8: Case Analysis II – The Implementation of Prohibition

Objective: We apply the tools earned in this class to analyze the implementation of a major change in public policy in the United States. We review a sample institutional analysis memorandum.

- Selections from Okrent, *Last Call*.

**Week 15: May 11- May 15: No Lecture: Institutional Analysis Memorandum Due**