Contact Information
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Course Pre-requisites
Students must have completed P11.1022 (Introduction to Public Policy).

Course Description and Objectives
Though the policy-making process is complex, with a host of actors and competing interests, public policy is traditionally shaped by elected officials, administrative agencies and organized interest groups. There are many avenues for policies to be informed by the lived experience of members of low-income and marginalized communities, however, their participation is often hidden and/or undervalued. Public servants and policy-makers can provide proactive opportunities for communities to assert their own priorities and rights through mechanisms like public planning processes or participatory budgeting. Similarly, marginalized communities can self-organize and even form common cause with broader interests to create more just public policies.

In this course, we will examine the essential concepts of power – what it is, how it is used, how groups and communities can expand and strengthen their political power, and how public officials can share theirs. We will explore strategies for initiating participatory policymaking from above (e.g., government/policymakers initiating participatory approaches to decision-making, the opening of previously hidden datasets to the public) and below (e.g., grassroots communities mobilizing to influence policy), and the democratic tradition of challenging traditional power structures. Case studies will include a landmark set of laws passed in 2013 in New York City to advance oversight of the Police Department, the global expansion of Participatory Budgeting, grassroots campaigns to improve public transit, and the effect of "open data" laws on policy formation. Students will learn about the mechanisms often used to advance community-driven efforts such as public planning processes, public hearings, meeting with elected officials, public information campaigns, and mass mobilizations.

Course requirements
This is a discussion-based course. We will be exploring issues in a community-learning environment, and as such, class preparation and participation by everyone are absolutely essential. Students are expected to read required texts in advance and be prepared to contribute to class discussions. There is both a speaking and listening component to participation: sharing your ideas and reflecting on/responding to
the ideas of others. Additionally, students will choose four weeks to write reading responses. Lastly, students will work in groups to write a final paper about a policy arena of their choosing.

More detailed assignment instructions are on NYU Classes.

Relative Weight of Assignments
- Class Participation 20%
- Reading Responses 40%
- Final Paper 40%

Course Schedule
(All readings are available on NYU Classes, except where links are provided below.)

- March 28
  - Introduction & Overview
  - Understanding Power
  - Participatory Governance – Theory & History
- April 4
  - Participatory Budgeting
    Guest Speaker: Sondra Youldeman, Community Voices Heard
- April 11
  - Community & Issue Organizing
  - The Legislative Process
  - Guest Speaker: John Raskin, Riders Alliance
- April 18
  - Community & Issue Organizing
  - Community Planning
  - Guest Speaker: Elena Conte, Pratt Center for Community Development
- April 25
  - Participatory Action Research
  - Guest Speaker: Shahana Hanif, CAAAV
- May 2
  - Open Data
  - Guest Speaker: Noel Hidalgo
- May 9
  - Critiques of Participatory Policymaking
Readings

Class 1: March 28 – Introduction and Overview; Understanding Power; Participatory Governance

  - “The Purpose”
  - “Democratic Aspirations” (pages 1-31)
  - “Competing Visions” (pp 65-94)
  - Chapter 1 (pages 1-23)

Class 2: April 4 – Participatory Budgeting


Class 3: April 11 - Community & Issue Organizing

- **Riders Alliance Case Study Articles posted on Classes site**
  - “The Education of an Organizer” and “In the Beginning”
  - Introduction: Community Organizing – Yesterday and Today (pages xliii – xlix)
  - Chapter 3: Picking the Good Fight (pages 48-78)
  - Chapter 2: Miracle on 174th Street, pp. 18–76. Focus on pp 30–48 & 69–76.
Class 4: April 18 - Community & Issue Organizing

- Community Safety Act Case Study Articles posted on Classes site
  - “Tactics”

Class 5: April 25 – Participatory Action Research

- Right to the City Alliance. 2010. “We Call These Projects Home: Solving the Housing Crisis from the Ground Up.” [http://www.cdp-ny.org/report/We_Call_These_Projects_Home.pdf](http://www.cdp-ny.org/report/We_Call_These_Projects_Home.pdf)

Class 6: May 2 – Open Data

See Classes website for readings

Class 7: May 9 – Critiques of Participatory Policymaking