

## **Political Participation and Policy**

**PADM-GP.4124, 1.5 Points, 2016 J-term**

### **Syllabus**

**Time: Tuesday/Thursdays, 2:30pm to 5:30pm**

**Location: BOBS Room LL138**

**Dates: 1/7 to 1/21**

#### **Professor**

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Office hours: By appointment

### **COURSE SUMMARY**

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Why do individuals choose to participate in politics and public life? This is an important question, since much of public policy depends on direct or indirect citizen support in the form of compliance, engagement, or collective action. Without it, even sound policies can fail to be broadly implemented. This course provides a “bottom up” view by exploring the motivations and constraints behind various kinds of civic engagement. We will cover voting, political mobilization, cooperation with the state, and the role of public opinion in both the American and international policy contexts. We will primarily read book chapters and articles in the field of political science, but the ramifications of our discussions will extend far beyond the field of politics and should be useful to a broad range of students interested in policy-making, implementation, and social change.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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This course will provide you with the theoretical and analytical tools for understanding the role of citizen participation in the policy-making and implementation processes. Whether your interest is in becoming a policy leader, an in-the-field practitioner, or researcher, this course will help you evaluate and anticipate how factors such as electoral support, protest, compliance, or public opinion affect the policy process. Especially in democratic settings, this perspective will give you a more holistic understanding about the real context in which public policy works.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

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### **Participation (20%)**

In this short and intensive seminar course, showing up *ready* will be key to not only to your own learning, but also that of your fellow students. Our classes will be open discussions, so it is essential that you have not only read the required readings before class, but also spent some time to think about them. Please know that cold calling is widely used in graduate-level seminars as a way to make sure everyone comes prepared.

### **Discussion Point Memo (20%)**

In our first class, you will sign up for a specific reading for which you will be in charge of leading class discussion. Depending on the size of the course, we will have 3-4 student leaders for each session. As a discussion leader, you will write a short, 1-page memo (to be circulated to the class) that summarizes the reading, highlights how that reading connects to or challenges other readings in that session or past sessions, and a 3-4 bullet point list of questions for the class to discuss.

### **Two Response Papers (30% each)**

You will be responsible for two short papers in response to course readings. You can choose any full session throughout the course, but the paper should be turned in BEFORE we discuss that set of readings. Response papers should be single-spaced and two to three pages in length.

The papers should be more than a summary of that session's readings. Instead, it should critique them or add novel points *in the context of a real, ongoing policy*. For example, you might criticize the limitations in the theory, methods, or generalizability of the readings in light of recent developments in your policy area of expertise. You might try applying the points of the readings to different contexts – different geography, area of policy – to see if the argument can be pushed further or needs to be refined. The point of these papers is to integrate theoretical discussions with real world examples in the policy world.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND READINGS

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### **January 7<sup>th</sup>: Political Participation and Policy**

We will have a shorter class today for introductions and reviewing the structure/requirements. The two readings will clarify the importance of this course, as well as illustrate why paying attention to the dynamics of political participation is consequential for policy-makers, policy researchers, and practitioners.

- Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77(1): 175-190.
- Mettler, Suzanne and Joe Soss. 2004. "The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship: Bridging Policy Studies and Mass Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(1): 55-73.

## January 12<sup>th</sup>: Why do we vote?

Voting is one of the most basic acts of civic engagement in democracies. It is also important since voting selects the politicians we put in office, who then have tremendous impact on what types of policies are put in place. We will use voting as a specific instance of political participation to explore the broad frameworks in the literature for who participates and why.

### *Policy context:*

"Forty Years of Freefall in New York Voter Turnout"

<http://www.gothamgazette.com/index.php/government/5432-forty-years-of-freefall-in-new-york-voter-turnout>

### *Readings:*

#### Resource Model

- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 2 and 9.

#### Rational Choice Theory

- Riker, William and Peter Ordeshook. 1968. "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting." *American Political Science Review* 62(1): 25-42.
- Blais, Andre. 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. Chapter 5.

#### Social Context

- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102.01 (2008): 33-48.
- Fowler, James H. 2006. "Altruism and Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 68(3): 674-683.

#### Institutional Context

- Berinsky, Adam J. 2005. "The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States." *American Politics Research* 33: 471-491.

## January 14<sup>th</sup>: Political Mobilization, Protests, and Social Movements

Citizen-led political movements are often critical turning points for policy change in contentious areas. But why would individuals partake in something that is often very costly? Why do some movements quickly fizzle, while others succeed in shifting national policy? Understanding the psychology behind social movements and protests is important for both policy-makers and political mobilizers working on the ground.

*Policy context:*

“Will Black Lives Matter be a Movement that Persuades?”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/will-black-lives-matter-be-a-movement-that-persuades/407017/>

“The Failure of Occupy Wall Street”

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andy-ostroy/the-failure-of-occupy-wal\\_b\\_1558787.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andy-ostroy/the-failure-of-occupy-wal_b_1558787.html)

*Readings:*

- Miller, Arthur H., Patricia Gurian, Gerald Gurian, and Oksana Malanchuk. 1981. “Group Consciousness and Political Participation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 25: 494-511.
- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5
- McClendon, Gwyneth H. "Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics: A Field Experiment at an LGBT Pride Rally." *American Journal of Political Science* 58.2 (2014): 279-290.
- Beissinger, Mark R. "The Semblance of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *American Political Science Review* 107.03 (2013): 574-592.

## January 19<sup>th</sup>: Citizen Cooperation with the State and Vice Versa

What motivates citizens to comply with state policies? From the other side, what conditions enable or facilitate states to make universally beneficial policies? We will explore both questions using examples from all around the world. As we will see, even “objectively” effective policies, for which there is scientific support, often fail to be implemented because of politics and the lack of citizen support.

*Policy context:*

“Why the Not-so-great Vaccine Debate of February 2015 Doesn’t Matter”

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/02/vaccines-politics-115008>

*Readings:*

- Tyler, Tom. 2006. *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 and 9.

- Putnam, Robert. 1994. *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 6.
- Miguel, Edward. 2004. Tribe or Nation? Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania, *World Politics*, 56.
- Lieberman, Evan S. 2007. "Ethnic Politics, Risk, and Policy-making: A Cross-national Statistical Analysis of Government Responses to HIV/AIDS." *Comparative Political Studies* 40(12): 1407-1432.

## **January 21<sup>st</sup>: Causes and Consequences of Public Opinion**

As policy makers and practitioners, a constant challenge is persuading or educating the public on the merits of a certain policy or service. Therefore, it is critical to understand that public opinion and citizens' understandings of the world are not always based on facts, but rather, various shades of bias, myths, and narratives. We will examine several sources of such bias.

### *Readings:*

- Bartels, Larry M. 2002. "Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions." *Political Behavior* 24(2): 117-150.
- Bartels, Larry M. 2005. "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1): 15-31.
- Walsh, Katherine Cramer. 2012. "Putting Inequality in its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 517-532.
- Gilens, Martin. 2000. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 3.