

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

**CORE-GP 1022 – Introduction to Public Policy –Spring 2017**

Section 001: Monday 6:45-8:55pm, MEYR 102  
Discussion Section 002, Monday 9-10pm, SILV 410  
Discussion Section 003, Monday 9-10pm, SILV 509

Professor J. Andrew Sinclair  
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Office Hours: Schedule Posted. See Below.

Teaching Assistants:  
    Laura Bligh, [lh1436@nyu.edu](mailto:lh1436@nyu.edu)  
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**Course Description**

This is a course about the public policy process and the role you – in many different capacities – can have in shaping policy outcomes. 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 policy actors succeed (or fail) in obtaining their objectives. You will learn to think carefully about institutions and present your analysis (in person and in writing) to policymakers. You should complete this course with a better sense of the challenges facing you and opportunities you have to make a durable impact.

**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**

To build a sophisticated understanding of the policy process you will need to engage in all components of the course. It is expected that you will complete all required reading in advance of the session for which they are listed, take notes on the material, and be prepared to summarize and critically evaluate it. You will help guide the discussion in our class meetings; your classmates are counting on you to bring your own perspective to small-group and whole-class conversations. Classes will include both lecture and discussion components – but feel free to ask on-topic questions at any point. I encourage the expression of diverse viewpoints in class and in your writing assignments; you should work within the framework presented but always think for yourself.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

See the lecture schedule at the end of the syllabus for release/due dates. Note that we are experimenting this year in this course with a new evaluation tool, so you may need to turn in your assignments twice (via the Assignments tab in NYU Classes, as you would normally, and via the new tool as well). You will get information about this as we go through the term.

Individual feedback will be returned to you via NYU Classes. If something seems amiss about the grading of your assignment, or you would like more information about the evaluation of your work, be sure to get in touch. Every student matters. It is important to get this right.

“Op-Ed.” (5% of Grade) You will write an opinion article, tackling a particular form of writing often used by participants in the policy process.

Institutional Analysis Memorandum. (40% of Grade). This is an exercise modeling a commonplace work-product in policy-related fields. This assignment will be completed in two parts:

- Part 1: (20%). You will complete a “strategic analysis” questionnaire specific to the first part of the assignment and a first draft of the memo.
- Part 2: (20%). You will turn in a second “strategic analysis” questionnaire, covering further topics, and a final version of the memo.

Final Exam. (35% of Grade). This is a take-home, open-book final exam that will require you to engage broadly and in a sophisticated manner with the theoretical material from the course.

Presentations Workshop. (10%: 5% Workshop Attendance, 5% Completion of Individual Presentation). As part of the course, you will attend one of the sessions of a Presentations Workshop taught by Will Carlin, a communications specialist, and then present your own work in the time-slot held by the discussion sections. You are required to sign up to give

your presentation; the course TAs will be in touch about the sign-up procedure. See the schedule below for dates.

Class Participation. (10% of Grade). This is awarded for contributing to a productive learning environment over the term, both in lecture and on the Forum section of the NYU Classes site for this course. All of the students in the course benefit from high levels of class attendance and participation, so you are expected to prepare, attend, and engage online. Participation grades will be lower for those with notably frequent absences from class or who make fewer than seven contributions (every-other-week) on the Forum. Online contributions may be: questions about the reading or assignments, comments about the material, answers to the questions asked by others, or links to outside news articles. For in-person attendance, major professional obligations or personal emergencies are excusable under this policy, but you should let me know of such unavoidable absences in advance by email. Please do the same for absences due to religious observance.

### **Further Assistance**

If you are interested, there is an (optional; highly recommended) memo-writing workshop run by Brooke Capps. The RSVP link:

<http://wagner.nyu.edu/community/events/training-03-03-2017>

Furthermore, there are additional writing resources available here:

<http://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/writing-center>

Note that these resources are not infinite --- particularly if you suspect you are not an exceptionally strong English-language writer, look at the assignment due dates to figure out when you will need assistance, *and get in touch with them now*. Later in the term it can be very difficult to get an appointment with a writing tutor.

Brooke Capps and her team have been provided with the assignments and grading rubrics for this course (updated for this term).

### **NYU Classes**

All announcements will be delivered through NYU Classes and materials and assignments posted there. Participation in the Forum is expected. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

### **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. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, *ask*.

### **Additional Administrative Details / Responses to Frequently Asked Questions**

- All emails regarding this course should have “Spring 2017 Intro PP” in the subject. Members of the faculty get an enormous volume of emails, much of which is not related to our courses – so flagging emails as from the course should help make sure I know your message is important. If you do not have a response in about 48 hours, I do not consider it rude if you re-send your email. Emails sent directly to me should be limited to matters of a personal nature; questions about the course material or assignments that would be of more general interest should be posted on the Forum. If you are confused about something, somebody else probably is too.
- You are responsible for obtaining any materials distributed in or outside of class. If you cannot find something on NYU Classes, email me immediately or post an inquiry on the Forum.
- Please silence cell phones while in class. I understand many of you have children at home or work responsibilities that may require you to monitor your phones for incoming messages -- that is ok, just do it quietly.
- I reserve the right to revise this syllabus as the term progresses. I have made at least some changes to the syllabus in nearly every semester of every course I have taught – so expect this. If I make changes to the syllabus, I will also use the course email system to notify you.
- The use of technology in class is generally discouraged – students seem to get the best results by taking notes by hand in class and then reviewing slides (posted after class) before engaging with the assignments. I do not post the slides in advance – in part because I often edit and update them on the day of class to reflect current events in public policy.

### **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 to make these arrangements in the first week of the term.

### **Required Readings**

There is one book required for the course - available in print and e-book format. Note that we will not need this until the end of the term:

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

You can likely find very inexpensive used copies online. All other readings will be posted on NYU Classes; what I have listed on the syllabus below is subject to change with notice provided by email.

The course calendar here lists only required readings. Most weeks will have supplemental readings (often presented as part of the lecture) which will be made available on NYU Classes. Make sure to reference this document so that you know what is required and what is optional.

### **Meetings of the Discussion Sections**

Note that not all scheduled meetings of the discussion sections will take place. The schedule we intend to follow is included below. As with other parts of the course, look for updates on the discussion sections to be distributed through NYU Classes.

## Course Calendar

### PART I: INPUTS & OUTPUTS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

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Lecture 1 (1/23): *Introduction to the Policy Process*

- **Objective:** Provide an overview of the study of the public policy process and the intellectual outline of the course.
- No assigned reading in advance of week 1.

Lecture 2 (1/30): *Intellectual Foundations – Systems of Policymaking*

**Op-Ed Assignment Distributed; TA Session #1 after class to discuss it.**

- **Objective:** Frame the intellectual inquiry into the policy process as something systematic, observable, predictable, and similar across policy domains. Answer this question: what is the relationship between policymaking and politics?
- 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.
- Selection from Saul Alinsky’s *Rules for Radicals*. (The Prologue, pp. 113-125).

Lecture 3 (2/6): “The Policy Machine” – The “Stages Heuristic” & “ACF”

**Op-Ed Assignment Due**

**Presentations “Bootcamps” this week:**

**WED, FEB 8, 5-6:30 PM, RUDIN FORUM**

**THURS, FEB 9, 5-6:30 PM, RUDIN FORUM**

- **Objective:** Begin to formulate a model of policymaking by looking at two (intellectually) structured alternatives, the “stages heuristic” and the “advocacy coalition framework.” Be able to answer this question: how might I describe how policymaking works? You should be able to evaluate benefits and limitations of these concepts.
- 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.
- Selections from Bardach, *The Eightfold Path* (Introduction, pp. 1-11).

Lecture 4 (2/13): *Computational Limits – Information Processing, Framing, Stories*

**Memo Assignment Part I Distributed; TA Session #2 after class to discuss it.**

- **Objective:** Explore limitations on the policy process (on systems, on ordinary people) – and the consequences (for policymaking).
- Workman, Samuel, Bryan D. Jones, and Ashley E. Jochim. 2009. “Information processing and policy dynamics.” *Policy Studies Journal* 37(1): 75-92.
- Stone, Deborah A. 1989. Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas. *Political Science Quarterly* 104, 2 (Summer): 281–300.
- 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.

Note: NYU is closed on 2/20.

## PART II: INDIVIDUALS & PURPOSEFUL BEHAVIOR

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Lecture 5 (2/27): *Individual Purpose, Strategic Interaction*

**During the sections: Individual Presentations (attend if presenting).**

- **Objective:** Focus on the role of individuals and their strategic behavior. You should be able to answer questions like: what should I expect other participants to do in a particular situation? And then: how can I use that knowledge to change policy outcomes?
- 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. Available on NYU Classes.
- Arsenault, Raymond. 2006. *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4, pp. 140-176. Available on NYU Classes.

Lecture 6 (3/6): *Institutional Analysis & Institutional Change*

**During the sections: Individual Presentations (attend if presenting).**

- **Objective:** Explain how purposeful behavior interacts with institutions in the policy process. Revisit the question: what is the link between politics & policy? And also: why do policies change? Why don’t they?
- 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.
- Gambetta, Diego. 1994. “Inscrutable markets.” *Rationality & Society* 6(3): 353-368.
- Selections from Royko, Mike. 1971. *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*. Available on NYU Classes.



Note: 3/13 is during spring break. Note: if you have an opportunity to do so over spring break, you may wish to do the reading for Week 12 in advance at this time.

Lecture 7 (3/20): *Policy Design Options*

**During the sections: Individual Presentations (attend if presenting).**

- **Objective:** This week focuses on tactical decisions (in policy design) to change outcomes without changing preferences. How do policy design decisions influence the politics of institutional change? If you have an opportunity to shape the formation of new institutions, what should you consider trying?
- Weimer, David L. 1992. "Claiming Races, Broiler Contracts, Heresthetics, And Habits: Ten Concepts For Policy Design." *Policy Sciences* 25: 135-159.
- Selections from Riker, William H. 1986. *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Selections from Caro, Robert. 2001. [1974]. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Random House. pp. 172-177.
- Selection from Bardach, *The Eightfold Path* (Appendix D).

## PART III: UNSATISFACTORY CONCLUSIONS

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Lecture 8 (3/27): *Nonsense and Impossibilities; Diffusion, Convergence, Voting*

### **Memo Part I Due**

- **Objective:** This week focuses on a couple of problems: Can incentives create long-lasting “bad” outcomes? Can unsuccessful policies spread? And can voters even sensibly express opinions about policy?
- David, Paul A. 1985. Clio and the Economics of QWERTY. *American Economic Review* 75: 332–37.
- Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. "Policy diffusion: seven lessons for scholars and practitioners." *Public Administration Review* 72, no. 6 (2012): 788-796.
- Selection from: Riker, William H. 1982. Liberalism against Populism: A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman.

Lecture 9 (4/3): *Bureaucracy, Representation, and Accountability*

- **Objective:** Examine where public administration fits into the policy process. Think about organizational structures that house policy workers. What powers do the different types of participants possess? And what role is left for voters?
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2012. “Why Public Administration Gets No Respect But Should.” *The American Interest* (<http://goo.gl/pyDRPF>).
- Bertelli, Anthony M. 2016. “Who Are the Policy Workers, and What Are They Doing? Citizen’s Heuristics and Democratic Accountability in Complex Governance.” *Public Performance & Management Review*, 40(2): 208-234.

## PART IV: INDIVIDUALS AND POLICY CHANGE

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Lecture 10 (4/10): *What can you do? “Policy Windows” & “Information Cascades”*

### **Memo Part 2 Distributed.**

- **Objective:** This week explores the options available to many different types of participants – ranging from street protestors to policy analysts – to change policy outcomes. You are not likely to be immediately made the majority leader of the United States Senate when you graduate – so what can you do?
- Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Longman, chs. 4, 9.
- Lohmann, Susanne. 1994. The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–1991. *World Politics* 47: 42–101.

Lecture 11 (4/17) *How can you do it? The Policy Memo (Welfare Reform Case)*

### **TA Session #3after class to discuss the Memo, Part II.**

- **Objective:** Examine in detail *one* commonly used policy tool – a written memo about options for institutional change presented to a decisionmaker. We will do this using a real memorandum from the Clinton presidency. What can you learn from this example about the tool? What can you learn about the substance?
- Reading: the Clinton memo materials.
- Kamark, Elaine. 2013. *How Changes Happens – Or Doesn't: The Politics of US Public Policy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Chapter 5.

Lecture 12 (4/24)

“Good Government” and Public Policy

**Memo Part II Due.**

- **Objective**: Discuss the role of “moral means” for obtaining “moral ends.”
- Selections from Caro, Robert. 2001. [1974]. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Random House. Ch. 5 (pp. 71-88), Ch. 29 (pp. 639-77).
- Selection from Golway, Terry. 2014. *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics*. New York: Norton & Co.
- Selection from Riordon, William L. 1905 [2008]. *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*. BN Publishing.

Lecture 13 (5/1):

*Prohibition: Policy Formation*

**Final Released.**

- **Objective**: Analyze a policy change, prohibition. How did it happen? Did the means ruin the end?
- Selections from Okrent, *Last Call*.

Lecture 14 (5/8):

*Prohibition: Policy Implementation*

**TA #4 to discuss final.**

- **Objective**: Continue the prohibition case, a study in “what can go wrong, will go wrong.” How can we apply these lessons to current policy debates?
- Selections from Okrent, *Last Call*.

**May 11, 2017: Take-Home Final Exam Due.**