



**NYU**

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

## **UPADM-GP 101**

# **The Politics of Public Policy Fall 2022**

### **Instructor Information**

- Michael Laskawy
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- Office Address: Puck Building, 295 Lafayette Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor
- Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30 – 11:15 or by appointment

### **Course Information**

- Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays, September 6<sup>th</sup> – December 13<sup>th</sup>, 8 AM – 10:30 AM
- Class Location: NYU Global Center, Room 275

### **Course Description**

One of the greatest and often dispiriting challenges that many students of public policy face when they enter public service is that their aspirations for what policy can achieve seem so readily thwarted by the political process. This class will use a series of case studies from all levels of government to explore this challenge, and to try to provide students with an intellectual framework for thinking about the dynamic relationship between politics and public policy to understand how politics shapes, determines and sometimes warps the policy making process. We'll study the structures of American government, the importance of interest groups, the impact of public opinion, the role of the media, the challenge of fiscal constraints, the authority of expertise, the impact of personalities, as well as other factors that often lead policies to be altered and negotiated as they move from proposal to practice. The real-world case studies we focus on will both help us to understand why public policy outcomes so often deviate from what might be described as best practices, and provide us with the opportunity to consider how we might, as potential policy makers ourselves, improve the policy making process.

### **Course and Learning Objectives**

1. To understand the processes by which public policy is developed, negotiated, and implemented in the United States

2. To understand the role of various institutional actors in that process, including but not limited to:
  - The three branches of the Federal government
  - States and localities
  - Organized interest groups
  - The media
  - Independent experts
  - Public policy professionals
  - Voters
3. To develop a familiarity with major critiques of the process of policy making in the United States
4. To learn certain techniques of policy advocacy utilized by public policy professionals

### Learning Assessment Table

Course Learning Objective Covered	Corresponding Assignment Title
1,2,4	Policy brief
1,2,3	Midterm paper
1,2,3,4	Final paper
1,2,3,4	Participation and discussion

### Materials and Assignments

You are expected to do the reading, post reading responses, attend class, be prepared for class discussions, and participate on a regular basis.

The readings on the syllabus should be available on-line, or I will post them on Brightspace.

In addition to class readings, I will ask you to regular read the New York Times (via a free NYU subscription), subscribe to the daily email Politico Playbook (also free), and follow four politicians on Twitter. Instructions on how to do all of these things will be posted on Brightspace after our first-class meeting.

In addition to required readings, on certain weeks there will be supplementary, optional readings posted. Students may be asked to be responsible for reading one of the supplementary readings and summarizing the reading for the class. No one will be asked to do more than one supplementary reading summary a semester.

There will be four writing assignments over the course of the semester. They will include one short policy brief, a take-home midterm essay, a final paper proposal, and a final paper. In addition, there will be weekly online discussion posts to which you will be asked to respond.

Your grade will be calculated as follows: Policy brief (5%), Midterm (20%), Final (60%), Participation, including discussion posts (15%)

Please be aware that the syllabus may change as the semester progresses, based on our pace, student feedback, and choices I make with regard to subject matter, the availability of guest speakers, etc. I will post all updates on Brightspace, and make sure you are apprised of any changes to our schedule or assignments.

## **Classroom Policies**

### **Attendance Policy:**

Since we only meet once a week, I expect everyone to attend every class in person. If for any reason you will be unable to attend class, please let me know in advance. Regular attendance is part of your grade. There will not be a remote option unless NYU instructs us to meet remotely.

### **Participation Policy:**

This is a class that works best if we all engage in a dialogue about the issues we are reading and thinking about. Classroom participation is a part of your grade. If for any reason you think that participating in classroom discussions will be a challenge for you, please make sure to come to my office hours to discuss it with me.

### **Discussion Post Policy:**

You are expected to post a reading response on Brightspace during any week that I make a Discussion forum available. You should assume there will be a weekly forum unless I state otherwise in class.

### **Late Paper Policy:**

Please let me know in advance if you are having difficulty completing an assignment on time so that we can discuss your situation. Papers that are late without notification will automatically be downgraded.

### **NYU Brightspace:**

Class announcements, updated assignments, syllabus modifications etc will all be made via NYU Brightspace, so please check the website regularly.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

### **Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses](#)

[Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

## NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

## NYU/Wagner Grading Policy

Per the Wagner grading policy, students will receive grades according to the Wagner grading scale. This information is [posted here](#).

## Course Schedule

*\*\*Readings are due the day they are listed\*\**

### Week 1: Tuesday September 6<sup>th</sup> – Introduction

#### Learning Objective:

This week will be an introduction to the course and to each other. We will begin with a broad overview of the semester, our methods and our goals. We will try to define some of our terms, in particular to understand what we mean when we talk about 'politics' and 'policy.' And we will start our exploration of the challenges that politics presents to policymakers and policymaking by discussing some recent issues in both local and national news, including the ongoing policy challenges presented by Covid-19.

#### Readings:

- Will post on Brightspace by Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>

### Week 2: Tuesday September 13<sup>th</sup> - American Democracy: Origins and Structure

#### Learning Objective:

This week we will focus on the origins of American democracy, and the structure of American government. We will take an historical perspective, and our focus will be original source material, emphasizing two key philosophical ideas that have been central to the American democratic project – the concept of rights as it was initially theorized by John Locke, and the concept of interests as it was initially theorized by Adam Smith. We will then explore how these ideas were transformed from theory to practice by the writers of the U.S. Constitution. We will interrogate these concepts to understand their strengths and weaknesses as a basis for political governance, how they have evolved, and where they fall short.

#### Readings:

- John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government* [selections]
- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* [selections]
- James Madison, Alexander Hamilton & John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, No. 10; No. 39; No. 51

### Week 3: Tuesday September 20<sup>th</sup> - The Rise of the Modern State

#### Learning Objective:

This week we will continue our historical conversation, focusing on the rise of the modern state, and the particular challenges presented by the emergence of the modern American state. We will begin, with the work of W.E.B Dubois, to confront the centrality of race and its persistence in the shape and structure of modern American politics and government. And we will read brief selections from two works of Karl Marx and Max Weber, whose attempts to understand the relationship between politics, economics and government will provide us with theoretical tools that we will utilize throughout the course.

#### Readings:

- Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, [selections]
- Max Weber, "*Politics as a Vocation*" [selections]
- W.E.B Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folks*, "The Forethought;" Chapter 1 "Of Our Spiritual Strivings;" , Chapter 2 "Of the Dawn of Freedom"

## **POLICY BRIEF ASSIGNED**

### Week 4: Tuesday September 27<sup>th</sup> - In Sickness and In Health.

#### Learning Objective:

This week we will begin our study of specific policy issues by focusing on healthcare policy. We will grapple with the question of why there is no true universal health insurance program in the United States, and how this relates to ideas of rights and interests. We will use the battle over the Affordable Care Act as a case study to understand the particular challenges presented by attempts to make major changes to the social safety net.

#### Readings:

- Dana Priest & Michael Weiskopf, "Health Care Reform: The Collapse of a Quest," *The Washington Post* (October 11th, 1994)

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Lawrence Jacobs and Theda Skocpol, *Health Care Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Chapters 1 & 2

- "The Affordable Care Act: A Brief Summary" The National Conference of State Legislators
- Stephanie Armour, "The Affordable Care Act: A Brief History," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 17, 2021.

## Week 5: Tuesday October 4<sup>th</sup> – Healthcare continued

### Learning Objective:

This week we will continue our discussion of healthcare reform. And we will also look at other less sweeping health policy proposals, including those around healthy school lunches and sugar taxes, to explore the issues with policies designed to incentive or disincentive certain behaviors, and the associated critique of policy overreach that focuses on the 'nanny state.'

### Readings:

- Don Gonyea, "From the Start, Obama Struggled With Fallout from a Kind of Fake News" *NPR* (January 10, 2017)
- Adam Liptak, "The Affordable Care Act Survives Latest Supreme Court Challenge," *The New York Times* (June 18, 2021)
- Sarah Kliff & Ezra Klein, "The Lessons of Obamacare," *Vox* (March 15, 2017)
- Sarah Kliff, "Bernie Sanders Medicare-for-all plan, explained," *Vox*, (April 10, 2019)
- Jeneen Interlandi, "Why doesn't the United States have universal health care? The answer has everything to do with race." *The New York Times* (August 14, 2019)
- Dylan Scott, "The Netherlands has universal health insurance — and it's all private," *Vox*, (January 17, 2020)
- Alice Park, "The New York City Soda Ban, and a Brief History of Bloomberg's Nudges," *Time Magazine*, (May 31st, 2012).
- Michael M. Grynbaum, "Judge Blocks New York City's Limits on Big Sugary Drinks," *The New York Times* (March 11, 2013).
- Deena Shanker, "Why Bloomberg's Soda Ban Fizzled," *Grist* (March 14, 2013)
- Lucy Steigerwald, "Why New York's Failed Soda Ban Matters," *Vice* (March 14, 2013)

## **POLICY BRIEF DUE**

Tuesday October 11<sup>th</sup> – NO CLASS (NYU on Monday schedule)

Week 6: Tuesday October 18<sup>th</sup> - It's Getting Hot In Here

### Learning Objective:

In this week's class we will explore environmental policy, focusing on global warming, and the response, or lack of response, at the Federal level. We will study how large corporations organize and participate in public policy debates. We will take a particular interest in how science is used and communicated in public policy, and the way expertise serves as a form of political power. And finally we will use the challenges presented by environmental regulation to understand the broader 'collective action problem' that challenges policy makers in many fields.

### Readings:

- Nathaniel Rich, "Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change," *The New York Times*, (August 1, 2018)
- David S. Hilzenreth, "Miscalculations, Lobby Effort Doomed BTU Tax Plan," *Washington Post* (June 11, 1993).
- Ryan Lizza, "As the World Burns," *The New Yorker* (October 3, 2010)

## Week 7: Tuesday October 25<sup>th</sup> - The Environment Continued

### Learning Objective:

This week we will continue our discussion of global warming and the environment. We will explore in more detail the role played by interest groups in environmental debates, and how that helps us understand policy debates more broadly. We will also focus on the role of misinformation in the debate over global warming, and how information is used and misused and transmitted in policy debates. We will also read about the regulation of environmental toxins, and how those policy conflicts help us understand the issue of "regulatory capture," when regulators appear more interested in helping the businesses they regulate than the public at large.

### Readings:

- Kelsey Piper, "When the World Actually Solved an Environmental," *Vox* (October 3, 2021).
- Amber Phillips, "Congress's Long History of Doing Nothing on Climate Change, in 6 acts," *Washington Post*, (December 1, 2015)
- Kate Galbraith, "Senators Have Beef with 'Cow Tax,'" *New York Times*, (March 9, 2009)
- Sharon Begley, "The Truth About Denial," *Newsweek*, (August 3, 2017)
- Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis, "How James Inhofe is Upending the Nation's Energy and Environmental Policies," *Washington Post*, (March 14, 2017)
- Cook, Supran, Lewandowsky, Oreskes & Maibach, "America Misled: How the Fossil Fuel Industry Deliberately Misled Americans About Climate Change," [Climatechangecommunications.org](http://Climatechangecommunications.org), (October 2019)
- Alvin Powell, "Tracing Big Oil's PR War to Delay Action on Climate Change " *Harvard Gazette*, (September 28, 2021)

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- Shannon Osaka, "Priced Out: Both Parties Used to Love the Carbon Tax, So Why Are They Giving Up On It?" *Grist*, (September 23, 2020)
- Eric Lipton, "How the Trump Administration Pulled Back on Regulating Toxic Chemicals," *Yale Environment 360*, (February 12, 2019)

## MIDTERM ASSIGNED

### Week 8: Tuesday November 1<sup>st</sup> - The Politics of Reproduction

#### Learning Objective:

- This week will be devoted to a discussion of the politics of abortion. As part of this discussion, we will explore the history of how abortion had been regulated in the United States prior to the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v Wade* declaring a Constitutional right to abortion, and we will also examine how U.S. policy compares to the policies of other nations. However, our main focus will be on the political conflicts that emerged around abortion in the aftermath of the Roe decision, how those conflicts played out at both the national and state levels, and the subsequent political processes that ultimately led to this year's Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs vs Jackson* reversing its decision in Roe. We will also discuss how the Dobbs decision is impacting the current electoral cycle, and what this tells us about American politics more broadly.

#### Readings:

- TBD

### Week 9: Tuesday November 8<sup>th</sup> - Yearning to Breathe Free

## ELECTION DAY!

#### Learning Objective:

- This week we will focus on immigration and immigration policy. Again we will take an historical perspective, but we will place particular emphasis on contemporary debates. We will study both current high profile political disputes including those surrounding Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the DREAM Act, and the border wall, as well as business-oriented policies such as EB5 and H1B visas.

#### Readings:



- Claire Felter, Danielle Renwick, and Amelia Cheatham, "The U.S. Immigration Debate," "The Council on Foreign Relations, 2021
- Elaine Kamarck and Christine Stenglein, "Can Immigration Reform Happen, A Look Back," Brookings, 2019
- Robert Pear and Carl Hulse, "Immigration Bill Fails to Survive Senate Vote," *New York Times* (June 28, 2007).
- "A Reagan Legacy: Amnesty for Illegal Immigrants," NPR (July 4, 2010)
- Rachel Weiner, "How Immigration Reform Failed, Over and Over," *Washington Post* (January 20, 2013)
- Ashley Parker and Jonathan Martin, "Senate, 68 to 32, Passes Overhaul for Immigration," *New York Times*, (June 27, 2013)
- Ashley Parker, "Bleak Prognosis From Both Sides of Aisle in House for Immigration Overhaul," *New York Times*, (June 26, 2014)
- Alec MacGillis, "How Washington Blew Its Best Chance to Fix Immigration," *ProPublica* (September 15, 2016)
- David Leonhardt, "A Great Fight for Our Times," *New York Times*, (October 11, 2016)
- Peter Beinart, "How the Democrats Lost Their Way on Immigration," *The Atlantic*, July/August 2017
- "Fact Check: Have Immigrants Lowered Wages for Blue Collar American Workers," NPR, (August 4, 2017)
- Margaret Peters, "Why did Republicans become so opposed to immigration? Hint: It's not because there's more nativism," *Washington Post*, (January 30, 2018)
- Daniel Kurtzleben, "Republican Are Happy Trump Ended Daca. They're Less Sure About Deporting Dreamers." NPR, (September 17, 2017)
- Alberto Allesina & Marco Tabellini, "The Political Effects of Immigration: Culture or Economics?" *HBS Working Paper 21-069*, July 2021, Introduction, Sections 5, 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.3, Conclusion only

## MIDTERM DUE

Week 10: Tuesday November 15<sup>th</sup> - Justice

Learning Objective:

- This week, we will study issues of civil rights and criminal justice, and how the American political system continues to grapple with, and fails to grapple with, the nation's history of racial discrimination. We will focus on the role played by advocacy groups in advancing their policy goals. While we take an historical perspective, we will place special emphasis on recent developments, including analyzing the movement to defund the police and responses to it.

Readings:

- Jill Lepore, "The Invention of the Police," *The New Yorker* (July 13, 2020)
- Sharon LaFraniere and Andrew W. Lehrenm, "The Disproportionate Risks of Driving While Black," *New York Times* (October 24, 2015)
- "A Tale of Two Countries: Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform," ACLU (April 20, 2020) pp 4-14, 28-47 only.
- Ashley Southall and Michael Gold, "Why 'Stop-and-Frisk' Inflamed Black and Hispanic Neighborhoods," *The New York Times* (February 19, 2020)
- Aaron Ross Coleman, "Police reform, defunding, and abolition, explained," *Vox*, (July 16, 2020)
- Mariame Kaba, "Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police," *The New York Times*, (June 12, 2020)
- Nekima Levy Armstrong, "Black Voters Want Better Policing, Not Posturing by Progressives," *The New York Times*, (November 9, 2021)
- Juan Williams, "Eric Adams Is Making White Liberals Squirm," *The Atlantic*, (August 24, 2021)
- Sarah Lustbader, "What the Arbery and Rittenhouse Verdicts Couldn't Tell Us," *New York Times*, (November 24, 2021)

## FINAL PROJECT ASSIGNED

### Week 11 Tuesday November 22<sup>nd</sup> - Home Sweet Home

#### Learning Objective:

- This week we will begin a two week unit focused explicitly on issues related to New York City. We will begin by delving into the housing crisis in New York as a way to understand the specific challenges of urban housing policy. We'll examine recent efforts to expand affordable housing in the City, and the related fiscal demands and trade-offs for City government. We will look at the current issues surrounding public housing in New York. And we'll discuss policies surrounding homelessness, and the political challenges they present to local government, as well as engaging with the debate surrounding 'gentrification.'

#### Readings:

- NYC Affordability Index, NYC Comptrollers Office, (June 19, 2021)
  - Samuel Stein, "Assessing DeBlasio's Housing Legacy: Why Hasn't the 'Most Ambitious Affordable Housing Program' Produced a More Affordable City?" Community Service Society, February 2021
  - Elizabeth Kim, "Can The Next Mayor Turn Around NYC's Affordable Housing Crisis?" *Gothamist*, (February 8, 2021)
- Alex Schwartz, "The Daunting Math of Solving New York's Housing Crisis," *Urban Matters*, (January 29, 2020)

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- Justin Davidson, "New Studies Say Gentrification Doesn't Really Force Out Low-Income Residents," *New York Magazine*, (August 5, 2019)
- Matthew Haag and Mihir Zaveri, "Will Ending a Lucrative Tax Break Ease or Fuel the N.Y.C. Housing Crisis?," *New York Times* (March 30, 2022)
- Mara Gay, "There Are Solutions to New York's High Rents Right in Front of Us," *New York Times* (March 28, 2022)
- Stephen Eide, "A Fresh Start on Homelessness?" *City Journal* (January 3, 2022)
- Andy Newman, Dana Rubinstein and Michael Gold, "New York City Plans to Stop Homeless People From Sheltering in Subway," *New York Times* (February 28, 2022)
- Janaki Chadha and Amanda Eisenberg, "'Back to the Giuliani era': Adams' order to clear homeless camps ignites fury in New York," *Politico New York* (April 2, 2022)
- Robin Kaiser-Schatzlein, "Encampment Sweeps Are Cruel Theater," *Curbel* (April 1, 2022)
- Ginia Bellafante, "Decades After the Destruction of Homeless Camps, What Have We Learned?" *New York Times*, (April 2, 2022)
- Michael Gold and Erin Woo, "What Other Cities Can Teach New York About Homelessness on Transit," *New York Times* (April 4, 2022)

## Week 12: Tuesday November 29<sup>th</sup> – No More Pencils No More Books

### Learning Objective:

- In this week's class, we will once again focus on New York City, turning our inquiry to the challenges of urban education. We will use this topic as a way to continue discussions of American federalism, and the role of state and local governments in the American system, including how the Federal government and state governments attempt to shape education policy. But our main focus this week will be on local governance. Our central case study will be the New York City school system, and the various efforts made in recent decades to improve education outcomes for public school students, as well as the ongoing efforts to deal with the de facto segregation of much of the City school system.

### Readings

- Jonathan Mahler, "The Fragile Success of School Reform in the Bronx," *New York Times*, (April 6, 2011)
- Nikole Hannah Jones, "Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City," *New York Times*, (June 9, 2016)
- Jonathan Chait, "Unlearning an Answer Charter schools deliver extraordinary results, but their political support among Democrats has collapsed. What will Biden do?" *New York Magazine*, (January 5, 2021)
- Eliza Shapiro, "\$773 Million Later, de Blasio Ends Signature Initiative to Improve Failing Schools," *New York Times*, (February 26, 2019)
- Eliza Shapiro, "Only 7 Black Students Got Into Stuyvesant, N.Y.'s Most Selective High School, Out of 895 Spots," *New York Times*, (March 18, 2019)

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- Elizabeth A. Harris and Winnie Hu, "Asian Groups See Bias in Plan to Diversify New York's Elite Schools," *New York Times*, (June 5, 2018)
- Eliza Shapiro, "New York Schools Are Segregated. Will the Next Mayor Change That?," *New York Times*, (January 29, 2021)
- Sophia Chang and Jessica Gould, "Number Of Black And Latino Students Admitted To NYC Specialized High Schools Falls To Lowest Level In 3 Years," *Gothamist*, (April 19, 2021)
- Michael Powell, "How It Feels to Be an Asian Student in an Elite Public School," *New York Times* (January 25, 2022)
- Lola Fadulu, "Schools Chancellor Pledges to End New York City's 'Betrayal' of Students," *New York Times* (March 2, 2022)

## FRIDAY DECEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup> - PROPOSALS FOR FINAL PAPER DUE

### Week 13: Tuesday December 6<sup>th</sup> – Follow the Money

#### Learning Objective:

- This week we will explore issues and policies related to economic inequality, and the role of money in the American political system. We will discuss taxation policy in the United States, and longstanding conflicts in America over the redistribution of wealth. We will discuss policies that support and discourage the unionization of workers, including current debates over raising the minimum wage and regulating work in the 'gig economy.' We will examine the history of welfare policies and the broader socialization of care in the United States, with a particular emphasis on how gender and race have impacted, and continues to impact, American economic policy making. And we will explore the way in which wealth has been deployed to impact American elections and policy making.

#### Readings

- John Cassidy, "Forces of Divergence," *The New Yorker*, (March 14, 2014)
- David Leonhardt, "A Great Fight for Our Times," *New York Times*, (October 11, 2016)
- Anshu Siripurapu, "The U.S. Inequality Debate," The Council on Foreign Relations, (July 15, 2020)
- Taylor Telford, "Income inequality in America is the highest it's been since Census Bureau started tracking it, data shows," *The Washington Post*, (September 26, 2019)
- Heather Long and Andrew Van Dam, "The Black-White Economic Divide Is As Wide As It Was in 1968," *The Washington Post*, (June 4, 2020)

- Elise Gould, "Higher Returns on Education Can't Explain Growing Wage Inequality," Economic Policy Institute, (March 15, 2020)
- Caleb Crain, "State of the Unions," *The New Yorker*, (August 19, 2019)
- Bridget Read, "Working Two Jobs, and Barely Surviving," *New York Magazine*, (February 24, 2021)
- Danielle Kutzleben, "Lots of Other Countries Mandate Paid Leave. Why Not the U.S.?" NPR, (July 15, 2015)
- Juliet Schor, "How the Gig Economy Promotes Inequality," *Milken Institute Review*, (September 18, 2020)
- Jonathan Weisman and Alan Rappeport, "An Exposé Has Congress Rethinking How to Tax the Superrich," *New York Times*, (June 9, 2021)
- Dylan Matthews, "How to Tax the Rich, Explained," *Vox*, (March 9, 2019)
- Frank Newport, "U.S. Public Opinion and Increased Taxes on the Rich," Gallup, June 4, 2021)
- Jeff Stein, "How conservative megadonors built a shadow GOP that weakened the official party," *Vox*, (April 14, 2016)

## Week 14: Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup> - The Fourth Estate & The Crisis of Democracy

### Learning Objective:

- This week will be devoted to an analysis of the role of the media in policy making and implementation. We'll analyze the symbiotic relationship between the press, advocates, interest groups, and policymakers. We'll study techniques of political communications, including the role of political communication professionals. And we'll explore the impact of social media on policy making specifically and politics more generally. As part of this discussion, we will examine the media's role in political polarization within the American electorate, and how polarization has come to shape policy making, a potentially even threaten American democratic practice.

### Readings

- Joe McGinnis, *The Selling of the President*, 1968, Chapter 2
- David Greenberg, *The Republic of Spin* Introduction & Chapters 46-48
- Rachel Withers, "George H.W. Bush's 'Willie Horton' ad will always be the reference point for dog-whistle racism," *Vox*, (December 1, 2018)
- Katie Zernike, "Kerry Pressing Swift Boat Case Long After Loss," *New York Times*, 5/28/2006
- Paul Starr, "Governing in the Age of Fox News," *The Atlantic*, January/February 2010
- Emma Roller, "Willie Horton's Heirs," *New York Times*, (January 12, 2016)
- Alexis C. Madrigal, "What Facebook Did to American Democracy," *The Atlantic*, (October 12, 2017)

Ezra Klein, "David Shor Is Telling Democrats What They Don't Want to Hear," *New York Times* (October 8, 2021)

Jonathan Haidt, "Why the Past 10 Years of American Life Have Been Uniquely Stupid," *The Atlantic* (April 11, 2022)

**Tuesday December 20<sup>th</sup> - FINAL PAPERS DUE**