

Course: PUPOL 100 Introduction to Public Policy
Semester: Fall 2014
Instructors: Sanford Schram
Time: Monday and Thursday 9:45-11:00 am
Location: Roosevelt House 304
Office: 1721HW
Hours: MTh 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
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Description: This course is designed to give students a broad overview of the public policymaking process, the primary theories and concepts for analyzing public policy, and a survey of critical issues in different public policy areas. First the course provides an introduction to theories of the policy process and some of the key contextual aspects of the American political system that serve to influence policy formulation and implementation. Second, the course offers discussion of the debates about how to best analyze public policies emphasizing the key differences between economic and political approaches. Third, the course examines a number of different policy areas. When examining these policies, we will be concerned with using our theoretical tools for understanding the policy process and how to best analyze policy in each area. We will also be concerned with the substantive details of these policies, including both the current policies adopted by government, and as well important alternative (proposed) policies that have yet to be adopted nationwide. Finally, we will attempt to arrive at some conclusions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies we will be studying and what can be realistically done to improve public policy in current period given the current political climate and the prevailing orientation to approach public policy solutions. Students will write reaction papers in response to the readings and a term paper focusing on an issue of public policymaking and analysis in a selected substantive area.

Learning Goals: The course is designed so that each student will have opportunity to:

- (1) improve critical thinking skills, including the capacity to grasp abstract concepts and theories regarding U.S. public policy;
- (2) develop a facility for using these abstract concepts and theories to deepen understanding of the facts of specific policies;
- (3) learn to use those facts to evaluate the validity of empirical claims about policy;
- (4) reconcile conflicting evidence and contrary positions about various policies, especially as expressed in the literature but also in public discourse;
- (5) improve public speaking skills and engage with others more reflexively in public policy debates; and
- (6) enhance writing skills, including in particular the ability to summarize the main points of arguments succinctly, explain theories clearly, use language precisely, demonstrate command of social science terminology related to public policy, and in the course of writing use abstract theories and concepts to deepen understanding of evidence for assessing public policies and alternatives.

Required Text: Michael Kraft and Scott Furlong, *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*, 4th Edition. CQ Press, 2012. Available from Shakespeare Bookstore.

Course Requirements:

4 Reaction Papers, 3-4 pages, 40%
 Policy Analysis Paper Proposal, 5-7 pages 5%
 Policy Analysis Paper, 10-12 pages 40%
 In-Class Term Paper Presentation, 10 minutes, 5%
 Overall Class Participation: 10%

Reaction Papers: Each student will sign up to submit four reaction papers (each paper 3-4 pages in length, typewritten double-spaced) over the course of the semester. Each paper need to be posted to blackboard by 6 pm the night before the class session that discusses the readings the paper is reacting to. Each paper should address one specific issue or point in the readings that the student finds important and has direct relevance to the themes of the course (described above in the Course Description). They are to be read by all students in the class and will serve the basis for course discussion for that session. Reaction papers are due 6 pm the night before the class in which they will be discussed. A sign-up sheet will be distributed to schedule the assignment of reaction papers.

Policy Analysis Paper: Students should choose a topic by mid-semester. Each student must meet with the instructor to discuss the topic. The paper must focus on a specific policy problem area, such as global warming, economic growth, homeland security, abortion, etc. The paper must examine specific issues of both process and analysis and include a discussion of what can be done to improve policy in that area taking into account the political climate and policy approaches that are currently ascendant. Students need to submit a written 2-3 page proposal for their paper. The final paper should be 10-12 pages, typewritten, double-spaced and is due Monday of the final exam period.

Overall Class Participation: Your participation grade will be determined in three ways: (1) attendance; (2) discussion of the readings and (3) discussion of the reaction papers.

Late Assignments and Make-Up Exams: The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences and late assignments: 1) serious illness; 2) illness or death of family member; 3) school trips; and 4) major religious holidays, and 5) other circumstances found by the instructor to be "reasonable cause for nonattendance." When there is an excused absence, students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work and/or exams. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of the absence, preferably in advance of the missed class. The burden of proof is on the student to provide sufficient documentation regarding the nature of the absence.

Academic Integrity, Cheating and Plagiarism: It is assumed that students in this course will work independently and that all work submitted for a grade is the work of that student. I consider the violation of this policy (including plagiarism) to be a very serious offense and will pursue any offense to the full extent permitted by the university.

Respect: Please do not talk to your neighbor during my lectures or when one of your colleagues is speaking. I realize you might occasionally miss a point in the lecture and might ask your neighbor what was said, and that is fine. What I will not tolerate is habitual gabbing while others are speaking.

Access: Should you require use of accommodation or assistance from access services, please see:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/student-services/access>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I. Introduction: Understanding Public Policymaking in Context

9/4 *Public Policy, Policy Analysis, and Politics*

Kraft and Furlong – Chapter 1

9/8-9/11 *Context for U.S. Policymaking: Iron Triangles in a Market-Centered Society*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 2

[Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspectives on Politics*, 12, 3 \(Fall 2014\): forthcoming.](#)

Part II. Theories of Public Policy Making: Key Concepts of Policy Analysis

9/15-18 *Theories of Public Policymaking: Rational-Comprehensive Decision-making vs. Incrementalism*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 3

[Charles Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through,'" *Public Administration Review* 19\(1959\): 79-88.](#)

9/22 *Key Concepts in Policy Analysis: Cost-Benefit Analysis vs. Political Adequation*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapters 4 and 6

[Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox* \(New York: W.W. Norton, 2011\), Chapter 1.](#)

9/29 *Politics of Problem Definition: Social Construction of Target Populations*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 5

[Sanford F. Schram and Joe Soss, "Success Stories: Welfare Reform, Policy Discourse, and the Politics of Research," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 557\(2001\): 49-65.](#)

[Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy," *American Political Science Review*, 87\(1993\): 334-347.](#)

10/2 *Agenda-Setting*

[Rodger Cobb, Jennie-Keith Ross and Marc Howard Ross, "Agenda Building as a Comparative Process," *American Political Science Review*, 70\(1976\): 126-38.](#)

[Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review*, 56\(1962\):](#)

947-952.

10/6 *Policy Feedback*

Joe Soss and Sanford F. Schram, "A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback," *American Political Science Review*, 101, 1 (Winter 2007): 111-127.

10/9 *Policy Drift*

Jacob S. Hacker, "Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State: The Hidden Politics of Social Policy Retrenchment in the United States," *American Political Science Review*, 98, 2 (May 2004): 243-60.

Sanford F. Schram, "The Appeal and Limitations of Social Impact Bonds," SSN Policy Brief.

Part III. Applying Theory to Practice: Debating Public Policies

10/16 *Economic Policy: What Policies Are Needed to Get Beyond the Effects of the Great Recession?*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 7

10/20-23 *Health Care: Should Obamacare be Repealed?*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 8

Term Paper Proposals Due October 24, 2014

10/27-30 *Social Welfare: Has the 1996 Welfare Reform Helped or Hurt the Poor?*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 9

[View film: "A Place at the Table."](#)

11/3-6 *Education: Is Neoliberal Privatization (as in Charter Schools, Online Education, etc.) Good for Democracy?*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 10

[Sanford F. Schram, "The Future of Higher Education and American Democracy," *New Political Science*, 36, 4 \(December 2014\): 425-37.](#)

11/10-13 *Environmental Policy: Should We Adopt "Cap and Trade"?*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 11

11/17-20 *Foreign Policy: Should We Continue the System of Surveillance Enacted with the Patriot Act?*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 12

Part IV. Conclusion: Evaluating Public Policies and Assessing the U.S. Policy System

11/24 *Gridlock in an Age of Neoliberalism: Can We Do Better?*

Kraft and Furlong, Chapter 13

[Teles, "Kludgeocracy," *National Journal*, 17 \(Fall 2013\):](#)

Part V: In-Class Term Paper Presentations

12/1-11

Term Papers Due December 18, 2014