

The Evergreen State College
Masters Program in Public Administration
Foundations of Public Policy Winter 2017
Syllabus as of 11 14 16
Tuesdays 6p-10p Sem II

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“Public Policy” is the sexy alter ego of public administration. The study of policymaking tantalizes us. It suggests that if we can unlock the secrets to how and when big policy decisions are made, and have an impact on those decisions, we can also benefit groups and causes we care about. The reality is more nuanced. The models describing the policy process don’t provide any magic buttons to push, but they do provide a variety of helpful frames for making sense of a complex reality. And despite the advent of “fact-free” campaigning, the study of policy analysis and mastery of policy analysis skills remain critical to effective governance.

As this course begins we will be in the process of transitioning to a new Presidential administration. It will be fascinating to observe the transfer of power, as well as which groups will have the power to shape the ideological and policy preferences of the new Administration, and the particular policy issues that make it onto the national “agenda.” The winner will confront a political system that is arguably at its most polarized since the pre-Civil War era and has been damaged severely during a dreadful campaign.

This course will provide an overview of the concepts and issues in the field of public policy. As the first course in the TESC MPA program policy concentration, it is intended to provide an introduction to the study of public policy processes and to the practice of policy analysis. We will examine the political and economic rationales offered for public intervention in our society and economy, analyze the many factors influencing the policy process, and critique the models analysts have created to describe it. Policy analysts have a vital role in the policy process through their *ex-ante* analysis of proposals to take action on public problems, and their evaluation of programs that have been implemented. We will contrast two categories of approaches to policy analysis—a classic approach epitomized by rational consideration of alternatives, and their benefits and costs, and an interpretive model that features deliberative processes at the core of democratic systems of governance. Our goal is to provide guidance for future policy analysts in our representative democracy, a system in which marginalized groups still find it difficult to gain entrée to the policy process.

Course learning objectives. Students will gain:

1. Improved understanding of the complex nature of public problems in several policy arenas;
2. Improved understanding of the many factors influencing the policy process, as well as models used to describe it;
3. An understanding of critical skills and concepts of policy analysis and ability to apply a variety of policy analysis techniques;
4. Improved analysis and writing skills.

We will read 4 texts plus a variety of shorter articles, governmental reports, and research studies, and discuss these in class. Lectures, films, guest presentations and workshops will be featured during our class sessions. Students will write several short papers, and prepare one longer paper, on which they will deliver a presentation the last day of class.

Credit and Evaluation: Students will receive 4 credits at the completion of the course if all course requirements have been successfully completed. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late (without having made arrangements before the due date), or multiple absences may be grounds for denial of credit. Partial credit will be awarded only under unusual circumstances. Consistent with MPA program requirements, a self-evaluation will be required for credit.

Expectations: All students are expected to contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. Evergreen e-mail will be used for communication about class work; course documents will be available on the course Canvas site. Faculty will be prepared for class, responsive to questions and provide prompt feedback on completed assignments.

Texts

Drutman, Lee (2016). *The Business of America Is Lobbying: How Corporations Became Politicized and Politics Became More Corporate*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. ISBN-13: 978-0190215514.

Dunn, William (2011). *Public Policy Analysis 5th Ed.* New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 9780205252572

Kamarck, Elaine (2013). *How Change Happens...or Doesn't*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. ISBN 9781588269393.

Smith, Kevin and C. Larimer (2016). *The Public Policy Theory Primer 3rd Ed.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press. ISBN-13: 978-0813350059

Optional texts (if you haven't read them, at least skim through to get the gist of each author's arguments).

Bardach, Eugene (2012). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, 4th Edition, CQ Press, 2012. ISBN 1608718425

Stone, Deborah (2012). *Policy Paradox*. New York: WW Norton. *Read chapter 1 on the polis vs. the market.*

Articles and other readings. (Available at the course Canvas site unless otherwise noted). Note that additional, optional readings will also be posted to Canvas for each week if you wish to go into greater depth on a particular subject).

Anderson, J. E. (2003). *Public policymaking: An introduction*. Ch. 1. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, pp. 1 – 34.

Binder, Sarah and Thomas Mann (2011). "Constraints on Leadership in Washington." *Issues in Governance Studies* 41. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Bryson, John M. "What To Do When Stakeholders Matter..." *Public Management Review*. 2004 6(1), 21-53.

Dimock, Michael, et al (2014). Beyond Red vs. Blue: The Political Typology. Pew Research Center. Available at: <http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/26/the-political-typology-beyond-red-vs-blue/>. Downloaded 10 27 16.

Economist (2016). "The Post-Truth World." September 10th.

Hajer, Maarten A. & Hendrik Wagenaar (2003). Introduction: *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*, Cambridge University Press.

Hofstadter, Richard (1964). "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" *Harper's Magazine*, November, pp. 77-86.

Mintrom, Michael (2010). "Doing Ethical Policy Analysis." In *Public Policy: Why ethics matters*, J. Boston, A. Bradstock, and D. Eng, Eds. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Salamon, Lester (2001). "The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action." Chapter 1 of *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance*. New York: Oxford.

Optional:

Edsall, Thomas (2016). "The Paranoid Style in American Politics Is Back." *New York Times*, Sept. 8th.

Assignments. Please complete in 11 or 12 point font, double spaced. Include page numbers. Post to the course Canvas site by 6 p.m. on the date noted.

Assignment 1. For the first night of class, complete the Political Typology quiz at <http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/>. The authors of the quiz make several assumptions for their political typology model. Does their model overstate or understate any particular factors? Did your "score" on the quiz surprise you in any way? No paper required; jot down some notes for our class discussion on this topic. **Due: January 10th.**

Assignment 2. How will the revived "paranoid style" of the 2016 campaign impact national policymaking? This week's readings consider the state of the U.S. Congress as well as Hofstadter's prescient depiction of "the paranoid style" and its influence on American politics. The level of paranoia reached a fever pitch during the final months of the 2016 presidential campaign. Do you believe the increased use of the paranoid frame has made governing and policymaking more challenging, and if so, how? Is this related to the advent of the "post-truth" world described in Week 1's *Economist* article? How might it change the policy process? What in your view can and should be done to lessen the impact of the use of the paranoid style? **Due January 17th; 2-3 pages.**

Assignment 3. Write a 2-3page seminar paper on the Kamarck text. **Due Jan. 24th; 2-3 p.**

Assignment 4. Complete a bill analysis of a bill proposed before the U.S. Congress or Washington state legislature. It may be an analysis of a proposed bill or one already enacted. Follow the template provided on Canvas, where sample bill analyses will be posted. Additional details on the assignment will be covered in class and posted to Canvas. **Due January 31st. 2-3 p.**

Assignment 5. Postmodern Policy Analysis: A Thought Experiment. After completing this week's readings, write a short paper in which you sketch out how a "postmodern" policy analyst would apply this approach to a policy issue, preferably the one that is the likely focus of your final paper. How does this contrast with the classic approach? **Due: Feb. 14th. 2-3 pages.**

Assignment 6. Come to class with a *one paragraph* proposal for your final paper project (see Assignment 9). Define the problem; explain why this is a *public policy* problem. **Due Feb. 14th.**

Assignment 7. Public Policy Observation. Attend in person a government or non-profit public meeting of your choice (not something you've attended before or are attending for work). Check the agenda in advance to ensure they will be discussing a policy at the meeting. Assess where the organization is in their policy process around that issue and what factors are playing a role in decision making. To what extent is the issue a *public* policy issue? How have formal or informal policy analysis influenced the process, if at all? Over what time span has the action on this issue occurred? Collect data on the timing of key events and include a brief chronology. If you wish, you may use "Time Toast" or "Dipity" technology (<https://www.timetoast.com/> or <http://www.dipity.com/>) and put the link in your paper. **Due February 21st, 6 p.m. 2-3 pages.**

Assignment 8. Is "lobbying" malign? Critique the text by Drutman. Are you convinced by his arguments? Do you buy his proposals? Do the evolving role of the media and social media in the U.S. and Drutman's lobbying model overlap, or should they? **Due February 28th. 2-3 pages.**

9. Assignment 9. Final paper. Research and write a 10 to 15-page policy brief. Explore an important issue in depth and provide recommendations to policy makers. Additional details on this assignment will be provided in class and posted to Canvas. **Due: March 8th.**

Presentation: Prepare a 5 minute presentation summarizing your findings; be prepared to deliver it March 8th.

Policy Studies and Policy Analysis Resources. Useful webpages:

Library of Congress/Thomas: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>;

Congressional Budget Office: <http://www.cbo.gov/>;

U.S. Government Accountability Office: <http://www.gao.gov>

Washington, JLARC: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JLARC/>

Cato Institute: www.cato.org

Center for Budget and Policy Priorities: <http://www.cbpp.org/>.

Progressive Policy Institute: <http://www.ppionline.org/>

The Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org/index.cfm>

Brookings: <http://www.brookings.edu/>;

The Heritage Foundation, <http://www.heritage.org/>

Washington Policy Institute: <http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/index.html>

Kaiser Foundation hc syllabus page: <http://www.kaiseredu.org/syllabus.asp?id=98>Ehlers report on technology: at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/house/science/cp105-b/toc.html>.

Tentative Schedule winter 2017: Subject to Change

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
1 Jan 10 th	Policy: what it is and why it matters Do “facts” matter? Competing concepts of the public; Rationales for public action	Anderson (2003) Ch. 1; Dunn, Ch. 3 Economist (2016) Skim Dimock study	Assignment 1.
2 Jan 17 th	The “Paranoid Style” and implications for governance at the national and state levels.	Binder and Mann (2011); Hofstadter (1964) Optional: Edsall (2016)	Assignment 2.
3 Jan 24 th	Models of the policy process; do they survive a clash with the “real world” of US politics? Bill Analysis workshop	Kamarck (2011); Smith and Larimer (2016), Ch. 2 & 5	Assignment 3.
4 Jan 31 st	Policy analysis I: Conceptual foundations, ethical principles Stakeholder analysis & workshop	Bryson (2004); Dunn Ch. 1,2; Mintrom (2010). Smith and Larimer (2016), Chs. 1,4,6	Assignment 4.
5 Feb 7 th	Policy Analysis II: Policy options; tools for public action Is a “nudge” enough? Policy analyst panel	Dunn, p. 310-319; Salamon (2001) Ch. 1. Smith and Larimer (2016), Ch. 7,8	Nothing due!
6 Feb 14 th	Policy Analysis III: Bardach and Beyond: CBA vs. postmodern policy	Dunn, Ch. 5-8 Hajer & Wagenaar (2003); Smith and Larimer (2016), Chs. 9,10	Assignment 5; Assignment 6.
7 Feb 21 st	Debrief Public Policy Observation Assignment Should we adopt a Universal Basic Income?	Flowers (2016); Kass (2016)	Assignment 7
8 Feb 28 th	Lobbying The Media and Politics post-Trump Panel on lobbying.	Drutman (2016)-all On the media, TBD.	Assignment 8.
9 March 7 th	The future of “Car Culture”: Mobility without Autos?	TBD	Nothing due!
10 March 14 th	Final Presentations		Assignment 9: Final paper