

Political Science 316

Policy Making Process

Fall 2015
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Politics as usual. It's a phenomenon we all love to hate. But what does it mean? When government policy is decided by politics, does that mean the policy is necessarily bad? Can we get rid of politics in policy making, or improve on it somehow? What would "politics as **unusual**" look like anyway? Although we will focus on the United States, the theoretical work we cover is supposed to apply to almost all policy settings. The questions that guide our inquiry include: How do issues get defined as problems worthy of government attention? Why do some problems get attention while others are ignored? What kinds of policy alternatives are considered as solutions to these problems, and why do we end up with some policies but not others? Why is policy change adopted at some times but not at others? What leads to policy stasis and policy change? Do certain kinds of processes yield better policies than others, and how should we decide what constitutes a good policy?

Course Readings

A coursepacket of required readings is available at the '37 House (51 Park St). The following required texts can be purchased at Water St Books:

Baumgartner, Frank, et. al. 2008. *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence*. New York: University of Cambridge Press.

Mehta, Jal. 2015. *Allure of Order: High Hopes, Dashed Expectations and the Troubled Quest to Remake American Schooling*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rose, Shanna. 2013. *Financing Medicaid: Federalism and the Growth of America's Health Care Safety Net*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Stone, Deborah. 2011. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. W. W. Norton.

Course Requirements

1. Participation in class discussion (30%). Beginning September 22, you will post one to two readings-based discussion questions on Glow at least once a week. I'll select from these and add my own questions as necessary to generate an agenda for discussion. You should plan to look at all of the questions, and think about your response to them before we convene. If your question is selected for the agenda, you will likely be asked to develop and explain it for the group. Discussion questions are not required for the days on which papers are due in class.
2. Three short papers (10% each, 30% total). Two to three page papers are *due in class* on the day we discuss the readings covered by the paper. These assignments are designed to help you participate fully in class discussion and explore elements of original research. Each paper can be rewritten. Due dates are:

October 1

October 29

November 10

3. Research paper (40%): A research paper based on original research is due on Wednesday, December 16. Proposals for research papers are due on October 15. We will devote the last three weeks of the semester to discussion, writing and peer review of research in progress.

Attendance policy: Regular attendance is essential for a rich intellectual experience and lively class discussion. More than two absences will result in a significant grade reduction. Please send me an email in advance of any single absence.

Honor Code: All written work should comply with the Honor Code. If you have questions about citations, please ask.

September 10 Introduction

Part 1. Framing: Problems and Paradigms

September 15 Goals, Policy, and Politics

- Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, pp. 1-106.
- Peter Muennig, et. al., “We All Want It, but We Don’t Know What It Is: Toward a Standard of Affordability for Health Insurance Premiums,” 36 *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 5 (October 2011), pp. 829-853.

September 17 Goals, Policy and Politics

- Stone, pp. 107-153.
- Binyamin Appelbaum, “A Life’s Value? It May Depend on the Agency,” *New York Times*, February 17, 2011.
- “Was Sarah Murnaghan Treated Justly?” 134 *Pediatrics* 1 (July 2014), pp. 155-162.
- Kevin Sack, “60 Lives, 30 Kidneys, All Linked,” *New York Times*, February 18, 2012.
- Christian Longo, “Giving Life After Death Row,” *New York Times*, March 5, 2011.
- Timothy Williams, “Jailed Sisters Are Released for Kidney Transplant,” *New York Times*, January 7, 2011.

September 22 Problems

- Stone, pp. 157-228.
- Regina G. Lawrence and Thomas A. Birkland, “Guns, Hollywood, and School Safety: Defining the School-Shooting Problem Across Public Arenas,” 85 *Social Science Quarterly* 5 (December 2004), pp. 1193-1207.
- Pamela Shifman and Salamishah Tillet, “To Stop Violence, Start at Home,” *New York Times*, February 3, 2015.
- Kristin A. Goss, “Good Policy, Not Stories, Can Reduce Violence,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 4, 2007.

September 24 Constructing a Target Population

- Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, “Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy,” 88 *American Political Science Review* 2 (June, 1993), pp. 334-347.
- Frank Baumgartner, et. al., *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence*, pp. 1-48.

September 29 Creating a New Frame

- Baumgartner, pp. 49-166.

October 1 Framing and Policy Change

- Baumgartner, pp. 166-230
- Joseph Rosenbloom, “The Unique Brutality of Texas,” *The American Prospect*, July 2004, pp. A11-A13.
- Richard Acello, “Telling tales, eluding death: a new approach changes capital cases in Texas,” *ABA Journal*, 101.3 (March 2015), p. 52.
- *Paper due in class*

Part 2. Disruption and Drama

October 6 Adapting the Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice

- John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapter 4 “Processes: Origins, Rationality, Incrementalism, and Garbage Cans,” and Chapter 8, “The Policy Window, and Joining the Streams” (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), pp. 71-89 and 165-195.
- Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, Chapter 1 “Punctuated Equilibria in Politics” and Chapter 4 “The Construction and Collapse of a Policy Monopoly” (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 3-22 and 59-82.

October 8 Elections and Policy Change

- Lawrence J. Grossback, David A. M. Peterson and James A. Stimson, “Electoral Mandates in American Politics,” *37 British Journal of Political Science* 4 (October 2007), pp. 711-730.
- Anne-Laure Beaussier, “The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: The Victory of Unorthodox Lawmaking,” *37 Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 5 (October 2012), pp. 741-777.

October 13 Reading period

October 15 Library Session with Rebecca Ohm

- *Research proposal due, in class*

Part 3. Incrementalism, Path Dependence, and Policy Feedback

October 20 Incrementalism

- Charles E. Lindblom, “The Science of Muddling Through,” *19 Public Administration Review* 2 (Spring 1959), pp. 79-88.
- Stone, pp. 229-268.

October 22 Critical Junctures and Path Dependence

- Shanna Rose, *Financing Medicaid*, pp. 1-77.
- Eric M. Patashnik, “Why Some Reforms Last and Others Collapse: The Tax Reform Act of 1986 versus Airline Deregulation,” in *Living Legislation: Durability, Change, and the Politics of American Lawmaking* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2012), ed. by Jeffrey A. Jenkins and Eric M. Patashnik, pp. 145-174.

October 27 Growth amidst Retrenchment

- Rose, pp. 78-184.

October 29 Path Dependence and Reform

- Rose, pp. 185-254.
- Simon F. Haeder and David L. Weimer, “You Can’t Make Me Do It, but I Could Be Persuaded: A Federalism Perspective on the Affordable Care Act,” 40 *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 2 (April 2015), pp. 281-323.
- *Paper due in class*

November 3 Cycles and Policy Change

- Jal Mehta, *The Allure of Order*, pp. 1-38, 85-155
Recommended but not required: pp. 39-84.

November 5 Policy Dominance

- Mehta, pp. 156-247.

November 10 Reforming the Reforms

- Mehta, pp. 248-303.
- Diane Ravitch, “In need of a renaissance: real reform will renew, not abandon, our neighborhood schools,” 34 *American Educator* 2 (Summer 2010), p. 10-end.
- Fawn Johnson, “The Very Last Thing Republicans Have to Fight About,” *National Journal*, February 27, 2014 (handout).
- *Paper due in class*

Part 4. Policy Design and Democracy

Nov. 12 Incentives and Rules

- Stone, pp. 271-310.
- Martha Derthick, “From Litigation to Legislation in Tobacco Politics: The Surrender of Philip Morris,” 127 *Political Science Quarterly* 3 (2012), pp. 401-415.
- Steven Brill, “What’s a Bailed-Out Banker Worth?” *The New York Times Magazine*, January 3, 2010.
- Eric M. Patashnik, “Making Pollution Control Pay: Emissions Trading for Acid Rain,” Chapter 8 from his book, *Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes Are Enacted?* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 136-154.

Nov. 17 Facts

- Stone, pp. 311-330.
- Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, “Libertarian Paternalism,” 93 *American Economic Review* 2 (May 2003), pp. 175-179.
- Rick Mayes and Thomas R. Oliver, “Chronic Disease and the Shifting Focus of Public Health: Is Prevention Still a Political Lightweight?” 37 *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 2 (April 2012), pp. 182-200.
- Alesha E. Doan and Kellee Kirkpatrick, “Giving Girls a Shot: An Examination of Mandatory Vaccination Legislation,” 41 *Policy Studies Journal* 2 (2013), pp. 295-318.

Nov. 19 Rights and Powers

- Stone, pp. 331-377.
- Peyton McCrary, “The Constitutional Foundations of the ‘Preclearance’ Process: How Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act Was Enforced, 1965-2005,” in *The Most Fundamental Right*, ed. by Daniel McCool (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), pp. 36-66.
- Adam Liptak, “Supreme Court Invalidates Key Part of Voting Rights Act,” *New York Times*, June 25, 2013.
- Ariel R. White, Noah L. Nathan and Julie K. Faller, “What Do I Need to Vote? Bureaucratic Discretion and Discrimination by Local Election Officials,” 109 *American Political Science Review* 1 (February 2015), pp. 129-142.

Part 5.

Research Papers

November 24 What is the question? And why is it interesting?

November 26 Happy Thanksgiving!

December 1 Hypotheses

December 3 Hypotheses and Evidence

December 8 Findings and Implications

December 10 Conclusion