

Course ID Number: DCC 5340
Course Title: Public Policy Process

No. of Credits: 2

Graduate School of International Relations
International University of Japan

Term: Winter 2012

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Course Introduction

As a dialogue between society and government, public policy is understood as a stated or unstated course of (non-)action by government to achieve a desirable status of society. This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of practical and theoretical issues of the public policy process. It will require students to 1) get familiar with the defining nature of public policy and the public policy process, 2) read and discuss theoretical materials explicating the public policy process and 3) describe and analyze practical policy issues at the subnational and national levels. During the course, the student is expected to develop a unique theory-based perspective to understand and examine dynamic characteristics of the public policy process.

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DCC5340: Public Policy Process

Winter 2012

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COURSE ESSENTIALS

As a dialogue between society and government, public policy is understood as a stated or unstated course of (non-)action by government to achieve a desirable status of society. This class is designed to provide students with an understanding of practical and theoretical issues of the public policy process. It will require students to 1) get familiar with the defining nature of public policy and the public policy process, 2) read and discuss theoretical materials explicating the public policy process and 3) describe and analyze practical policy issues at the subnational and national levels. During the course, the student is expected to develop a unique *theory-based perspective* to understand and examine dynamic characteristics of the public policy process.

For this purpose, an examination of the historical development of the study of public policy will be provided, followed by discussions of the concepts, types, and tools of public policy with a special attention to the relationship between government and society. Building upon an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the policy stages heuristic, the students will be able to discuss theoretical underpinnings in examining problem definition, agenda setting, legitimization, implementation, and evaluation. The focus being on the dynamic interface between public policies and participants, the students will develop a keen understanding of the political nature of the public policy process in terms of how a variety of participants and their interests influence the nature and dynamics in each stage of the policy process. In addition, students are required to review of a policy literature that empirically applies specific theories and frameworks of their choice and present their product to the class. While designed to make students knowledgeable about, and critical of, the theoretical developments of the public policy process, this class will also provide the student with a basic conceptual tool who wants to be a policy analyst.

COURSE DESIGN

Each week we will have two class sessions. The first one will be devoted to lectures and discussions about the required readings. During the second session, two students will present the journal articles and book chapters in the required reading list. Each presentation will last no more than 15 minutes. During and after presentation, the class will be open to questions

and discussions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students become familiar with various definitions of public policy, different policy types, and policy tools.
- Students demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the stages of the public policy process.
- Students grasp various models and theories of the public policy process.
- Students identify the major actors and institutions in the different stages of the policy process.
- Students appreciate the political nature of the policy process, with a sharp focus on the various interests/participants in the process.
- Students recognize the public policy as an outcome of collective process where the role of social construction is critical.
- Students are able to apply theories of decision-making to different types of policy-making
- Students discern different approaches in policy implementation studies and evaluate their relative strengths and weaknesses.
- Students understand the intertwined relationship in the utility, significance, and participants of policy evaluation.
- Students develop a keen sense of how policy analysis and evaluation contribute to improving the democratic policy process.
- Students identify and analyze policy issues of their choice using specific theories of the policy process.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- Thomas A. Birkland. 2011. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. (3rd edition). Armonk, NY: Me.E. Sharpe.
- Kevin B. Smith and Christopher W. Larimer. 2009. *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. Westview Press. ISBN: 978-0-8133-4381-5.
- Additional readings are indicated in the class schedule.

REFERENCES

- Thomas R. Dye. 2011. *Understanding Public Policy*. 13th edition. Longman. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-77417-3
- Michael Hill and Peter Hupe. 2009. *Implementing Public Policy*. 2nd edition. Sage. ISBN-13: 978-1-4129-4799-2
- Michael Howlett, M. Ramesh, and Anthony Perl. 2009. *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles & Policy Subsystems*. (3rd edition). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0195428025.
- Anne Larason Schneider and Helen Ingram. 1997. *Policy Design for Democracy*. University Press of Kansas. ISBN-13: 978-070060844-7

- Michael Moran, Martin Rein, and Robert E. Goodin (Eds.). 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-954845-3.
- Paul A. Sabatier. 2007. *Theories of the Policy Process*. (2nd edition). Westview Press.
- Deborah Stone. 2002. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Decision Making*. Revised edition. W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN-13: 978-0-393-976250
- Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein. 2008. *Nudge*. Penguin Books.
- Stella Z. Theodoulou. 2001. *Policy and Politics in Six Nations: A Comparative Perspective on Policy Making*. Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978-0-13-086603-5.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Examination

There will be one in-class examination to the end of the term. The exam will cover the class readings and discussions, testing students' overall understanding of the public policy process. The exam will require creative and imaginative thinking.

2. Class Exercises

- **Quizzes:** There are 7 quizzes to be administered at the beginning of the class meetings. Each quiz will cover the class reading for the class. On the quiz, students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the readings for the week. Quizzes will be provided on dates at the instructor's discretion.
- **Reading Presentations:** For the majority of the class meetings, student will present articles/chapters from the reading list. The instructor will enlist volunteers for presentation. The presenter is expected to prepare PowerPoint slides.
- **Discussions and participation:** During the class, the instructor will ask lots of questions. Students are expected to actively offer their own views and understanding of the issues

3. Review Paper

- Students will write one review paper on a theory or framework of the public policy process throughout the term. The paper will 1) summarize/describe a theory/framework in the field and 2) review empirical studies that apply it.
- Each paper shall not be longer than 15 pages, single-spaced.
- Students are expected to submit their chosen topic on the class of Week 4.

4. Policy Case Memo

- Each student will write a policy memo in his or her own country. The memo is to include key features of the policy, including policy goals, key delivery mechanisms, target population, implementing agencies, expected results, and limitations (or points of improvement) of the policy.
- This memo should be about 5-6 pages long, single-spaced, excluding references.
- Some of the policy memos will be presented during the class.

Student Assessment

- Final Exam: 40%
- Review Paper 25%
- Policy Memo 10%

- Quizzes: 15%
- Presentations/Participation: 10%

Grading Scale

- 96-100 A 90-95.9 A-
- 80-89.9 B+ 70-79.9 B
- 66-69.9 B- 60-65.9 C
- <60 F

Policies and Expectations

1. *Class attendance*: Students are required to attend every class. If emergencies occur, please let the instructor know immediately through e-mail or phone. For everybody's benefits, please come to the class in time. The 15-minute quizzes begin on time.
2. *Readings*: Reading is the most important part of the class. The amount of required readings is about 100 pages per week, which should be manageable. Please come to the class prepared to discuss the issues in the readings.
3. *Consultation with the instructor*: Students are encouraged to consult with the instructor if and whenever they have questions/issues with regard to the class, including, but not limited to, term project topics, class attendance, and exams.
4. *Academic honesty*: This class follows the university guideline on plagiarism and cheating, which occurs in p. 16 of *CURRICULUM HANDBOOK for Students who enrolled in THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2011-2012*. Student is expected to give credit to the authors whose work she or he is relying upon. A simple rule is that if the student copies more than six consecutive words from works by others, then she or he needs to make quotation marks on the copied portion and cite the source. If the student paraphrases the other's work, then she or he needs to cite the source.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Introduction (Review of Syllabus) Public Policy as a Field of Study (Practice and History)

- Birkland, Chapter 1
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 1
- Lasswell, Harold D. 1951. "The policy orientation," in Daniel Lerner and Harold D. Lasswell (ed.), *The Policy Sciences: Recent Developments in Scope and Methods*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Week 2: Understanding Public Policy: Theoretical Approaches

- Dye (2011), Chapters 2&3 (pp.11-53)
- Birkland, Chapter 2, Chapter 10 (pp.301-305)
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 2 (pp.27-36), Chapter 3 (pp.66-74)
- Jones, Michael D. and Mark K. McBeth. 2010. "A narrative policy framework: Clear enough to be wrong?" *The Policy Studies Journal* 38(2): 329-353.

Week 3: Policy Context: Actors, Interests, and Values

- Birkland, Chapters 4&5
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 4 (pp.75-90)
- Sabatier, Paul A. 1988. "An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein," *Policy Sciences* 21(2): 129-168.
- Heclo, Hugh. 1978. "Issue networks and the executive establishment," in Anthony King (ed.), *The New American Political System* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute), pp. 87-124.
- Jochim, Ashley E. and Peter J. May. 2010. "Beyond subsystems: Policy regimes and governance," *The Policy Studies Journal* 38(2): 303-327.

Week 4: Problem Definition and Agenda Setting

- Birkland, Chapter 6
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 4 (pp.90-99)
- Hilgartner, Stephen, and Charles L. Bosk. 1988. "The rise and fall of social problems: A public arena model," *The American Journal of Sociology* 94(1): 53-78.
- Cobb, Roger, Jennie-Keith, and Marc Howard Ross. 1976. "Agenda building as a comparative political process," *The American Political Science Review* 70(1): 126-138.
- Literature Review Topic Due.

Week 5: Policy Formulation

- Birkland, Chapters 7&8 (pp. 202-252)
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 2 (pp.36-48), Chapter 8
- Stone (2002), Chapters 2&3 (pp. 40-85)

Week 6: Public Policy Decision-making

- Birkland, Chapter 8 (pp. 253-262)
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 3 (pp.49-56), Chapter 5
- Lindbloom, Charles E. 1959. "The science of muddling through," *Public Administration Review* 19:79-88.
- Forester, John. 1984. "Bounded rationality and the politics of muddling through," *Public Administration Review* 44(1): 23-31.
- Policy Case Memo Due.

Week 7: Policy Implementation

- Birkland, Chapter 9
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 7
- Lipsky, Michael. 1983. *Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 1&2 (pp. 3-25).
- Matland, Richard E. 1995. "Synthesizing the implementation literature: The ambiguity-conflict model of policy implementation," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 5:145-74.

Week 8: Policy Evaluation

- Dye (2011), Chapter 15
- Smith and Larimer, Chapter 6
- Howlett et al. (2009), Chapter 8
- Moran et al. (2008), Chapter 15 (pp.319-335)

Week 9: Policy Change and Learning

- Howlett et al. (2009), Chapter 9
- Moran et al. (2008), Chapter 17 (pp. 367-388)
- May, Peter. 1992. "Policy learning and failure," *Journal of Public Policy* 12(4): 331-354.
- Bennett, Colin J., and Michael Howlett. 1992. "The lessons of learning: Reconciling theories of policy learning," *Policy Sciences* 25(3): 275-294.

Week 10: Review Paper Presentation

- While all of the students will prepare presentation slides, one third of them will present.
- Review Paper Due

Week 11: Course Examination

**This syllabus may be subject to changes at the instructor's discretion if necessary. **