

**PUAD 540**  
**Public Policy Process**  
**Fall 2017**  
**Tuesday 4:30 –7:10**  
**Enterprise Hall 275**

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Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00 – 4:00 & Wednesday 6:00-7:00, or  
By appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is designed to provide an understanding of the dynamics of the public policy process in the United States. The course examines policy environments and major governmental and non-governmental actors that play roles in policymaking. Policymaking is analyzed across the stages of the policy process, from agenda setting and policy formulation to policy implementation and evaluation. The course also analyzes in-depth the policy context, policy process, and policy changes in several areas of public policy including highway funding, health care reform and Medicaid, affirmative action, and elections. In all instances, particular emphasis will be placed on the dynamic interactions among ideas, interests, institutions, and actors.

**CLASS SESSIONS:** Classes will follow a seminar format. The quality of class discussions will be critical to the success of this seminar. Students will be given discussion questions/topics each week to consider in completing the readings for the following week. Please come to class prepared to respond to these questions, as well as to raise questions of your own.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Students will be required to write two of three short papers (3-4 pages in length) analyzing selected readings. Paper questions will be distributed a week in advance and are due on the dates indicated on the course schedule; students will select which of the two paper due dates work best for them. A reflective essay, drawing on both readings and Capitol Hill Day, is also required. A group project is also required. Additionally students will be required to write a policy memo on a topic of their choice (8 pages) and to present their memo to the class.

**COURSE EVALUATION:** The final grade for the course will be based on:

- class participation 10%
- two group projects 10% each (20%)
- two papers on readings 15% each (30%)
- reflective essay on Capitol Hill Day 15%
- policy memo 20%
- policy memo presentation 5%

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course is designed to enable students to **participate in and contribute to the policy process** (NASPAA 2<sup>nd</sup> core competency), specifically to acquire:

- Knowledge of various actors and institutions involved in the policy making process.
- Understanding of the complications and constraints that budgeting presents.
- Knowledge of the general process of public policy creation, formulation and implementation.
- Knowledge of the roles of different stakeholders in policy-making: The bureaucracy, legislature, and lobbies and/or special interest groups in the policy process.

In this course, particular attention will be paid to students' ability to:

- Gain an understanding of the principal actors, institutions, and procedures involved in making public policy.
- Develop a sophisticated understanding of the Constitutional systems of separation of powers and federalism and how these systems shape policymaking and policy implementation in the United States.
- Understand the policy justifications for government intervention in a particular area.
- Acquire knowledge of the policy process across a range of policy issues, such as transportation, health care, and climate change.
- Gain insights into how information and analysis can contribute to policy advice to elected and appointed officials.
- Improve students' ability to analyze public policy proposals and make inferences about the potential for effective implementation.
- Understand differences in the political dynamics between different types of policy issues and the opportunities and challenges presented at different stages of the policy process.
- Understand the challenges and opportunities for effective policymaking in periods of crisis and rapid shifts in public opinion.

**BOOKS:** The following books are available at the Campus Bookstore:

**Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies**

John Kingdon

Harper Collins (Pearson), 1997

**All Roads Lead to Congress**

Costas Panagopoulos and Joshua Schank  
CQ Press, 2008

**Pathways to Power**

Tim Conlan and Paul Posner  
Georgetown University Press, 2014

**Medicaid Politics: Federalism, Policy Durability, and Health Reform**

Frank J. Thompson  
Georgetown University Press, 2012

Additional readings, such as journal articles and book chapters, will be available either on Blackboard or through GMU Libraries E-Journals.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

September 5 – Last day to add classes or to drop with no tuition penalty.

September 19 – Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty

September 29 – Final drop deadline (67% tuition penalty)

**COURSE SCHEDULE****August 29 Introduction and Overview**

Discussion of course themes, syllabus, and course requirements.

**September 5 The American Political System – Context for Policymaking**

In this session, we will examine the central characteristics or features of the American political system and discuss how they affect policymaking in the United States. We will evaluate how our system of government constrains the making of public policy. Additionally, we will investigate the major actors, both inside and outside government, who are involved in policymaking and consider theories or models that help us to explain the relationships among these actors.

John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Chapters 2-3.

The Declaration of Independence  
The Articles of Confederation  
Federalist Papers #10 and #51  
The Constitution of the United States

The above documents can be found in many American government textbooks and on the Internet at a variety of websites, for example the National Archives, [http://www.archives.gov/exhibit\\_hall/charters\\_of\\_freedom/constitution/constitution.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/charters_of_freedom/constitution/constitution.html), the

Library of Congress, <http://thomas.loc.gov>, and the Liberty Library of Constitutional Classics, <http://www.constitution.org>

**September 12                      Politics and Policy: The Case of Highway Funding**

In this session we will examine a detailed case of congressional policymaking. This case well illustrates not only the roles of Congress and the President, but also the impact that interest groups and ideas have on the shaping of public policy. Comparisons between the process used in this case and the ones outlined by the Framers will be drawn.

Panagopoulos and Schank, *All Roads Lead to Congress*

**First Paper  
Due  
September 12**

**September 19                      Policy Process – Formation and Formulation**

In this class we will analyze in detail Kingdon's model for understanding the processes of agenda setting (formation) and development of alternatives (formulation). We will discuss why government addresses certain public problems and not others, and justifications for the role of government in economic and social life. The methodology that Kingdon used in his research will be evaluated.

Kingdon, Chapters 1, 4-10

**September 26                      Theories and Approaches to the Policy Process**

During this session, we will examine a number of other theories and approaches to understanding the policymaking process. We will also continue our discussion of the justifications for government involvement in policy areas, as well as exploring which level of government should have primary responsibility for a policy area.

Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory" (1964), *World Politics* 16(4):677-715. (All journal articles will be available on GMU Library, E-Journals)

James Q. Wilson, Chapter 16 in *Political Organizations* NY: Basic Books, 1973. (concepts and typology to contrast with Lowi) [will be on Blackboard]

Timothy J. Conlan, Paul L. Posner, and David R. Beam, *Pathways of Power: The Dynamics of National Policymaking*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014, pp. 1-15, 106-189.

**October 3      Pluralist and Partisan Pathways -- Case Study Analysis**

In this session, we will carefully analyze the pluralist and partisan pathways. Additionally, using Kingdon's three streams framework, one group will present a case of the pluralist pathway and one group will present a case of the partisan pathway.

Conlan, Posner and Beam, *Pathways*, pp. 16-59 (Chapters 3-4)

**Group Project Presentations**

**October 10              No Class – Columbus Day**

**October 17              Expert and Symbolic Pathways – Case Study Analysis**

In this session, we will carefully analyze the expert and symbolic pathways. Additionally, using Kingdon's three streams framework, one group will present a case of the expert pathway and one group will present a case of the symbolic pathway.

Conlan, Posner and Bean, *Pathways*, pp. 89-127 (Chapters 5-6)

**Group Project Presentations**

**October 24              Health Care and Medicaid**

We will review the Clinton, Obama, and Trump administration's efforts to reform health care and then delve into the role of Medicaid in the US health care system and its political durability.

Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, last chapter

Thompson, *Medicaid Politics*, Chapters 1, 6 & 7

**Capitol Hill Day  
Friday, October 27  
Gold Room (Rm. 2168), Rayburn House Office Building  
9:00am – 1:00pm**

**Capitol Hill Day Paper  
Due  
November 7<sup>th</sup>**

**October 31**                      **Health Care and Medicaid – in a Federal System**

We will continue our analysis of the policy processes for health care and Medicaid in particular and focus this week on the federalism aspects. Four group projects will investigate the role and dynamics of Medicaid in four different states.

**Second Group Project Presentations**

**November 7**                      **Courts as Policymaking Institutions – Affirmative Action**

We will discuss the reasons that courts become involved in policymaking, the constraints on the courts as policymaking institutions, and differences in the judicial and legislative policymaking processes.

*Federalist Paper #78*

Donald L. Horowitz, *Courts and Social Policy*, Washington, DC: Brookings, 1977, Chapter Two: Attributes of Adjudication, pp. 22-56. (on Blackboard)

Rachel F. Moran, “Of Doubt and Diversity: The Future of Affirmative Action in Higher Education,” *Ohio State Law Journal* (2006) Vol. 67: 201-239.

**November 14**                      **Courts as Policy Making Institutions -- Elections**

We will continue our discussion of the courts, focusing on the Supreme Court’s rulings in three areas of election law.

***Redistricting:***

*39 341 (2016)*

Saikrishna Bangalore and John Yoo, “People (not =) Legislature, Prakash,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* (2016) Vol. 39(2): 341-370.

***Voting Rights:***

Derrick Darby, “Uncovering the Voting Rights Act: The Racial Progress Argument in Shelby County,” *Kansas Journal of Law and Public Policy* (2015-2016) Vol. 25: 329-346.

***Campaign Finance/Political Parties:***

Joseph Fishkin and Heather K. Gerken, “The Party’s Over: *McCutcheon*, Shadow Parties, and the Future of the Party System,” *The Supreme Court Reporter* (2014): 175-214

**Second Paper Due  
November 14<sup>th</sup>**

**November 21            Off for Capitol Hill Day**

**November 28            Policy Memo Presentations**

**December 5             Policy Memo Presentations**

**Policy Memo Paper  
Due  
December  
13<sup>th</sup>**

**HONOR CODE POLICY**

The Honor Code policy relative to the types of academic work indicated below is set out in the appropriate paragraphs:

1. Quizzes, tests and examinations. No help may be given or received by students when taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, whatever the type or wherever taken, unless the instructor specifically permits deviation from this standard.
2. Course Requirements: All work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement of any course. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.