

U.S. INSTITUTIONS AND THE POLICY PROCESS
PUBP-730
Fall 2017

Professor David M. Hart
Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

Times, Places, and Contact Information

Class meetings: Tuesdays, 7:20-10:00 p.m., Founders Hall 475

Office hours: Tuesdays, 4-6 pm or by appointment

Office location: Founders Hall 609

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Overview

This course provides a theoretical and practical understanding of the principal governmental and non-governmental institutions that shape public policy at the national level in the United States. These institutions include the three branches of the Federal government, which were provided for by the U.S. Constitution, along with the states. They also include institutions that the framers did not foresee, such as political parties and executive agencies. The course will investigate the interactions of these institutions over time as well as their day-to-day operations.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should have acquired:

1. Greater familiarity with the national policy-making process in the U.S., including the interaction of policy and politics,
2. Deeper appreciation of how the U.S. policy-making process compares to those of other nations,
3. Enhanced ability to analyze information and engage effectively in strategic discussions about U.S. national policy-making and its reform,
4. Stronger written and oral communication skills, and
5. More profound understanding of the ethical and moral dimensions of public policy.

Participants

PUBP-730 is open to all qualified graduate students and is a prerequisite for the Ph.D. in Public Policy at the Schar School.

Course Texts and Additional Readings

Two texts will be available in the campus bookstore:

1. Haskell, John, Marian Currinder, and Sara A. Grove, *Congress in Context*, 2nd edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 2014.)
2. Taylor, Steven L., Matthew S. Shugart, Arend Lijphart, and Bernard Grofman, *A Different Democracy: American Government in a 31-Country Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

Additional readings will be made available through the course website or linked through the syllabus to open web sources.

Format

The primary format for this course will be the seminar, with a significant role for students as discussion leaders, respondents, and participants. The seminar format will be supplemented by faculty lectures and occasional guest speakers.

Assignments and Grading

1. Designated discussion leadership in response to weekly question, approx. 750 words, due at one class meeting as assigned between Sept. 5 and Nov. 14, weighted at 10%.
2. Designated oral response to discussion leader, due at two class meetings as assigned between Sept. 5 and Nov. 14, pass/fail weighted at 5% each (10% total).
3. Policy-making process landscape mapping project, individual or team assignment (up to 3 members), topic selected by students with faculty approval:
 - a. Legislative and executive branch mapping memo, approx. 1000 words/person, due Oct. 17, weighted at 15%.
 - b. Presentation with one-page handout at class meeting, due as assigned between Oct. 24 and Nov. 21, evaluated with full mapping memo.
 - c. Full mapping memo, approx. 2500 words/person, due in class on Nov. 21, weighted at 30%.
4. Analysis of proposed institutional reform, approx. 2000 words, topic selected from list, due Dec. 13 at 9 a.m., weighted at 25%.
5. Weekly seminar participation, weighted at 10%.

Detailed handouts with instructions for each assignment will be provided well in advance of each due date.

Late Assignments

Late assignments, with the exception of the discussion leadership assignment, will be penalized one grade level (for instance, from A+ to A) for each calendar day or part thereof, up to a full grade (A+ to B+) each week. The discussion leadership assignment will not be accepted late; students missing one of these assignments will receive an F for it. If you anticipate difficulty completing this assignment, please seek to trade your date with another student and contact Prof. Hart at once.

Class Participation

Students need to attend regularly to participate effectively. A student who misses more than three classes will be penalized one full grade on the participation component for each additional class missed. Please consult Prof. Hart if you are in jeopardy of such a circumstance.

Students with Special Needs

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodation, please see the instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Read the plagiarism policy attached to the end of this syllabus. Ignorance of or failure to understand the policy will not lead to lenience in case of violation.

Class Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
1	Aug. 29	Introduction: Political Engineering	Taylor et al., chs. 1-2, skim ch. 3 Haskell et al., ch. 1	None
2	Sept. 5	Congress	Taylor et al., ch. 7 & pp. 320-4 Haskell et al., chs.3, 5-6, skim ch. 2	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation
3	Sept. 12	The President	Taylor et al., ch. 8 Haskell et al., ch. 11 <u>Klein</u> (open source) Mettler (Blackboard)	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation
4	Sept. 19	The Budget Process	Haskell et al., ch. 7, skim 8 Schick, ch. 5 (BB) Neustadt and May, pp. 157-167 & 212-219 (BB)	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation
5	Sept. 26	Executive Agencies	Haskell et al., chs. 9-10 Katz (BB)	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation
6	Oct. 3	Foreign and Military Policy-Making	Reread Haskell, pp. 339-53 Auerswald (BB) Griffin (BB)	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation
OCTOBER 10 – NO CLASS – COLUMBUS DAY RECESS				
7	Oct. 17	Policy-Making: A Worm’s Eye View	Field trip/guest speaker TBD	Seminar participation Short memo due.
8	Oct. 24	Political Parties and Interest Groups	Taylor et al., ch. 6 Haskell et al., ch. 13 & pp. 434-444 Baumgartner et al. (BB)	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation Landscape update
9	Oct. 31	Public Opinion, Voting, and Elections	Taylor et al., ch. 5 Haskell et al., ch. 4	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation Landscape update
10	Nov. 7	Federalism	Taylor et al., ch. 4 Weissert et al. (BB) Goelzhauser & Rose (BB)	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation Landscape update
11	Nov. 14	The Courts	Taylor et al., ch. 9 Haskell et al., ch. 12 Deming (BB)	Discussion lead/response Seminar participation Landscape update
12	Nov. 21	American Exceptionalism?	Taylor et al., ch. 10	Seminar participation Landscape update Long memo due.
13	Nov. 28	Reform 1	Haskell et al., ch. 14 Guest speaker TBD	Seminar participation
14	Dec. 5	Reform 2	Guest speaker TBD	Seminar participation

Additional Readings

Class 3:

- Ezra Klein, “The Unpersuaded: Who Listens to a President?,” *New Yorker* (March 19, 2012).
- Suzanne Mettler, “The Polycscape and the Challenges of Contemporary Politics to Policy Maintenance,” *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2016, pp. 369-391, only pp. 369-378 assigned. [Blackboard]

Class 4:

- Allen Schick, *The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process* (Brookings, 2007), ch. 5 (pp. 84-117) [Blackboard]
- Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (Free Press, 1988), pp. 157-167 & 212-219. [Blackboard]

Class 5:

- Richard S. Katz, *Political Institutions in the United States* (Oxford, 2007), ch. 7 (pp. 169-194). [Blackboard]

Class 6:

- David Auerswald, “The Evolution of the NSC Process,” in Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof, eds., *The National Security Enterprise : Navigating the Labyrinth* (Georgetown University Press, 2nd ed., 2017), pp. 32-56. [Blackboard]
- Stephen M. Griffin, “The Tragic Pattern of the War Power: Presidential Decisions for War since 1945” paper prepared for the 2012 American Political Science Association annual meeting. [Blackboard]

Class 8:

- Frank R. Baumgartner, Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech, “Money, Priorities, and Stalemate: How Lobbying Affects Public Policy,” *Election Law Journal* 13:194-209 (2014). [Blackboard]

Class 10:

- Greg Goelzhauser and Shanna Rose, “The State of American Federalism 2016–2017: Policy Reversals and Partisan Perspectives on Intergovernmental Relations,” *Publius* 47:285–313 (2017). [Blackboard]
- Carol S. Weissert; Benjamin Pollack; and Richard P. Nathan, “Intergovernmental Negotiation in Medicaid: Arkansas and the Premium Assistance Waiver,” *Publius* 47:445–466 (2017). [Blackboard]

Class 11:

- Adam Deming, “Backlash Blunders: Obergefell and the Efficacy of Litigation to Achieve Social Change,” *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law* 19:271-298 (2016).

Schar School Policy on Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university, as well as the field of public policy inquiry, depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus, any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the University and the purpose of the School of Policy, Government and International Affairs. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. It is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one's professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in termination from the program and possible termination from Schar School. This termination will be noted on the student's transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), termination also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the Schar School policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. (<http://policy.gmu.edu/honorcode>)

Professor Hart's Addendum

I believe deeply that intellectual integrity is a fundamental element of learning. I firmly support the School's zero tolerance policy on plagiarism and will enforce it stringently. Ignorance is not an excuse. To avoid plagiarism, a simple rule of thumb may be of help: when in doubt, include a citation. Citations, including those to web sources, should include sufficient information to allow a reader to verify the source. Further details on when and how to cite sources will be discussed in class. However, providing a citation to a block of text taken with minimal change from a source is not sufficient to avoid plagiarism. You must put the block in quotation marks, thereby acknowledging the source's contribution of specific words as well as ideas in the block.