

POS 513: PUBLIC POLICY FIELD SEMINAR

Last updated: December 20, 2007

Professor Patricia Strach

e-mail: pstrach@albany.edu

Office Hours: Contact Office (B16 Humanities), Wednesday 12:30-2:30
304 Milne Hall, Friday 1-2 and by appointment

This course introduces students to public policy and the policy process in the United States. In it, we focus on important *theories* of how policymaking works in the United States from pressures on legislators to make policy, adapt policy, implement it, and the effect it has on citizens' individual lives. We take a broad overview of the classics as well as look at new directions in contemporary policy research. This course is recommended for students who are interested American politics broadly or policy students looking for theoretical background.

TEXTS

The books listed below are available for purchase at Mary Jane books or at online retailers such as Amazon.com.

Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kevin Bruyneel. 2007. *The Third Space of Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Robert Nakamura and Thomas Church, *Cleaning Up the Mess*, Brookings Institution Press.

John Kingdon. 1984. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Boston: Little Brown.

Barbara Nelson. 1984. *Making an Issue of Child Abuse: Political Agenda Setting for Social Problems*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Paul Sabatier. 2007. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Jonathan Simon. 2007. *Governing through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Deborah Stone. 2002. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. New York: Norton.

Patricia Strach. 2007. *All in the Family: The Private Roots of American Public Policy*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

5 Response Papers	35%
Final Paper (Literature Review)	40%
Participation (Including reading questions and policy presentation)	25%

Response Papers: During the course of the semester you are required to write **five** response papers. These papers integrate the readings for the week and provide your own thoughtful evaluation and criticism. **Papers should be between three and four pages.** You may choose whatever weeks you wish to write your papers but you must turn in your paper at the beginning of class on the material that we are discussing for that class.

Literature Review: A literature review is due at our last class meeting. More specific instructions on how to write and structure a literature review will be handed out in class.

Class Participation: There are three components to your class participation grade. First, you must submit discussion questions to me via e-mail (pstrach@albany.edu) by midnight on Tuesday before our Wednesday class. The questions should be interesting and engaging questions that you would feel comfortable leading class discussion. Second, you will each sign up for two policy presentations. In these, you will do a brief background on the policy area hitting some of the major works and key issues. Policy presentations should be about 15 minutes.

Because this is a small class, we will have an active discussion about the ideas and arguments in the reading. Your participation (and even excitement) is essential. You are expected to come to class ready to engage the reading and your fellow classmates. **The date next to the readings indicates when they should be completed. You should read the assigned readings for class on that day.**

I. Introduction

January 23: What is Public Policy and Why Do We Study It?

January 30: How Do We Study It?

Sabatier. 2007. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Part I and II

Bruyneel. 2007. *The Third Space of Sovereignty*. Introduction

II. Constructing Public Policy and the Policy Agenda

February 6: Framing

Stone. 2002. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*.

Nelson. 1984. *Making an Issue of Child Abuse: Political Agenda Setting for Social Problems*.

****Policy Presentation: Pensions and Retirement**

February 13: Agenda Setting I

Kingdon. 1984. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*.

Manna. 2006. "Borrowing Strength, Federalism and Education Agendas." *School's In: Federalism and the National Education Agenda*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

****Policy Presentation: Education**

February 20: Agenda Setting II

Baumgartner and Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*.

**Policy Presentation: *Energy*

February 27: Policy Design and Creation

Salamon. 2002. "The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action." and "Tax Expenditures." *The Tools of Governance: A Guide to the New Governance*, edited by L. M. Salamon.

Strach. 2007. *All in the Family: The Private Roots of American Public Policy*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 5.

**Policy Presentation: *Welfare*

III. The Effects of Policy

March 5: Path Dependence and Policy Feedback

Pierson. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hacker. 2002. *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Policy Presentation: *Health*

March 12: Policy Change

Peters, Pierre, and King. 2005. "The Politics of Path Dependency: Political Conflict in Historical Institutionalism." *Journal of Politics*.

Strach. 2007. *All in the Family: The Private Roots of American Public Policy*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press. Chapter 3, 4, 6.

**Policy Presentation: *Tax*

March 19: TBA

March 26: Classes Suspended Spring Break

April 2: Implementation

Robert Nakamura and Thomas Church, *Cleaning Up the Mess*, Brookings Institution Press.

**Policy Presentation: *Environment*

April 9: Citizenship

Soss. 1999. "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action."

Mettler and Soss. 2004. "The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship: Bridging Policy Studies and Mass Politics."

Bruyneel. 2007. *The Third Space of Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

**Policy Presentation: *Welfare*

Recommended:

Mettler and Milstein. 2007. "American Political Development from Citizens' Perspective: Tracking Federal Government's Presence in Individual Lives over Time."

IV: New Frontiers

April 16: New Directions in Public Policy Research

Bruyneel. 2007. *The Third Space of Sovereignty*.

Simon. 2007. *Governing through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear*. New York: Oxford.

***Policy Presentation: Criminal Justice and/or Racial Equality*

April 28: Navigating Ethical Dilemmas

Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray. 1996. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. New York: Free Press. Chapters 13-14.

Frances Fox Piven. 2007. "From Public Sociology to Politicized Sociologists." *Public Sociology: Ideas, Arguments, and Visions for the Future*. Dan Clawson (et al).

Berkeley: University of California Press.

***Policy Presentation: Immigration*

May 5: Paper Presentations and Conclusions