OVERVIEW

Public policy implementation is not automatic. Government policy and program implementation is considerably more complex today than even a half century ago. Goals are now more multifaceted. Also, government is currently far more likely to contract out for the production of services and be the manager of such contracts, an arrangement known as the “hollow state.”

There are many tools available to the government to implement policies and programs. Their use must be selected wisely. In complex policy systems individual decisions can result in significant yet unintended system wide effects. The direction of a policy or program can be significantly altered or blocked by many actors in the political environment who are at odds with either policy or programmatic goals or the instruments used to achieve them.

Public policy implementation wasn’t an important field of study until the 1970s and the publication of Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky’s *Implementation*. Since then many scholars authored numerous case studies examining specific aspects of policy or program implementation and designed a number of frameworks to identify structural features and conditions for success. This course will survey key themes in the political science, public policy, and public administration literature examining the intersection between policy intentions/design and policy implementation/impact, including:

- The challenges of public policy implementation
- The tools of implementation
- The role of bureaucrats as policy implementers
- The use of regulation as a tool of implementation
- Policy implementation in a federalism environment
- Program implementation as contract management in the “hollow state”
- Legislative and judicial policy implementation
- The system dynamics of State policy implementation and impact
- State legislative policy and its implementation impact
- State-local governance policy and implementation and impact

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

*Required Books* (available at Mary Janes’ Bookstore; other readings available through BLS):

- *Implementation* by Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky (1973)
- *Cleaning up the Mess* by Thomas Church and Robert Nakamura (1993)
Assignments

2 Class Readings Reviews: three to five page essays that integrate in a critical and sophisticated fashion the reading material of the week. Essays are due at the beginning of class. One essay is due on or before March 6th. Another is due on or before April 3rd.

Final Paper: Two options. (1) Twenty to thirty page literature review on one of the topics covered in Modules I or II. (2) Twenty to thirty page examination of the adoption and implementation of a particular policy described within the context of the material in one of the topics in modules I or II. Whichever option you select you must submit a two to three page prospectus on or before the April 3rd class meeting. Final papers, to be submitted electronically, are due May 2nd by 11.59PM. Students will deliver five-minute presentations of final papers at the last class meeting and respond to one or two questions.

Final: Two five page essays. Distributed during the last class. Due May 12th by 12.59PM.

Participation: You are expected to offer thoughtful input into the classroom discussions. Two absences are permitted without explanation. Any additional absences require substantiation of a satisfactory explanation, such as a medical condition, to avoid significantly reducing the participation grade.

Grading
Final Exam: 20%
2 Class Readings Reviews: 30%
Final Paper: 40% (30% Paper; 5% Prospectus; 5% Paper Presentation)
Participation: 10%

READINGS

I. BACKGROUND ON POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction to the Challenges of Policy Implementation
Jan 31

Implementation
Implementation and Public Policy, pp. 1-17

Policy Implementation Framework and Tools
Feb 7

Implementation and Public Policy, pp. 18-48, 218-265

Bureaucrats as Policy Implementers
Feb 14

The Implementation Game, 36-177
Regulation as an Approach to Policy Implementation
Feb 21

The Regulatory Craft

Implementation and the Hollow State
Feb 28


Implementation in a Federalist System
March 6

When Federalism Works

II. INSTITUTIONS AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

Legislative Policy and Its Implementation and Impact
March 13

Cleaning up the Mess

March 20

Reform in the Making: The Implementation of Social Policy in Prison

Guest Speakers:
NYS Department of Correctional Services Commissioner Brian Fischer
Psychiatrist and Inmate Mental Health Services Specialist Stephen Price

Judicial Policy and Its Implementation and Impact
April 3

FINAL PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE

Hard Judicial Choices, pp. 3-25, 85-104, 163-204
The Impact of the United State Supreme Court, pp. 169-85
Implementation and Public Policy, pp. 138-74

III. STATE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

State Legislative Policy and Its Implementation Impact
April 10

Unjust and Counterproductive: New York's Rockefeller Drug Laws

Guest Speaker: Albany County District Attorney David Soares
System Dynamics of State Policy Implementation and Impact
April 17

What is Systems Thinking?
Systems Thinking and Public Management

Guest Speaker: Center for Policy Research Systems Modeler Rod MacDonald

Impact of State Governance Structure on the State-Local Government System
April 24

Governing New York’s Communities: Government, Business, and Civic Leaders Talk About...
Governing New York’s Communities: Municipal Leaders Talk About...

Guest Speakers:

Assistant Comptroller John Traylor of the Office of the State Comptroller
Intergovernmental Studies Program Director and Assistant Dean of Rockefeller College Sydney Cresswell

IV. FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS

May 1

Be prepared to ask your colleagues thoughtful questions on their presentations and respond to theirs