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. In addition, assigned articles are available on the course website (eres) for your convenience. You are responsible for the content of those articles even if the posted copies are missing or incomplete.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

4 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 four 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 the 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. You may only turn in one paper per week.
**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 Thursday before our Friday 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

September 2: Classes Suspended, What is Public Policy and Why Do We Study It?

September 9: How Do We Study It?

II. Constructing Public Policy and the Policy Agenda

September 16: Framing
**Policy Presentation: Pensions and Retirement

September 23: Agenda Setting I
**Policy Presentation: Education

September 30: Classes Suspended

October 7: Classes Suspended

October 14: Agenda Setting II

**Policy Presentation: Energy**

October 21: Policy Design and Creation

**Policy Presentation: Science and Technology**

October 28: Solutions

**Policy Presentation: Foreign Affairs**

III. The Effects of Policy

November 4: Path Dependence and Policy Feedback

**Policy Presentation: Health**

November 11: Policy Change

**Policy Presentation: Tax**

November 18: Citizenship

**Policy Presentation: Welfare**
Recommended:

November 25: Classes Suspended

IV. New Directions in Policy Research

December 2: US Prisons and “the Carceral State”

**Policy Presentation: Prisons**

Recommended Topic: Navigating Ethical Dilemmas
PS Symposium: “’Pracademics’: Mixing an Academic Career with Practical Politics.” PS 44:2.(eres)