Professor Patricia Strach  
e-mail: pstrach@albany.edu  
Office Hours: Mondays 1-2, Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 AND by appointment  
304 Milne Hall

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, the University bookstore, or at online retailers such as Amazon.com. In addition, articles assigned will be available on the course blackboard website.


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 Response Papers</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (Literature Review)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (Including reading questions and policy presentation)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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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 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 Monday before our Tuesday 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

August 31: What is Public Policy and Why Do We Study It?

September 7: How Do We Study It?
   Sabatier. 2007. Theories of the Policy Process. Part I and II

II. Constructing Public Policy and the Policy Agenda

September 14: Framing
   **Policy Presentation: Pensions and Retirement

September 21: Agenda Setting I
   **Policy Presentation: Education

September 28: Agenda Setting II

**Policy Presentation: Energy**

October 5: Policy Design and Creation

**Policy Presentation: Science and Technology**

October 12: Solutions

**Policy Presentation: Foreign Affairs**

October 19: Bureaucratic Politics

**Policy Presentation: Environment**

III. The Effects of Policy

October 26: Path Dependence and Policy Feedback

**Policy Presentation: Health**

November 2: Policy Change

**Policy Presentation: Tax**

November 9: Implementation

**Policy Presentation: Prisons**

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November 16: Citizenship


**Policy Presentation: Welfare**

Recommended:


IV: New Frontiers

Week of November 23: New Directions in Public Policy Research


**Policy Presentation: Trade**

Week of November 30: Navigating Ethical Dilemmas


**Policy Presentation: Immigration**

December 7: Paper Presentations and Conclusions