POS 513: PUBLIC POLICY FIELD SEMINAR

Last updated: December 20, 2007

Professor Patricia Strach
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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.

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 Response Papers</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (Literature Review)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Participation (Including reading questions and policy presentation)</td>
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**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?

II. Constructing Public Policy and the Policy Agenda

February 6: Framing
    **Policy Presentation: Pensions and Retirement**

February 13: Agenda Setting I
    **Policy Presentation: Education**
February 20: Agenda Setting II

**Policy Presentation: Energy**

February 27: Policy Design and Creation


**Policy Presentation: Welfare**

III. The Effects of Policy

March 5: Path Dependence and Policy Feedback


**Policy Presentation: Health**

March 12: Policy Change


**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


**Policy Presentation: Welfare**
**Recommended:**

**IV: New Frontiers**
April 16: New Directions in Public Policy Research
  **Policy Presentation:** Criminal Justice and/or Racial Equality

April 28: Navigating Ethical Dilemmas
  Berkeley: University of California Press.
  **Policy Presentation:** Immigration

May 5: Paper Presentations and Conclusions