

**POS 513: Public Policy Field Seminar
Fall 2011**

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Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-2:30, Fridays 3:40-4:40, 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 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.

- Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones. 1993/2009. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago 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.
- 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

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?

*Starr. 1988. "The Meaning of Privatization." (Recommended, eres)

September 9: How Do We Study It?

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

Elinor Ostrom. 2011. "Background on the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework." *Policy Studies Journal* 39(1). 7-28. (eres)

II. Constructing Public Policy and the Policy Agenda

September 16: Framing

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

Nelson. 1984. *Making an Issue of Child Abuse: Political Agenda Setting for Social Problems*. Chapters 1 and 4.

***Policy Presentation: Pensions and Retirement*

September 23: 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 (eres)

***Policy Presentation: Education*

September 30: Classes Suspended

October 7: Classes Suspended

October 14: Agenda Setting II

Baumgartner and Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*.
**Policy Presentation: Energy

October 21: 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 (eres)

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

**Policy Presentation: Science and Technology

October 28: Solutions

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

Nelson. 1984. *Making an Issue of Child Abuse: Political Agenda Setting for Social Problems*. Chapters 5-7.

**Policy Presentation: Foreign Affairs

III. The Effects of Policy

November 4: Path Dependence and Policy Feedback

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

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

**Policy Presentation: Health

November 11: Policy Change

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

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

Chris Koski. 2010. "Greening America's Skylines: The Diffusion of Low-Salience Policies." *Policy Studies Journal*. 38: 1. (eres)

**Policy Presentation: Tax

November 18: Citizenship

Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. 1993. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." (eres)

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

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

**Policy Presentation: Welfare

Recommended:

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

November 25: Classes Suspended

IV. New Directions in Policy Research

December 2: US Prisons and "the Carceral State"

Ann Chi Lin. 2000. *Reform in the Making: The Implementation of Social Policy in Prison*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Selections (eres).

Naomi Murakawa. Forthcoming. *The First Civil Right*. Oxford University Press. Selections (eres).

Weaver and Lerman. 2010. "Political Consequences of the Carceral State." *APSR*. 104:4. (eres)

***Policy Presentation: Prisons*

Recommended Topic: 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. (eres)

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. (eres)

PS Symposium: "'Pracademics': Mixing an Academic Career with Practical Politics." *PS* 44:2.(eres)