

**RPOS/RPUB 140: Introduction to Public Policy
Spring Semester 2011**

Lectures (Class number RPOS-8024 / RPUB-6631):

Tues and Thurs, 8:45-10:05 in LC18, with Professor Holly Jarman

Office Hours for Professor Jarman: Tues and Thurs 10:30-11:30am in Humanities B16, please email hjarman@albany.edu for appointments at other times.

Discussion Sessions (you must register for one of these sessions):

Pavel Terpelets (Class number 8112): Fridays, 9:20-10:15 in ES 108,

Office Hours for Instructor Terpelets: Fri, 10.30-12.30 in Humanities B16, or email pavel.terpelets1@gmail.com.

Rick Caceres-Rodriguez (Class number 8113): Fridays, 11:30-12:25 in Humanities 32

Office Hours for Instructor Caceres-Rodriguez: Fridays 1-3pm in Humanities B16, or email rc385995@albany.edu.

Course Summary

In high school civics courses you may have learned how a bill becomes a law. But where do ideas for laws come from in the first place? Why do some ideas get attention while other problems are ignored? What does it take to get a law enacted AND successfully implemented? What are the roles of the executive, legislature, courts, interest groups, business, the news media, and other actors in the policy process? Why do some policies, even after extensive research and analysis, seem so irrational and haphazard? This course introduces students to the process of public policy making. Because the policy process engages nearly all elements of politics, this course analyzes public policy making as the outcome of a number of political actors and processes. Students will gain a greater appreciation for the complexity of policymaking, the vast number of actors involved in policy making, and the factors that make policies more or less successful. Because public policy affects all fields of human activity, this course is a good introduction to policy for students in political science as well as other social sciences, criminal justice, social work, business, and related disciplines. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- discuss how public policy is made in the United States with others, using evidence from contemporary policy issues to construct coherent arguments in writing and in person.
- evaluate several issue areas in depth: explain why an existing policy came to be, debate its effectiveness, and identify potential alternatives.
- compare US policy debates with those in other countries and at the global level, and discuss those differences with others.

This course can be taken to fulfill the General Education requirement for social science. The learning objectives for social science courses are as follows:

1. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding that human

- conduct and behavior more generally are subject to scientific inquiry.
2. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena.
 3. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions.
 4. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, models, and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.
 5. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematical analysis, employment of interpretive analysis.

Required Texts

There is one textbook that you need to purchase for the class:

Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong (2009) 'Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives' Washington DC: CQ Press. 3rd Edition. The very nice companion site for the book is at <http://www.cqpress.com/cs/publicpolicy/>.

This book is available for purchase at the University bookstore on the uptown campus and Mary Jane Books on Western Avenue. Please support our bookstores and buy local! Other readings will be posted on Blackboard for each week to supplement the main textbook. The Blackboard site can be accessed at <https://bls.its.albany.edu/webct/logon/978094379001>

What We Expect From You

- Please come prepared. We expect you to read all of the required texts for each class before you come to class. Come to class ready to discuss, debate and disagree with the arguments they contain, with your fellow classmates, and us!
- Please be respectful of other people's opinions. This does not mean that those opinions should or will go unchallenged, but that we all agree to listen carefully to one another and offer constructive criticism.
- Assignments should be submitted to Blackboard by 12 noon on the day of the deadline. 5 points will be deducted from late assignments for every day that they are late, unless there are mitigating circumstances (see below). If for some reason Blackboard does not allow you to upload, simply send the assignment by email to your instructor – assignments submitted by email before the deadline are still considered on time, but Blackboard submission is strongly preferred.
- Please respect the university's policy on academic integrity, available at: http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html. Using someone else's argument without citing their work, quoting an article, book, web site or other source without giving the source, claiming as your work a paper written by someone else, and resubmitting a paper you wrote for another class are all examples of plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered to be a serious matter, even if it was not intentional. Plagiarism

could result in any of the following, depending on the seriousness of the case: requirement to rewrite the affected assignment, lowering the assignment or the course grade by a full grade or more, failing the assignment or the course, or withholding permission to withdraw from the course.

There are no prerequisites for this course. The course is graded A-E. Formal requirements, in addition to full participation in class discussion on the basis of the assigned readings, are:

1. Weekly Quizzes 40%
2. Participation in the Discussion Sessions 30%
3. Short Written Assignments 30%

1. Weekly Quizzes

We expect you to come to class having read and thought about all the assigned readings for that class. One quiz per week will be given at the start of either lecture class, and will begin promptly. The quiz will ask a few straightforward comprehension questions about the reading for that week – they are designed to test your understanding of what you have read. Each quiz is worth a maximum of 5 marks, and your top 8 quizzes will count towards your final grade. **There will be no opportunities to make up quizzes that you have missed.**

2. Participation in the Discussion Sessions

The discussion sessions are designed to do just that – they are your opportunity to talk about policy, get clarification on something covered in the lectures, or share your own views. Attending the discussion sessions is mandatory, and attendance will be taken at every discussion section. For every discussion section that you fail to attend (mitigating circumstances excluded) 1 point will be deducted from your participation grade at the end of the semester.

On three occasions during the semester, we will work together on three different exercises:

- ***Congressional Committee role-play on health reform:*** you will take the role as either a member of the Senate Finance Committee or the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to discuss the reform of US healthcare.
- ***Negotiation Exercise:*** you will be assigned to either the American or Chinese delegation to take part in the US and China dialogue, discussing both economic issues and climate change.
- ***Policy Solutions Presentation:*** Team presentation on alternatives within a specific policy area, **either** ‘Tackling Inequality in the United States’, ‘The Future of Higher Education’, ‘Options for Guantanamo’ **or** any contemporary policy issue as approved by your instructor.

Your participation in these exercises will be assessed by your instructor. Your instructor will observe your participation in both the preparation session and the exercise itself before awarding you a grade. In addition to the instructor’s observations, students may submit no more than 2 pages of notes to the instructor at the end of both the preparation session and the exercise itself as evidence of their preparation for the exercise.

3. Short Written Assignments

In relation to each of the three exercises, we require you to complete a short written assignment. The assignment will be different for each exercise:

- ***Congressional Committee role-play on health reform:*** acting as a committee staffer, write a policy briefing outlining the key issues under debate by your committee. Set out a range of policy alternatives in your report. **Deadline March 11th.**
- ***Negotiation exercise:*** write an account of the negotiations: outlining your arguments, the other party's arguments, and the settlement reached. **Deadline April 1st.**
- ***Policy Solutions Presentation:*** write an outline of your presentation, including an assessment of the effectiveness of available policy alternatives, backed up with evidence. **Deadline May 6th.**
- In each exercise, you will be using information from real life sources such as Congressional Committee reports, policy documents, legislation, media accounts, statistics, etc. Assignments should be no more than three pages, using 1 inch margins, double spaced, using 12point font. All references and source materials should be fully cited (see plagiarism, above).

What You Can Expect From Us

- **Instructor accessibility:** each instructor will hold regular office hours each week in Humanities B16. Please try to come and see us during those hours. If you can't come to office hours due to a conflict with another class or a work commitment (and only for those reasons), we can arrange an alternative meeting time with you –but be aware that we all have full schedules and you might have to wait a bit longer for an appointment. Many problems can be solved if you bring them to our attention early enough, so come to us sooner rather than later.
- **Grading:** If you submitted your assignment on time, you have the right to get the graded work returned to you within a reasonable timeframe (approximately one week), with a set of written comments.
- **Right to appeal:** if you believe your grade is wrong for whatever reason, we encourage you to visit us in our scheduled office hours to talk about the problem. However, we ask that you do so within two weeks of receiving the grade. Appeals about assignments that are more than two weeks old will not be considered unless there are mitigating circumstances. Professor Jarman will consult with the other instructors as necessary to review your grade. Making an appeal is no guarantee that your grade will be raised: it may go up, down or stay the same depending on the results of the review.
- **Mitigating circumstances:** From time to time, unforeseen circumstances mean that students will have to miss classes or assignments. In such circumstances, please let Professor Jarman know the situation as soon as it is practical, so that alternative arrangements can be made. I may request documentation of your circumstances, depending on the case.
- **Alternative class requirements:** Please contact Professor Jarman at the start of the course if you require alternative assessment arrangements e.g. extra time to finish

assignments. If you are new to the university, you may wish to contact UAlbany's Disability Resource Center, <http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml>

Course Outline & Reading List

Thurs 20th Jan: Why We Study Public Policy

- Read K&F Chapter 1

Fri 21st Jan: Discussion Sections

- Introductions, warm up

Tues 25th Jan: Why the Policy Process Doesn't Work Like a Civics Textbook

- Read K&F Chapter 2

Thurs 27th Jan: Who else makes policy? The Media, Interest Groups, & Citizens

Friday 28th Jan: Discussion Sections

Tues 1st Feb: Paying Attention- Why Some Problems are Ignored & Others are Addressed

- Read K&F Chapter 3

Thurs 3rd Feb: It's Not Over Until It's Implemented- Why Some Things Just Don't Get Done

Friday 4th Feb: Discussion Sections

Tues 8th Feb: Surprise! The Financial Crisis as a Focusing Event

- Read K&F Chapter 7
- Read Joseph Stiglitz 'The Anatomy of a Murder: Who Killed America's Economy?' p329-339 in *Critical Review* 21(2-3), 2009.

Thurs 10th Feb: Transparency and Accountability in Economic Policymaking

Friday 11th Feb: Discussion Sections

Tues 15th Feb: Tools of Government I- Taxation & Stimulus

- Christopher Howard. 2002. "Tax Expenditures." *The Tools of Governance: A Guide to the New Governance*, edited by L. M. Salamon.
- Read Paul Krugman, 2009. 'How Did Economists Get it So Wrong?', *New York Times*, September 2nd.

Thurs 17th Feb: Tools of Government II- Markets, Monetary Policy & Austerity Budgeting

Friday 18th Feb: Discussion Sections

- Health Reform Roleplay Preparation Session
- Explore health reform readings on Blackboard

******Winter Break******

Tues 1st March: Why US Health Reform Was Incremental...Until It Wasn't

- Read K&F Chapter 8
- Read Lawrence Jacobs. 2010. 'What Health Reform Teaches Us About US Politics', PS, October 2010.

Thurs 3rd March: Why Don't We Do That Here? Problem Definition & Health Policy Alternatives

Friday 9th March: Discussion Sections

- Health Reform Roleplay Exercise

Tues 8th March: We, the People- Citizenship and Public Policy

- Read Doris Meissner. 2010. 5 Myths About Immigration. Washington Post, May 2nd, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001106.html>
- Read Randall Archibold. 2010. Arizona Enacts Stringent Law on Immigration. New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/us/politics/24immig.html>
- Read Erika Martin and Courtney Burke. 2010. Health Reform: Unknown Future for Undocumented Immigrants, available at http://www.rockinst.org/observations/martine/2010-12-illegal_immigrants.aspx

Thurs 10th March: Migration, Immigration, and Government Services

Friday 11th March: Discussion Sections

- Submit Health Reform Written Assignment

Tues 15th March: Security or Civil Liberties? Homeland Security and Path Dependency

- Read K&F Chapter 12
- Read Elizabeth C Economy and Adam Segal (2009) 'The G-2 Mirage', Foreign Affairs 88(3):14-23.

Thurs 17th March: Trade Policy as Diplomacy

Friday 18th March: Discussion Sections

- Negotiation Exercise Preparation Session

Tues 22nd March: Environmental Policy & Climate Change- the Role of Evidence in Policymaking

- Read K&F Chapter 11
- Skim read IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, Executive Summary, <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Thurs 24th March: Energy Policy- Interests and Alternatives

Friday 25th March: Discussion Sections

- Negotiation Exercise

Tues 29th March: Prison Reform and The Politics of Parole

- Read Samuel Freedman. 2008. 'Unlikely Allies on a Former Wedge Issue', New York Times, June 28.
- Read CQ Researcher. 2009. Legalizing Marijuana. CQR Vol. 19, Issue 22, pp525-548.

Thurs 31st March: Issue Framing in Drug Policy

Friday 1st April: Discussion Sections

- Submit Negotiation Exercise Written Assignment

Tues 5th April: Assessing Policy Alternatives I

- Read K&F Chapter 6

Thurs 7th April: Assessing Policy Alternatives II

- Guest lecture

Friday 8th April: Discussion Sections

- Group Presentations Preparation Session

Tues 12th April: Welfare or work?

- Read K&F Chapter 9
- Read Dawn Nuschler. 2010. Social Security Reform: Current Issues and Legislation. Congressional Research Service, September 14th. This is a long document- only read pp10-18!

Thurs 14th April: How secure is Social Security? Predictions and Projections in Public Policy

Friday 15th April: Discussion Sections

- Group Presentations

******Spring Break******

Tues 26th April: Quality Control in Primary and Secondary Education

- Read K&F Chapter 10
- Read Jennifer Epstein. 2009. Should everyone go to college? Inside Higher Education, September 18th.
- Read Nick Anderson "GOP Leaving 'No Child' Behind", Washington Post, July 13th 2009.

Thurs 28th April: Paying for Higher Education

Friday 29th April: Discussion Sections

Tues 3rd May: Making Things Work- Towards Better Policy
▪ Read K&F Chapter 13

Friday 6th May: Submit final written assignment

Additional Readings by Policy Issue (great for assignments!)

Economy:

Joseph Stiglitz ‘The Anatomy of a Murder: Who Killed America’s Economy?’ p329-339 in *Critical Review* 21(2-3), 2009.

Michael Lewis (ed.) 2008. ‘Panic: The Story of Modern Financial Insanity’. New York: Penguin.

Paul Krugman, (2009) ‘How Did Economists Get it So Wrong?’, *New York Times*, September 2nd.

James K Galbraith. 2009. ‘No Return to Normal: Why the Economic Crisis, and its Solution, Are Bigger Than You Think’ in *Washington Monthly*, March/April 2009.

Paul Krugman. 2009. ‘How Did Economists Get it So Wrong?’, *New York Times*, September 2nd.

Congressional Oversight Panel reports, available at <http://cop.senate.gov/reports/>

Christopher Howard. 2002. “Tax Expenditures.” *The Tools of Governance: A Guide to the New Governance*, edited by L. M. Salamon.

The Economist, July 17th 2008. End of Illusions.

Peter Goodman. 2008. Taking Hard New Look at Greenspan Legacy.’ *New York Times*, October 9th.

Ryan Grim. 2008. Lawmakers Regret Deregulating. *Politico*, September 25th.

Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, annual reports to Congress.

Education:

Nick Anderson “GOP Leaving ‘No Child’ Behind’, *Washington Post*, July 13th 2009.

Sam Dillon 2010. “Obama Proposes Sweeping Changes in Education Law” *New York Time*, March 14.

Maria Glod 2009. “Nation’s Report Card Sees Gains in Elementary, Middle Schools”, *Washington Post*, April 29th.

Michele McNeil 2010. “Obama Seeks to Make Race to the Top Grants Permanent Program” *Education Week*, Jan 27, p16.

US Department of Education. 2010. Race to the Top Program- Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions, April 20th.

John Merrow. “Learning Without Loopholes: With NCLB Reauthorization on Hold, We Should Move Toward Common Standards-and Fewer Excuses.” *Education Week*.

Kenneth Jost (2010) ‘Revising No Child Left Behind’, *CQ Researcher*, April 16th.

Jennifer Epstein. 2009. Should everyone go to college? *Inside Higher Education*, September 18th.

Prisons:

International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College London (2010) World Prison Population List, 8th Edition.

Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons (2010) 'Confronting Confinement'.

National Public Radio (Jan 2010) 'Death Row Cases Decline in 2009', transcript.

Vera Institute of Justice (July 2009) 'The Fiscal Crisis in Corrections: Rethinking Policies and Practices'.

Marc Mauer. 2009. Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System, testimony to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, October 29th.

Samuel Freedman. 2008. 'Unlikely Allies on a Former Wedge Issue', New York Times, June 28.

John Gramlich. 2009. 'At least 26 states spend less on prisons', stateline.org, August 11th.

CQ Researcher. 2009. Legalizing Marijuana. CQR Vol. 19, Issue 22, pp525-548.

Security/Foreign Policy:

Department of Homeland Security, 'One Team, One Mission: Securing Our Homeland', Strategic Plan 2008-2013.

Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation Enduring Freedom Casualty Status, March 2010.

GallupPoll. Special Report on the Muslim World.

Stephen Mufson and John Pomfret. 2010. 'There's a new red scare, but is China really so scary?' Washington Post, Feb 28th.

Michael Green. 2009. 'US-China Relations Under President Obama.' Brookings Institution, July 14-15.

Thomas Lunn. 2010. 'Human Rights in China: Trends and Policy Implications.' Congressional Research Service. Jan 25th.

Aaditya Mattoo (2009) 'A Crisis Round of Trade Negotiations?', *Voxeu.org*, <http://www.iie.com/publications/papers/paper.cfm?ResearchID=1173>

Peter Bergen. 2009. 'Winning the Good War'. Washington Monthly, July/August 2009.

Christia Fotini and Michael Semple. 2009. 'Flipping the Taliban', Foreign Affairs, July/August 2009.

Elizabeth C Economy and Adam Segal (2009) 'The G-2 Mirage', Foreign Affairs 88(3):14-23.

Environment and Energy:

People's Republic of China, (2007) 'China's National Climate Change Program'.

Pew Center on Global Climate Change. 2009. 'Climate Change 101: Understanding and Responding to Global Climate Change.'

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2007. Climate Change 2007 Synthesis Report.

Christine Scott-Hayward, Pew Center for Global Climate Change (2007) 'Climate Change Mitigation Measures in the People's Republic of China', International Brief 1.

David Adam 'From Kyoto to Copenhagen' in Washington Monthly, July/August 2009.

The Economist. Stopping Climate Change. Special report, December 5th 2009.

John Schwartz. 2009. 'Courts as Battlefields in Climate Fights', New York Times, Jan 26th.

Bryan Walsh. 2009. Lessons from the Copenhagen Climate Talks. Time, December 21st.

Bryan Walsh. 2007. 'The Stolen Emails- has climategate been overblown?' Time Magazine online, December 7th.

Karl Thomas et. al. (eds) "Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States", US Global

Change Research Program, June 2009.

Immigration and Citizenship

- Christina Escobar (2007) 'Extraterritorial Rights and Citizenship in Latin America', *Latin American Research Review* 42(3), October.
- Saskia Sassen (1998) *Globalization and Its Discontents*, Chapter 3, 'America's Immigration "Problem"', New York: New York Press.
- Ruth Ellen Wasem. 2010. Immigration Issues in the 111th Congress. Congressional Research Service, October 29th.
- The White House of President Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President after meeting with Members of Congress to discuss immigration," press release, June 25, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-after-meeting-with-members-of-Congress-to-discuss-immigration/, accessed July 8, 2009.
- Doris Meissner. 2010. 5 Myths About Immigration. *Washington Post*, May 2nd, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/30/AR2010043001106.html>
- Steve Benen. 2010. The Perilous Fate of Immigration Reform. *Washington Monthly*, Oct 26th http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/archives/individual/2010_10/026315.php
- CQ Weekly, Top Issues for 2011: Immigration at a Glance.
- Randall Archibold. 2010. Arizona Enacts Stringent Law on Immigration. *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/us/politics/24immig.html>

Health:

- Alec MacGillis (2009) 'Your Handy Healthcare Cheat Sheet', *Washington Post*, August 16th.
- Senate Finance Committee (2009) *Financing Comprehensive Health Care Reform: Proposed Health System Savings and Revenue Options*, May.
- Senate Finance Committee (2009) *Expanding Health Care Coverage: Proposals to Provide Affordable Coverage to All Americans*, May.
- Bernadette Fernandez et. al. (2009) 'Health Care Reform: An Introduction', Congressional Research Service, August 31st.
- Senate HELP Committee (2009) 'HELP Democrats Call for Urgent Healthcare Reform', press release, June 16th.
- Senate HELP Committee (2009) 'In Historic Vote, HELP Committee Approves the Affordable Health Choices Act'.
- Tom Harkin (2009) Floor Statement of Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Stories of the Uninsured and Underinsured, December 6th.
- NPR: Is Health Insurance Unconstitutional? <http://www.npr.org/2010/12/15/132083360/Is-Requiring-Health-Insurance-Unconstitutional?ft=1&f=1027>
- Jonathan Cohn. 2010. How they did it. *The New Republic*, June 10, p14.
- John Reichard. 2010. After the Win, No Time to Lose. *CQ Weekly*. April 5th, p814.
- Zeller, Shawn. "HHS Minds a Health Care Gap." *CQ Weekly* (Jan 17, 2011): 145. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport112-000003795661>.

Welfare and Social Policy

GAO: Social Security Reform, Answers to Key Questions.

R Kent Weaver. 2000. Ending Welfare Reform As We Know It. Washington DC: Brookings Institution.

Alan Weil and Kenneth Finegold. 2002. Welfare Reform: The Next Act. Urban Institute.

Mary Cooper. 2004. Social Security Reform. CQ Researcher, September 24th.

US Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States.

Robert Posen. 2010. Congress Should Focus on Social Security Reform. Ft.com, November 18th.

Dawn Nuschler. 2010. Social Security Reform: Current Issues and Legislation. September 14th.

CRS Legislative histories of social security reform, available at:

<http://www.ssa.gov/history/reports/crsleghist.html>