

PUBLIC POLICY

V53.0306, Fall 2007

Monday/Wednesday 11 AM–12:15 PM

Room: 19 West 4th Street, #102.

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This course is about policymaking in the federal government. We seek to understand how things happen in Washington after the elections are over. Once the policymakers are in their chairs, how do they decide what to do? Especially, what explains the evident success or failure of our government in dealing with different kinds of issues? Why does Washington manage some things well (such as controlling the money supply and the Social Security system) but other things poorly (such as improving the public schools or balancing the budget?).

To find the answers, this course takes you “inside Washington,” to a world of policymaking that few Americans know much about. The players include, not only the President and members of Congress, but unelected appointees, bureaucrats, lobbyists, and experts. Some of what goes on is highly visible, such as controversies in Congress, but other things are obscure—such as the appointment of officials and the writing of regulations and budgets.

The press makes it seem that everything in government is political. Supposedly, officials decide things chiefly because of some immediate personal or partisan advantage. While this is sometimes true, the substance of policy also matters greatly. People who make a good argument about how to solve a problem have real influence. Washington is full of advocates who honestly believe in the solutions they offer. Their debate with opponents is usually sincere, and “what works” strongly influences the outcome.

How does one make one’s way in this world? Washingtonians are adept at both political and policy analysis. They are savvy about the immediate interests affected by policy, but they can also make arguments for preferred outcomes on the merits. I hope to introduce you to both of these skills. We will study how the government works at a sophisticated level, and you will learn the rudiments of policy analysis. We will review several key dimensions of national domestic policy. With this background, you will be better able to advance the solutions you care most about.

You will use these tools to address a contentious current issue—illegal immigration. Divided into teams, students will prepare presentations on the question. The leading teams will present their proposals to the class. The key is to use both policy and political analysis to make your case. Students will also write short papers about their experience.

My approach draws in part on first-hand knowledge. I worked in and around the federal government for six years before becoming a professor. I became a successful advocate for welfare reform, and I often return to Washington in my capacity as an expert on social policy. I often testify in Congress and advise agencies on these subjects.

I will use Blackboard to distribute questions, updates, and other information to the class.

READINGS

Students should purchase the following texts at the bookstore, although the books will also be on reserve at Bobst:

Michael E. Kraft and Scott R. Furlong, *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007).

James E. Anderson, *Public Policymaking: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

Barbara Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007).

Nicole W. Green, *Immigration*, ed. Ann Chih Lin (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002).

Alice M. Rivlin and Isabel Sawhill, eds., *Restoring Fiscal Sanity 2005: Meeting the Long-Run Challenge* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2005).

The following additional materials should be read where indicated in the course schedule below. They are listed in the order assigned:

Lawrence M. Mead, "Public Policy: Vision, Potential, Limits," *Policy Currents* 5, February 1995: 1-4.

James Q. Wilson and John J. DiIulio, Jr., "The Policy-Making Process," *American Government*, 6th ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1995), ch. 15.

Hugh Heclo, "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment," in *The New American Political System*, ed. Anthony King (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), ch. 3.

Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, *The Broken Branch How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get It Back on Track* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), ch. 7.

Harold Seidman, "Introduction," *Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), ch. 1.

David Osborne, "Government that Means Business," *New York Times Magazine*, March 1, 1992, pp. 20-8.

Donald F. Kettl, "The Three Faces of Reinvention," in *Setting National Priorities: The 2000 Election and Beyond*, ed. Henry J. Aaron and Robert D. Reischauer (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1999), ch. 13.

Harold Seidman and Robert Gilmour, "Cooperative Feudalism," in *Politics, Position, and Power: From the Positive to the Regulatory State*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), ch. 9.

Richard P. Nathan, "There Will Always Be a New Federalism," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16, no. 4 (October 2006): 499-510.

Duncan MacRae, Jr., and James A. Wilde, “Perfect Markets, Imperfect Markets, and Policy Corrections,” in *Policy Analysis for Public Decisions* (North Scituate, MA: Duxbury Press, 1979), ch. 5.

Additional readings for the illegal immigration project are listed below.

All the additional readings will be on reserve at Bobst. Copies may be purchased from New University Copy and Graphics, 11 Waverly Place, phone 212-473-7369. Packet 1 covers the readings above, packet 2 the immigration readings.

REQUIREMENTS

Students will take a midterm and final examinations, both closed-book and in-class, participate in a policy analysis exercise, and write a short paper on the experience. The exercise and paper are described further below. The two exams, exercise, and paper will each count 20 percent of the grade. The final 20 percent will be given for class participation, with weight to be given for both attendance (1/3) and contributions to class discussion (2/3), both of which will be recorded. Doing well in class requires attending regularly, doing the readings in advance, and participating actively.

The midterm and final exams will be two-part. Half of each test will be to write six identifications of terms or concepts from the course, chosen out of 12. The other half will be to answer one broad essay question, chosen out of three. Each part will count about half the grade. Both halves of the midterm will cover all material up to that point in the course. On the final, the IDs will be drawn from material after the midterm, but the essays will cover the whole course.

Final grades will be determined by ranking the class on the basis of average. About the top quarter to a third of the class can expect to receive A's, the middle 40-50 percent B's, the rest C's or—in rare cases—lower grades. Students should note that, because of this scaling procedure, final grades may not correspond precisely to what one would expect on the basis of average. Often, I give out more B's during the term than I want to for the record. So in the final reckoning, some students with high B averages get A's and—less often—some with low B averages get C's.

I will grant extensions, makeups, or Incompletes based on *unexpected* demands on your time, such as illness or family crises. Obligations you can foresee (such as jobs or sports events) do not qualify. For illness, bring a note from a doctor or parent. Incompletes, similarly, will be given for cause and only on the basis of consultation before the end of the course. To arrange extensions, makeups, or Incompletes, students must confer with me in my office during office hours or at other agreed times. A brief conversation before or after class is not sufficient. Students who disappear or fail to complete the requirements without explanation will simply fail the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is the schedule for class meetings, with the reading assigned for each. Readings should be completed in advance of class, as otherwise it will be difficult to participate in discussion:

Sept. 5: The Policy Approach: Policymaking challenges in Washington. The approach used in this course:

Kraft and Furlong, pp. 1-15; Mead, “Public Policy.”

Sept. 10: The Institutional Setting: How the Constitution and federal institutions shape policymaking in Washington. The key governmental players.

Kraft and Furlong, pp. 30-51; Kingdon, ch. 2.

Sept. 12: The Political Setting: The political and electoral forces that shape policymaking. Key nongovernmental players.

Kraft and Furlong, pp. 51-71; Kingdon, ch. 3.

Sept. 17: Types of Policy: Types of issues and the political patterns associated with them. The theories of Theodore Lowi and James Q. Wilson.

Kraft and Furlong, pp. 87-9; Wilson and DiIulio, "The Policy-Making Process."

Sept. 19: The Agenda: Politics: How issues and alternatives come to be defined in policymaking.

Anderson, ch. 3; Kingdon, chs. 1, 4-5, 7.

Sept. 24: The Agenda: Experts: The important role of outside experts in developing alternatives and solutions for government.

Kingdon, chs. 6, 8, 10; Hecllo, "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment."

Sept. 26: Congress: Partisanship: The rising polarization of the parties in Congress, and the changes this has forced in how Congress operates.

Anderson, pp. 127-47; Sinclair, ch. 1; Mann and Ornstein, *Broken Branch*, ch. 7.

Oct. 1: Congress: Policymaking: Changes in procedures that have made Congressional decisions more complicated and less predictable in the last twenty years.

Sinclair, chs. 2-4, 6, 13

Oct. 3: The Bureaucracy: Functions and organization of the federal bureaucracy. The politics of Executive organization and bureaucratic reform.

Anderson, pp. 211-27; Seidman, "Introduction."

Oct. 8: No class (Columbus Day)

Oct. 10: The Reinvention of Government (Prof. Dennis Smith): The influential theory that the bureaucracy can be improved through contracting, competition, and other market mechanisms.

Osborne, "Government that Means Business"; Kettl, "The Three Faces of Reinvention."

Oct. 15: Federalism: The Intergovernmental System: Evolution, politics, and reform of the federal system, including intergovernmental grants.

Kraft and Furlong, pp. 37-42; Seidman and Gilmour, "Cooperative Feudalism"; Nathan, "There Will Always Be a New Federalism."

Oct. 17: Implementation: The complex, troubled implementation of domestic programs. Influence of local administration, the grant system, and the courts.

Anderson, ch. 6.

Oct. 22: Midterm Examination.

Oct. 24: Immigration: History and development of the nation's policies toward newcomers from abroad.

Green and Lin, pp. 1-43, 81-100.

Oct. 29: Illegal immigration: The current controversy over how to deal with undocumented aliens, chiefly from Mexico.

Green and Lin, pp. 43-81, 100-12.

Oct. 31: Policy Analysis: Rationales for Policy: How government interventions are justified. The influential theory of the agenda developed by economists.

Kraft and Furlong, pp. 15-19; MacRae and Wilde, "Perfect Markets, Imperfect Markets, and Policy Corrections."

Nov. 5: Policy Analysis: Making Policy Arguments:

Anderson, pp. 122-7; Kraft and Furlong, chs. 4-6.

Nov. 7: Budgeting: Basics: The fundamental concepts and institutions of federal budgeting.

Anderson, pp. 162-85; Kraft and Furlong, pp. 199-217.

Nov. 12: Budgeting: Crisis and Reform: The deficit controversy, budget reform, the balancing of the budget, and its recent unbalancing.

Anderson, pp. 185-95; Sinclair, chs. 5, 10-12; Rivlin and Sawhill, chs. 1, 6.

Nov. 14: Evaluation: How government programs are reassessed in the light of experience. Different approaches to evaluation, and the politics thereof.

Anderson, ch. 7.

Nov. 19: Entitlements: The budgetary and other problems posed by large guaranteed benefit programs such as Social Security, health programs, and welfare.

Kraft and Furlong, ch. 9; Rivlin and Sawhill, ch. 3.

Nov. 21: Health Policy: The problem of health policy and the major public programs, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Kraft and Furlong, ch. 8; Rivlin and Sawhill, ch. 4.

Nov. 26: Domestic Policy: Overview of what the federal government does domestically, and current challenges in economic, regulatory, and social policy.

Kraft and Furlong, pp. 180-99, 290-360.

Nov. 28: Student presentation on illegal immigration.

Dec. 3: Student presentation on illegal immigration.

Dec. 5: Student presentation on illegal immigration.

Dec. 10: Student presentation on illegal immigration.

Dec. 12: Review Session.

Papers due in class.

Dec. 17: Final examination—10-11:50 AM, in 19 West 4th Street, #102.

POLICY ANALYSIS EXERCISE

Overview

Students will participate in teams that prepare presentations on this issue: *How should the federal government respond to the problem of illegal immigration?*

Note that this question covers only illegal immigration, not the many other issues involved in legal immigration policy. However, the positions one takes on the illegals may be influenced by positions on these other issues.

The main options to be considered are:

- *An enforcement approach* that stresses mainly the reduction in illegal immigration through improving border security and enforcing laws against employment of the illegals.
- *A legalization approach* that stresses mainly the use of guest worker programs and the movement of the illegals toward citizenship.

Teams of about six students each will be formed after the midterm examination, some favoring one approach to the issue and others the other. I will give lectures to introduce the topic on Oct. 24 and 29. Teams will work independently to develop evidence and arguments supporting their position and criticizing others. Each team will give a preliminary presentation to me, receiving feedback. Teams will then give presentations to class in the period Nov.28-Dec. 10, followed by questions. If there are more than four teams, the four with the strongest initial run-throughs will be the presenters. Thus, each team will be in the position of witnesses making presentations to policymaking bodies, such as Congressional committees.

Actual policy analysis done in Washington often is technical and detailed. Your task here is more qualitative—to justify a general approach to solving the illegals problem. You may offer projections about costs or other effects based on existing reform plans, but I do not expect you to make such estimates yourselves. Focus on showing in general terms why your option is preferable to the alternatives. Address these questions, in approximately this order:

- *Problem:* What exactly is the problem posed by illegal immigration? State it as precisely as possible. Your team will have to narrow the problem posed to keep it manageable.
- *Causes:* What are the forces behind the problem? What caused it, and, thus, what has to change to overcome it?
- *Options:* What are the alternatives for solving the problem? Be creative. You may consider options other than those I have defined.
- *Consequences:* What would be the results of choosing each alternative? Explain the strong and weak points of each. One can cover just the strong points of each if the drawbacks are clear from the advantages of the other options.
- *Politics:* Include in your analysis political or bureaucratic factors that might impede approving or implementing your recommendation. How do you deal with these problems?
- *Recommendation:* In light of the above, which approach do you favor and why?

Some reform proposals and bills in Congress already exist. While teams may allude to these, they should concentrate on understanding the problem and showing why *in general* their approach is best for overcoming it.

For guidance on how to do public policy research, see the class handout on this topic.

Details

Teams: Students will be assigned to teams based on preferences they indicated on their information forms at the beginning of the course. I will designate team leaders from among students who have been active in class. Once assembled, each team is free to develop whatever position it prefers on the issue. You may reject your initial position and propose something else.

Schedule: The teams will be named right after the midterm examination. Team leaders will be in charge of arranging meetings and allocating tasks after discussion with other team members. Teams will go through these stages:

- *Initial meeting:* Following the initial lectures on immigration, I will hold meetings outside of the usual class time. There will be one meeting for each major reform option. All the teams addressing each option should come to the meeting on that option. If all members cannot come, at least send representatives.
- *Initial reading:* All students should do the reading assigned for the two lectures on the topic as soon as possible.
- *Further reading:* Team members may read the additional items suggested below and further items that they may uncover themselves. Members may divide up the readings among themselves, each member reading some items and producing notes on them for the others.
- *Working meetings:* I leave it to each team leader to arrange further meetings to assemble the team's work and write its presentation.
- *Run-through:* Each team will make an initial presentation to me at a time outside of class, receiving feedback. Based on the initial run-throughs, I will select four teams to speak in class, if there are more than four teams.
- *Class presentation:* The selected teams will make revised presentations to the class on one of the four dates, Nov. 28-Dec. 10.

Note that, both in the trial run and class sessions, presentations should:

- Last no more than 30 minutes, to allow time for discussion.
- Include a verbal argument backed by PowerPoint slides to summarize the main points. Do not overdo PowerPoint or fail to make your verbal argument clear.
- Involve several team members as presenters. Several members should also respond to questions. However, there is no requirement that everyone speak

See separate handout on presentations for further pointers and details.

Grades: I will grade each team based on its presentation(s). All members of a team will receive the same grade, provided all have contributed in a meaningful way. Members who fail to contribute or cause problems for their groups may receive a lower grade.

Readings

The readings for the introductory lectures on the topic are assigned in the class schedule above. How much more reading teams do is up to them. I recommend the following items, all of which are on reserve at Bobst and available for purchase (see above). All should also be available through Bobst e-journals, although you may have to try several web archives to find them:

Linda Chavez, "The Realities of Immigration," *Commentary*, July/August 2006, pp. 34-40.

Ashley Pettus, "End of the Melting Pot?" *Harvard Magazine*, May-June 2007, pp. 44-53.

Jeffrey S. Passel, "The Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S.: Estimates Based on the March 2005 Current Population Survey" (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, March 7, 2006).

Peter Skerry, "How Not to Build a Fence," *Foreign Policy*, no. 153 (September/October 2006): 64-7.

Roger Lowenstein, "The Immigration Equation," *New York Times Magazine*, July 9, 2006, pp. 36-43, 69-71.

Samuel P. Huntington, "The Hispanic Challenge," *Foreign Policy*, no. 141 (March/April 2004): 30-45.

Polls on immigration:

NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Poll, "Immigration: Summary of Findings."

Center for Immigration Studies, "New Poll: American Prefer House Approach to Immigration."

John S. Lapinski, Pia Peltola, Greg Shaw, and Alan Yang, "Trends: Immigrants and Immigration," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 356-83.

Other materials: Teams are free to research and cite materials from government publications and web pages, such as the Department of Homeland Security, the agency that oversees immigration. Students may also cite the items listed above and other nongovernment materials provided they were regularly published as books or academic articles. Stories from *National Journal* and *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports*, available through Bobst e-journals, are good sources on the evolving politics of the immigration issues and bills in Congress.

Teams may *not* cite material off web pages that are *not* governmental *unless* the material was also regularly published. If possible, materials should be cited in their published form and not using web addresses.

PAPER

After working on the policy analysis exercise, you will write a short paper assessing the experience. Question: "Why did the policy analysis exercise turn out as it did?" Your task is to explain why some groups and arguments turned out to be more effective than others. Consider your own group's presentation, the reception it received, and also the fate of other groups. Address such issues as:

- Overall, was the enforcement or legalization approach most persuasive to the class, and why?
- What arguments or evidence proved to be most decisive in determining that outcome?
- In your own group, what was strongest about your presentation, and what was weakest?
- Which aspects of making your case presented the most difficulty for your group, and why?
- How was your own opinion about how to solve illegal immigration affected by the experience?
- What would you do different next time?

Document your points from the readings as appropriate, but this is not a research paper. Rather, I want to know what you have learned about making policy argument from the immigration case.

Due: Dec. 12, the last meeting of class. Papers handed in after this will be accepted but penalized --5 points if handed in by the final examination, which is on Dec. 17; --10 points if handed in later than this but prior to the time grades are submitted.

Be aware that delays due to commuting, the subway, or computer or printer problems are to be expected and are the student's responsibility.

Extensions without penalty will be given for serious, unexpected, and documented demands on your time, such as illness or family emergency. Students in difficulties should confer with me out of class before the paper is due. For illness, bring a note from a parent or doctor.

Extensions beyond when grades go in require an Incomplete. This also requires that there be serious, unexpected, and documented demands on your time. You must confer with me out of class *before the end of the course*. Students who fail to turn in a paper, or turn it in after grades are submitted, without arranging an Incomplete, will simply fail the course.

Submission: Papers may be handed to me in class on or before the deadline. They may also be left in my box at the Politics Department prior to when I leave for the class when the paper is due.

Papers may be mailed, but must arrive by the time due, not simply be postmarked on that date. Papers may not be faxed to the Department or submitted by e-mail.

Keep a copy of your paper, in hard copy or on disk, in case it should become lost.

Format: Papers should observe the following guidelines. Papers infringing the rules will be accepted but incur a penalty of 4 points off per infraction, but not more than 8 points total:

--Cover page: must include name, local address, e-mail address, and all possible phone numbers. Please place this data in the upper left-hand corner, to make it easier to locate your paper in a stack.

--Cover page: *must also include the question being answered.* Write it out verbatim on your cover page. This is to make sure that you focus on it. *Students often forget to do this!*

--Length: 8-10 pages, excluding cover page and bibliography (if any) but including footnotes or endnotes. In figuring length, half the length of any tables or figures will be added to the text.

--Papers must be typed or written on a computer.

--Spacing: double-spaced, with 24-7 lines to the page.

--Margins: 1-1.5" on the left and top of pages, .75-1" on the right and bottom.

--Type size: close to the size used for this assignment.

--Pages must be numbered, starting with the first page of text. Numbers may be handwritten.

--Binders--avoid. Instead, papers should be stapled at upper left-hand corner.

--Citations: Materials that are cited must come from government sources or articles or books that were regularly published, not private think tanks or web pages.

Sources: The paper may be written entirely from the readings required for the course and the policy analysis exercise. You may consult further materials, but this is not required.

Originality: Students may discuss the assignments with other students but must write their papers individually, without collaboration with others. Students may seek help with their writing in general, but the writing they hand in should be entirely their own, not edited by others.

Plagiarism: Do not use ideas or language drawn from readings without giving the source. Also, do not use an author's actual language as if it were your own. When you quote a source verbatim, it is not sufficient to give the reference; you must *also* put quotation marks around the borrowed language to make clear that someone else is talking. It is plagiarism not to cite a source *and also* to use an author's words as if they were your own--even if you do cite the source. Do not copy material out of books into your paper unless the author truly says it better than you can. Plagiarism is a serious offense that will draw heavy penalties.

At the same time, do not be self-consciously "academic." The paper is intended to test your own thought and expression. Don't feel you have to have a citation on every sentence. There is no need to document facts that are commonly known to your audience.

Documentation: See separate handout. You may use the author/date or footnote/endnote method.