

Political Science 575
Public Policy and Management 508
M 1:30-4:20, Parrington 213
Winter 2010

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PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES

This course is broadly concerned with political science research about policy processes. We will conduct this course as a research seminar in American politics. The material addresses various perspectives concerning policy processes primarily in the American context but with some examples outside of the United States. The course is aimed at PhD students who desire to use the course for developing their interests and research possibilities in studying aspects of policy processes or public policy.

Requirements

The main requirement is development of a research paper that addresses relevant concepts, one or more of the theoretical perspectives discussed in the course, or both. Details about the paper will be provided in class. Examples of prior papers are contained in the readings listed below.

Grades will be based on a combination of performance on a short response paper, the required research paper, and contributions to the seminar. Each component will be assessed as follows:

- *Response Paper.* This will be due the 5th week of the quarter (Thursday, February 4th). By then, we will have worked our way through a variety of theories about policy processes. For this assignment, you are asked to write a 4 to 5 page (double-spaced) response paper that addresses the question “what is the state of theorizing about policy processes?” with attention to your take on (a) emerging consensus about how to study policy processes, (b) fruitful areas of theorizing, (c) less fruitful areas of theorizing, and (d) major gaps in theorizing and/or research. The emphasis should be on your assessment of the literature that we have addressed as in answering a qualifying exam question. This will count for 20 percent of the course grade.
- *Research Paper.* This will be developed in a series of steps that include: (1) preliminary topic paper due during the 3rd week (due January 18th by email submission); (2) “toward final paper” due the 6th week (due February 10th by email submission); (3) in-class presentation to be given during week 10; and (4) the research paper itself (due March 15th by email submission). Each of the first two items will be graded either as “ahead of the game” (plus .1), “on target” (zero), or “time to get going” (minus .1). The final paper grade will be adjusted by the grade points listed in parentheses for each rating (i.e., maximum of plus/minus .2) to a maximum grade on the final paper of 4.0. Failure to turn in either intermediate paper on time will result in a .3 grade reduction to the final paper for each instance. In addition, note that there is a penalty for late final papers. The research paper constitutes 60 percent of the course grade.
- *Contribution to the Seminar.* Your contributions to the seminar will be assessed with respect to: (1) your performance in leading assigned discussion of material for the course; and, (2) your contributions to the seminar discussion and in weekly course postings. For selected weeks of the course (noted in the syllabus) you are required to post comments about the readings using the Catalyst Go-Post feature (linked in course website) by 12n of the day of the class. These should be a paragraph or so of your comments that provide your reactions, questions that occur to you, and other observations about the readings or

theoretical perspectives. Those taking the lead for any given topic should scan the posted comments and be prepared to address them as part of the discussion of relevant material. Each student's contributions to the seminar will be evaluated on an overall scale of "stellar contributions" (3.8 to 4.0), "solid contributions" (3.6 to 3.8), "acceptable contributions" (3.4 to 3.6), or "less than desired contributions" (3.3 or below). A single grade will be provided for this component and it will constitute 20 percent of the course grade.

Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore:

Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). [The main change in the 2nd edition is an added Chapter 13, which is part of the reading assignments.]

Eric M. Patashnik, *Reforms at Risk: What Happens after Major Policy Changes are Enacted* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Paul Sabatier, ed., *Theories of the Policy Process*, 2nd edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007).

Recommended background for those with limited exposure to the fundamentals of policy processes in the United States:

Thomas Birkland, *An Introduction to the Policy Process* – now in 2nd edition (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe 2005).

Additional journal articles and sample student papers – each marked with (w) in the list of readings that follow – will be available for downloading from a password-protected portion of the course website.

Web Resources

A web site has been established for the course as indicated at the top of the first page of the syllabus. That site provides updates on assignments and links to useful research sites.

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

We are constrained this quarter by conflicts between the scheduled course meeting date and two holidays (January 18th and February 15th) along with another conflict for the instructor on February 8th. This means that some sessions will cover more material than normal and that we may have to schedule additional meeting times if we fall behind.

Week 1. Jumping In

January 4 – reading comments to be submitted by 12n

Course Overview

Policy Processes – Overview of Theoretical Issues and Perspectives

Paul Sabatier, "The Need for Better Theories," Chapter 1, pp. 3-17; and "Fostering the Development of Policy Theory," Chapter 11, pp 321-336 in Sabatier *Theories of the Policy Process*.

Studying Policy Agendas, Focusing Events, and Interest Involvement

John Kingdon's "Streams Metaphor" and the Opening of Policy Windows

Nikolaos Zahariadis, "The Multiple Streams Network: Structure Limitations and Prospects," Chapter 3 in Sabatier *Theories of the Policy Process*, pp. 65-92.

Thomas Birkland, "Focusing Events, Mobilization, and Agenda Setting," *Journal of Public Policy* 18 (January-April, 1998): 53-74 (w)

Jessica Boscarino, "Surfing for Problems: Advocacy Group Strategy in Forest Policy," *Policy Studies Journal* 27 (3, 2009): 415-435. (w)

Sample Student Papers

Travis W. Reynolds, "Coalitions, Institutions, and Strategy in United States Climate Change Policy," POLS 575 paper 2008, 30pp. (w)

Week 2. Agenda and Policy Change: Theoretical Perspectives

January 11 – reading comments to be submitted by 12n

Dynamics of Policy Agendas – Information Processing

Baumgartner and Jones: Punctuated Equilibrium and Agenda Change

James True, Bryan Jones, and Frank Baumgartner, "Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in American Policymaking," Chapter 6 in Sabatier *Theories of the Policy Process*, pp. 155-187.

Baumgartner and Jones, "Punctuated Equilibria in Politics," Chapter 1, "Punctuated Equilibria in Politics"; Chapter 5, "Two Models of Issue Expansion"; and Chapter 13, "Policy Subsystems, Punctuated Equilibrium, and Theories of Policy Change" in *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*.

Samuel Workman, Bryan D. Jones, and Ashley Jochim, "Information Processing and Policy Dynamics," *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (1, 2009): 75-92. (w)

Policy Venues and Venue Shopping

Sarah B. Pralle, "Venue Shopping: Political Strategy and Policy Change: The Internationalization of Canadian Forest Advocacy," *Journal of Public Policy* 23 (2003): 233-260. (w)

Dynamics of Policy Change: ACF

Paul Sabatier and Hank-Jenkins Smith: Advocacy Coalition Framework

Paul Sabatier and Christopher Weible, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications," Chapter 7 in Sabatier *Theories of the Policy Process*, pp. 189-220.

Christopher Weible, Paul Sabatier, and Kelly McQueen, "Themes and Variation: Taking Stock of the Advocacy Coalition Framework," *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (1, 2009): 121-140 (w).

Peter J. May, "Reconsidering Policy Design: Policies and Publics," *Journal of Public Policy* 11 (part 2, 1991): 187-206. (w)

Sample Student Papers

Melissa Poague, "Mature Versus Emergent Policy Areas: Comparing Point and Nonpoint Sources of Water Pollution," MA essay, UW Department of Political Science, 2004, 45pp. (w)

Policy Entrepreneurs

Michael Mintrom and Phillipa Norman, "Policy Entrepreneurship and Policy Change," *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (4, 2009): 649-677. (w)

Week 3. Toward Final Papers

January 18 – Holiday.

Topic Paper due January 18th by 4pm as word or pdf document to pmay@u.washington.edu

Discussion of research paper directions – Individual consultations regarding the final paper to be arranged.

Week 4. Problem Definitions, Causal Reasoning, and Policy Feedback

January 25 – reading comments to be submitted by 12n

Problem Definitions and Causal Reasoning

Schneider and Ingram's "Social Construction" Theory

Anne Schneider, Helen Ingram, and Peter DeLeon, "Social Construction and Policy Design," Chapter 4 in Sabatier *Theories of the Policy Process*, pp. 93-126.

Anne Schneider and Maria Sidney, "What's Next for Policy Design and Social Construction Theory?" *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (1, 2009): 103-119. (w)

Causal Reasoning, Problem Definitions, and Social Construction

Deborah A. Stone, "Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas," *Political Science Quarterly* 104 (Summer 1989): 281-300. (w)

Sample Student Papers:

Shauna Fisher, "Policy Venues, Social Constructions, and Same Sex Marriage: Defining the Issue of Same Sex Marriage across Congress and Courts," Paper Political Science 575 course 2004, 27pp. (w)

Policy Feedback

Suzanne Mettler and Joe Soss, "The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship: Bridging Policy Studies and Mass Politics," *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (1, March 2004): 54-73. (w)

Eric Patashnik and Julian Zeilzer, "When Policy Does Not Remake Politics: The Limits of Policy Feedback," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 2009. (w)

Week 5. Foci and Units of Analysis –Subsystems, Regimes, and Policy Coherence

Response Paper due Thursday February 4th by 4pm with submission by email to pmay@u.washington.edu as a word or pdf document. Place your name on a cover page only to permit blind grading of the paper.

February 1 – reading comments to be submitted by 12n

Subsystems and Regimes

Daniel McCool, "Subgovernments as Determinants of Political Viability," *Political Science Quarterly* 105 (2, 1990): 269-293. (w)

Peter J. May, Joshua Sapatichne, and Samuel Workman, "Widespread Policy Disruption: Terrorism, Public Risks, and Homeland Security," *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (2, 2009): 171-194. (w)

Ashley E. Jochim and Peter J. May, "Beyond Subsystems: Policy Regimes and Governance" forthcoming *Policy Studies Journal*. (w)

Sample Papers

Joshua Sapatichne, "Reconstructing National Urban Policy," paper presented at the 2009 APPAM meeting, Michigan State University [from his dissertation], 30pp. (w)

Policy Coherence and Policy Regimes

Peter J. May, Joshua Sapatichne, and Samuel Workman, "Policy Coherence and Policy Domains," *Policy Studies Journal* 24 (3, 2006): 381-403. (w)

Peter J. May, Ashley Jochim, and Joshua Sapatichne, "Policy Regimes and Governance: Constructing Homeland Security," Center for American Politics and Public Policy, 40pp (w)

Sample Student Papers:

Ann Buffardi, "Failure to Focus: Implications of Issue Fragmentation for U.S. Foreign Policy," APPAM Conference 2009 (revision of PolS 575 Paper, Winter 2008), 26pp (w).

Weeks 6 & 7. Consultation on Final Papers

February 8 – no class – P. May out of town

Draft “Toward Final Paper” due 4pm on February 10th as a word or pdf document to pmay@u.washington.edu

February 15 – no class holiday.

Consultations on final papers to be arranged.

Week 8. Policy Learning

February 22 – reading comments to be submitted by 12n

Policy Learning

Peter J. May, "Policy Learning and Failure," *Journal of Public Policy* 12 (Part 4, 1992): 331-354. (w)

Colin Bennett and Michael Howlett, "The Lessons of Learning: Reconciling Theories of Policy Learning and Policy Change," *Policy Sciences* 25 (August 1992): 275-294. (w)

Sample Student Papers:

Betsi Beem. "Planning to Learn: Blue Crab Policymaking in the Chesapeake Bay," *Coastal Management Journal* 34 (2006): 167-182. (w)

Yuta Masuda, "Policy Learning in Public Health: The Case of Seasonal Influenza and Avian Influenza," paper for POLS 575 autumn 2009, 28pp (w).

Week 9. Making Policy Stick – Reforms at Risk

March 1 – reading comments to be submitted by 12n

What Happens after Major Policy Changes are Enacted

Eric Patashnik, *Reforms at Risk* – focus on chapters 1, 2, & 9 (theorizing and conclusions) and read at least one of the case chapters (3 through 8)

Week 10. Research Presentations & Wrapping up course

March 8

Individual presentation of key themes, ideas, and findings from research papers.

Week 11. [Exam week]

Research Papers Due March 15th by email to [pmay@u.washington](mailto:pmay@u.washington.edu) as a word or pdf document by 4pm.