

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

CORE-GP 1022 – Introduction to Public Policy – Spring 2018

Lecture: Section 001: Monday 6:45-8:55pm, MEYR 102
J. Andrew Sinclair, j.andrew.sinclair@nyu.edu
Discussion: Section 002, Monday 5:35-6:35pm, MEYR 102
TA: Laura Bligh, lh1436@nyu.edu
Discussion: Section 009, Monday 9:05-10:05pm, MEYR 102
TA: Caroline Iosso, ci495@nyu.edu

Course Description

This is a course about the public policy process and the role you – in many different capacities – can have in shaping policy outcomes. This class introduces you to analytic frameworks for thinking about various aspects of this process. We do not study a single context or policy, but, rather, seek to understand how policy actors succeed (or fail) in obtaining their objectives. You will learn to think carefully about institutions and present your analysis (in person and in writing) to policymakers. You should complete this course with a better sense of the challenges facing you and opportunities you have to make a durable impact.

Course Objectives

1. To understand core theories of the process of making public policy.
2. To understand the politics of policy arguments.
3. To understand the decisionmaking tools and strategies of policymakers.
4. To learn how to conduct an institutional analysis for a policy proposal.
5. To learn how to write a memorandum presenting an institutional analysis.

Teaching Approach

To build a sophisticated understanding of the policy process you will need to engage in all components of the course. It is expected that you will complete all required readings in advance of the session for which they are listed, take notes on the material, and be prepared to summarize and critically evaluate it. You will help guide the discussion in our class meetings; your classmates are counting on you to bring your own perspective to small-group and whole-class conversations. Classes will include both lecture and discussion components – but feel free to ask on-topic questions at any point. I encourage the expression of diverse viewpoints in class and in your writing assignments; you should work within the framework under discussion but always think for yourself.

Assignments and Evaluation

See the schedule at the end of the syllabus for specific dates. This course involves a number of integrated components, including an op-ed assignment designed by Professor Thom Blaylock (in common across all policy sections in 2017-2018) and a presentation-skills component (featuring a workshop with a communications specialist, Professor Will Carlin, and individual presentations). While this does generate a lot of “moving parts,” it also means that you will get a lot from the course.

Individual feedback will be returned to you via NYU Classes for most of your assignments. If something seems amiss about the grading of your assignment, or you would like more information about the evaluation of your work, be sure to get in touch. Every student matters. It is important to get this right.

“Op-ed.” (10% of Grade). You will write an opinion article, tackling a particular form of writing often used by participants in the policy process. You will learn about this in the TA session tied to the first week of the course and carry on the exercise in weeks three and four – attendance is required. Although the final product is due Feb. 26th, this intensive exercise will involve producing drafts of your own work and engaging in a peer-review process during this time. This assignment was developed by Professor Thom Blaylock; all of the other policy sections used a similar assignment this fall.

Presentation Skills. (5%: 2.5% Workshop Attendance, 2.5% Completion of Individual Presentation). As part of the course, you will attend one of the sessions of a Presentations Workshop taught by Will Carlin, a communications specialist, and then present your own work in the time-slot held by the discussion sections. See the schedule below for dates. You are required to sign up *both* to attend one of Professor Carlin’s workshops *and* (separately) to give your presentation. The course TAs will be in touch about the sign-up procedure for individual presentations; the sign-up for the main workshops can be found on the Wagner events page: <https://wagner.nyu.edu/events>. The dates are in the summary at the end of this document.

Community Participation. (5%). All of the students in the course benefit from high levels of class attendance and participation, so you are expected to prepare, attend, and engage productively. For in-person attendance, major professional obligations or personal emergencies are excusable under this policy, but you should let me know of such unavoidable absences in advance by email. Please do the same for absences due to religious observance. Provided that you are a productive and positive contributor to the term, *this score is derived from completion of seven substantive posts on the NYU Classes Forum* by the due-date for the final assignment.

Institutional Analysis Memorandum. (40% of Grade). This is an exercise modeling a commonplace work-product in policy-related fields. This assignment will be completed in two graded parts:

- Part 1: (20%). You will complete a “strategic analysis” questionnaire specific to the first part of the assignment and a first draft of the memo.
- Part 2: (20%). You will turn in a second “strategic analysis” questionnaire, covering further topics, and a final version of the memo.

Note that at each stage of this Memo assignment, you are to *turn in the entire packet as a single pdf file, including all prior work and feedback.* This helps improve the quality of the feedback you obtain on your work.

Final Exam. (40% of Grade). This is a take-home, open-book final exam that will require you to engage broadly and in a sophisticated manner with the theoretical material from the course.

Further Writing Assistance

To be successful in this course, you will need to communicate efficiently and professionally in writing. There are additional writing resources available here:

<http://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/advisement/writing-center>

You have a Wagner Writing Center folder in NYU Classes, which you should also visit. Note that these resources are not infinite – so seek help sooner rather than later.

NYU Classes

All announcements will be delivered through NYU Classes and materials and assignments posted there. Participation in the Forum is expected, as outlined above. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website. Nearly all the readings for the term will be posted in the Resources folder.

Academic Integrity

The students and faculty at NYU are very concerned about academic integrity. Each student should have the assurance that the rules of the game are understood by everyone and enforced equally. Students are encouraged to learn and study together. Individual assignments are just that, but mutual assistance is appropriate. The Wagner School has an academic code that is available here: <http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/academic-code>. Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, *ask*.

Additional Administrative Details / Responses to Frequently Asked Questions

- All emails regarding this course should have a clear subject line. Members of the faculty get an enormous volume of emails, much of which is not related to our courses – so flagging emails as from the course should help make sure I know your message is important. If you do not have a response in about 48 hours, I do not consider it rude if you re-send your email – I do want to answer your questions, and sometimes things slip past me. Emails sent directly to me should be limited to matters of a personal nature; questions about the course material or assignments that would be of more general interest should be posted on the Forum. If you are confused about something, somebody else probably is too.
- You are responsible for obtaining any materials distributed in or outside of class. If you cannot find something on NYU Classes, post an inquiry on the Forum.
- Please silence cell phones while in class (unless you too are expecting a baby). I understand many of you have children at home or work responsibilities that may require you to monitor your phones for incoming messages -- that is ok, just do it as quietly as possible.
- I reserve the right to revise this syllabus as the term progresses. I have made at least some changes to the syllabus in nearly every semester of every course I have taught – so expect this. If I make changes to the syllabus, I will also use the course email system to notify you.
- The use of technology in class is generally discouraged beyond having some way to find quotes or relevant passages in the reading during group discussions – most students seem to get the best results by taking notes by hand in class and then reviewing slides (posted after class) before engaging with the assignments. I do not post the slides in advance – in part because I often edit and update them on the day of class to reflect current events in public policy. When you review the lecture slides later, look at the “notes” view – I often put additional information in the notes.

Policy Regarding Disability Services and Programs

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980). Reasonable accommodations can be made for students with qualified disabilities, but only for students who have registered with the Moses Center and provide documentation from that office. Please be sure to make these arrangements in the first week of the term.

Required Readings

There is one book required for the course - available in print and e-book format. Note that we will not need this until the end of the term:

Okrent, Daniel. 2010. *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. New York: Scribner.

You can likely find very inexpensive used copies online. All other readings will be posted on NYU Classes; what I have listed on the syllabus below is subject to change with notice provided by email.

Most weeks will have supplemental optional readings (often presented as part of the lecture) which will be made available on NYU Classes. Make sure to reference this document so that you know what is required and what is optional.

Meetings of the Discussion Sections

The schedule, below, includes information on the meetings of the TA Recitation Sections. As with everything else in the course, if I need to make adjustments to this schedule, changes will be posted via NYU Classes. Note that you need to attend *your* section – some weeks feature activities based on a particular number of anticipated participants. We use these sessions to run the op-ed exercise, deliver information on the memo assignments, and to keep a place on your schedule for the individual presentations.

Spring 2018

PART I: INPUTS & OUTPUTS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

Lecture 1 (1/22): *Introduction to the Policy Process*

- **Objective:** Provide an overview of the study of the public policy process and the intellectual outline of the course.
- No assigned reading in advance of week 1, although please review the documents for the Op-Ed Event.
- **TA Sections: Meet this week! Op-Ed Event Day No. 1.**

Lecture 2 (1/29): *Intellectual Foundations – Systems of Policymaking*

- **Objective:** Frame the intellectual inquiry into the policy process as something systematic, observable, predictable, and similar across policy domains. Answer this question: what is the relationship between policymaking and politics?
- Downs, Anthony. 1972. Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle. *Public Interest* 28: 38–50.
- Cobb, Roger W., and Charles D. Elder. 1971. “The Politics Of Agenda-Building: An Alternative Perspective For Modern Democratic Theory.” *Journal of Politics* 33(4): 892-915.
- Selection from Saul Alinsky’s *Rules for Radicals*. (The Prologue, pp. 113-125).
- Optional (Strongly Encouraged): Bachrach, Peter and Morton Baratz. 1962. The Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review* 56: 947–52.
- **TA Section:** Off this week – but **draft op-ed due by 5pm (note specialized turn-in instructions for this to allow for peer review)**. Also please note that you will hear from the Writing Coaches directly with team assignments and workshop locations by 5pm on January 30th.

Lecture 3 (2/5): “The Policy Machine” – The “Stages Heuristic” & “ACF”

- **Objective:** Begin to formulate a model of policymaking by looking at two (intellectually) structured alternatives, the “stages heuristic” and the “advocacy coalition framework.” Be able to answer this question: how might I describe how policymaking works? You should be able to evaluate benefits and limitations of these concepts.
- Weible, Christopher. 2007. “An Advocacy Coalition Framework Approach to Stakeholder Analysis: Understanding the Political Context of California Marine Protected Area Policy.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 17(1): 95-117.
- Selections from Bardach, *The Eightfold Path* (Introduction, pp. 1-11).
- (Optional, Recommended):
 - Weible, Christopher M., Paul A. Sabatier, and Kelly McQueen. 2009. “Themes and variations: Taking stock of the advocacy coalition framework.” *Policy Studies Journal* 37(1): 121-140.
 - Kamark, Elaine. 2013. *How Changes Happens – Or Doesn’t: The Politics of US Public Policy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Chapters 1-2.
 - Paul A. Sabatier, Ed. 1999. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Ch. 1 & 6.
- **TA Section: All Attend (op-ed training continues).** Be sure to examine the Op-Ed Event Spring 2018 guidelines for instructions on what needs to be done before this meeting, including providing peer feedback.

Lecture 4 (2/12): *Computational Limits – Information Processing, Framing, Stories*

- **Objective:** Explore limitations on the policy process (on systems, on ordinary people) – and the consequences (for policymaking).
- Workman, Samuel, Bryan D. Jones, and Ashley E. Jochim. 2009. “Information processing and policy dynamics.” *Policy Studies Journal* 37(1): 75-92.
- Stone, Deborah A. 1989. Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas. *Political Science Quarterly* 104, 2 (Summer): 281–300.
- Berinski, Adam J., and Donald R. Kinder. 2006. Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis. *Journal of Politics* 68, 3 (August): 640–56.
- (Optional): Selection from Green, James. 2007. *Death in the Haymarket*. New York: Anchor Books.

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- **TA Section: All Attend (op-ed training continues).** Be sure to examine the Op-Ed Event Spring 2018 guidelines for instructions on what needs to be done before this meeting, including providing peer feedback. **Final op-ed is due 2/26.**

NOTE: NYU IS CLOSED ON 2/19; WE DO NOT HAVE CLASS.

PART II: INDIVIDUALS & PURPOSEFUL BEHAVIOR

Lecture 5 (2/26): *Individual Purpose, Strategic Interaction*

- **Objective:** Focus on the role of individuals and their strategic behavior. You should be able to answer questions like: what should I expect other participants to do in a particular situation? And then: how can I use that knowledge to change policy outcomes?
- Sinclair, J. Andrew and Anthony M. Bertelli. 2015. “Simple Games for Discussions of Public Policy.” Course Notes (Version I). This handout covers the following topics: Equilibrium, Coordination and the Prisoner’s Dilemma, Democratically Dividing the Dollar , and Public Goods Provision.
- Bertelli, Anthony M. 2012. *The Political Economy of Public Sector Governance*, ch. 2. Available on NYU Classes.
- Arsenault, Raymond. 2006. *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4, pp. 140-176. Available on NYU Classes.
- (Optional). Recommend *Rules for Radicals*, “Tactics”, 126-164; Morton Davis *Game Theory* – find a copy at the library, or buy a used one; and Poundstone, *Prisoner’s Dilemma* – same, find a copy at the library, or buy a used one.
- **TA Section: Off this week.** But your **Op-Ed Assignment is due on 2/26.**

Lecture 6 (3/5): *Institutional Analysis & Institutional Change*

- **Objective:** Explain how purposeful behavior interacts with institutions in the policy process. Revisit the question: what is the link between politics & policy? And also: why do policies change? Why don’t they?
- North, Douglass C. 1998. “Five Propositions about Institutional Change.” In Knight and Sened, eds. *Explaining Social Institutions*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 15-26.

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- Gambetta, Diego. 1994. "Inscrutable markets." *Rationality & Society* 6(3): 353-368.
- Selections from Royko, Mike. 1971. *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*.
- (Optional, Recommended): Selection from Caro's *Master of the Senate*.
- **TA Section: Optional.** The recitation sections will focus on discussing the first part of your memo assignment. Attendance is *strongly encouraged*.

NYU IS CLOSED ON 3/12 FOR SPRING BREAK

Lecture 7 (3/19): *Policy Design Options*

- **Objective:** This week focuses on tactical decisions (in policy design) to change outcomes without changing preferences. How do policy design decisions influence the politics of institutional change? If you have an opportunity to shape the formation of new institutions, what should you consider trying?
- Weimer, David L. 1992. "Claiming Races, Broiler Contracts, Heresthetics, And Habits: Ten Concepts For Policy Design." *Policy Sciences* 25: 135-159.
- Selections from Riker, William H. 1986. *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Selections from Caro, Robert. 2001. [1974]. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Random House. pp. 172-177.
- Selection from Bardach, *The Eightfold Path* (Appendix B).
- (Optional): List, Margolis, and Osgood: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12777>. For the one-paragraph summary of the argument, see:
 - <http://freakonomics.com/2007/01/06/is-the-endangered-species-act-bad-for-endangered-species-john-list-thinks-it-might-be/>.
- **Presentation Skills Bootcamps – This Week!** Option 1 is Monday, 3/19, 5:15-6:30pm. Option 2 is Thursday, 3/22, 5:15-6:30pm. These are taught by Professor Will Carlin. Registration in advance is required via the Wagner Events page on the school's website: <https://wagner.nyu.edu/events>. You are required to attend one of these sessions, held in the Rudin Forum at the Puck Building. There are no recitation sections this week.

PART III: UNSATISFACTORY CONCLUSIONS

Lecture 8 (3/26): *Nonsense and Impossibilities; Diffusion, Convergence, Voting*

- **Objective:** This week focuses on a couple of problems: Can incentives create long-lasting “bad” outcomes? Can unsuccessful policies spread? And can voters even sensibly express opinions about policy?
- Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. "Policy diffusion: seven lessons for scholars and practitioners." *Public Administration Review* 72, no. 6 (2012): 788-796.
- Selection from: Riker, William H. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism: A Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman.
- (Optional): David, Paul A. 1985. Clio and the Economics of QWERTY. *American Economic Review* 75: 332–37.
- **TA Sections:** Will meet to discuss Memo Assignment Part #2 – as before, optional but strongly encouraged. **Memo Part #1 due**, turned in via NYU Classes.

Lecture 9 (4/2): *Bureaucracy, Representation, and Accountability*

- **Objective:** Examine where public administration fits into the policy process. Think about organizational structures that house policy workers. What powers do the different types of participants possess? And what role is left for voters?
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2012. “Why Public Administration Gets No Respect But Should.” *The American Interest* (<http://goo.gl/pyDRPF>).
- Bertelli, Anthony M. 2016. “Who Are the Policy Workers, and What Are They Doing? Citizen’s Heuristics and Democratic Accountability in Complex Governance.” *Public Performance & Management Review*, 40(2): 208-234.
- TBA – reading on central banking. (I will see how the term is progressing.)
- (Optional – examples of odd cases, intelligence and policing). *Charlie Wilson’s War*, Ch. 3, 6; *LA Noir* Ch. 6 & also pp. 290-293.
- **TA Section: Individual Presentations (Option 1 of 2).** If you are not presenting this week, you do not need to attend. Please make sure you know where you will be giving your presentation – double-check the sign-up sheet.

PART IV: INDIVIDUALS AND POLICY CHANGE

Lecture 10 (4/9): *What can you do? “Policy Windows” & “Information Cascades”*

- **Objective:** This week explores the options available to many different types of participants – ranging from street protestors to policy analysts – to change policy outcomes. You are not likely to be immediately made the majority leader of the United States Senate when you graduate – so what can you do?
- Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2nd Ed. New York: Longman, chs. 4, 9.
- (Optional – discussed in class): Lohmann, Susanne. 1994. The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany, 1989–1991. *World Politics* 47: 42–101.¹
- (Even more optional): Lynne Olson, *Those Angry Days*, Ch. 18 – although I’d encourage you to read the whole book if you have time.
- **TA Sections: Individual Presentations (Option 2 of 2).** If you are not presenting this week, you do not need to attend. Please make sure you know where you will be giving your presentation – double-check the sign-up sheet.

Lecture 11 (4/16) *How can you do it? The Policy Memo (Welfare Reform Case)*

- **Objective:** Examine in detail *one* commonly used policy tool – a written memo about options for institutional change presented to a decisionmaker. We will do this using a real memorandum from the Clinton presidency. What can you learn from this example about the tool? What can you learn about the substance?
- Reading: the Clinton memo materials.
- Kamark, Elaine. 2013. *How Changes Happens – Or Doesn’t: The Politics of US Public Policy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Chapter 5.
- (Optional): Johnson, Rucker C. and Mary E. Corcoran, 2003. “The Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency: Job Quality and Job Transition Patterns after Welfare Reform.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 22(4): 615-639.
- **TA Sections: Off this week.**

¹ I used to require this paper – but it is very long, so I have moved it to “optional.” You are responsible for the content at the level we cover it in class but may wish to read the original piece.

Lecture 12 (4/23)

“Good Government” and Public Policy

- **Objective:** Discuss the role of “moral means” for obtaining “moral ends.”
- Selections from Caro, Robert. 2001. [1974]. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Random House. Ch. 5 (pp. 71-88), Ch. 29 (pp. 639-77).
- Selection from Golway, Terry. 2014. *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics*. New York: Norton & Co.
- Selection from Riordon, William L. 1905 [2008]. *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*. BN Publishing.
- **TA Sections:** Meet to cover final assignment – as before, optional but encouraged. Also: **Memo Assignment #2 Due**, turned in via NYU Classes.

Lecture 13 (4/30): *Prohibition: Policy Formation*

- **Objective:** Analyze a policy change, prohibition. How did it happen? Did the means ruin the end?
- Prologue, Ch. 3, and Ch. 7 from Okrent, *Last Call*. (And as much else in Part I as you can).
- **TA Sections: Not meeting.**

Lecture 14 (5/7): *Prohibition: Policy Implementation*

- **Objective:** Continue the prohibition case, a study in “what can go wrong, will go wrong.” How can we apply these lessons to current policy debates?
- Pick one or two chapters from Part II of Okrent, *Last Call*. Do all of Part II if you can.
- **TA Sections: Not meeting.**

May 10, 2018: Take-Home Final Exam Due, 11:55 pm. Note that the end of the spring semester comes with relatively hard deadlines for turning in grades, so extensions are not possible (out of my control). **Plan ahead.**

Summary Schedule

- January 22, Mon. Recitation sections meet for Op-Ed Event Day No. 1.
- January 29, Mon. By 5pm: Op-Ed drafts due; Recitation sections **do not meet**.
- February 5, Mon. Recitation sections meet for Op-Ed Event Day No. 2 (Peer Feedback).
- February 12, Mon. Recitation sections meet for Op-Ed Event Day No. 3 (Peer Feedback).
- February 19, Mon. NYU is closed; we do not have class.
- February 26, Mon. Final Op-Ed documents due via NYU Classes. Recitation sections **do not meet**.
- March 5, Mon. Recitation sections do meet to go over Memo Asn. #1 (**Optional**).
- March 12, Mon. NYU is closed; we do not have class.
- March 18 – March 30: high probability of schedule disruption (baby No. 2 due). Keep alert for messages about changes in schedule, which will be minimized as much as humanly possible.
- March 19, Mon., 5:15-6:30pm. Presentation Bootcamp Option No. 1 (sign up for one). Note that this will take place even if there is a disruption to our lecture schedule.
- March 22, Thurs., 5:15-6:30pm. Presentation Bootcamp Option No. 2 (sign up for one). Note that this will take place even if there is a disruption to our lecture schedule.
- March 26, Mon. Memo Asn. #1 due. Recitation sections do meet to go over Memo Asn. #2 (**Optional**). Note that this will take place even if there is a disruption to our lecture schedule.
- April 2, Mon. Recitation. Individual Presentations Option No. 1 (sign up for one.)
- April 9, Mon. Recitation. Individual Presentations Option No. 2 (sign up for one.)
- April 16, Mon. Recitation sections **do not meet**.
- April 23, Mon. Memo Asn. #2 due. Recitation sections meet to go over final assignment (**Optional**).
- April 30, Mon. Recitation sections **do not meet**.
- May 7, Mon. Recitation sections **do not meet**. This is also our last class. There is no need to be physically present in New York after this point.
- May 10, Thurs. Your final is due (remotely, via NYU Classes).