

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

**UPADM-GP 101 – SPRING 2018**

Tuesday, 12:30 pm - 3:15 pm, 194M 306  
Professor J. Andrew Sinclair  
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**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 how policymakers engage each other through written work. 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 and how they deploy them.

**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 reading 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; while you should work within the intellectual arguments of the course, you should also always think for yourself.

Office hours will typically be Monday afternoons at varying times. I will circulate times by email.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Reading Response No. 1 & No. 2 (10% of Grade Each). These short writing assignments are brief responses to questions connecting the theory of the course to current events. They will aid you in applying the theoretical material presented in the course and prepare you for the exam. These will be due online via NYU Classes on 2/20 and 3/20.

In-Class Exam. (35% of Grade). This is an in-class exam which is currently scheduled to take place on 4/3 and cover the lectures and readings from the course.

Policy Analysis Assignment. (35% of Grade). This serves as the final, culminating assignment for the course and involves providing analysis of a real policy memo. This serves to both expose you to professional work and challenges you to apply the theoretical material to a complex policy problem. This will be due online via NYU classes on 5/8.

Class Participation. (10% of Grade). This is awarded for contributing to a productive learning environment over the course of the term. All of the students in the course benefit from high levels of class attendance and participation, so you are expected to prepare and attend.

**[02/08/18 UPDATE: Part of this measurement will include checking to see if you have made at least five posts on the course Forum by the end of the term.]**

A note about due-dates: we're also expecting a new baby in the last week of March. *Those* due-dates can be a bit unpredictable, so I might need to make some adjustments to the schedule as we go along.

## NYU Classes

All announcements will be delivered through NYU Classes and materials and assignments posted there. 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.

## 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**

- You are responsible for obtaining any materials distributed in or outside of class.
- Please silence cell phones while in class (unless you too are expecting a new child).
- I reserve the right to revise this syllabus as the term progresses.
- The use of technology in class is generally discouraged – 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.

### **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 the letter is delivered to me in the first week of the term.

### **Required Readings**

There is one book required for the course - available in print and e-book format:

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.

I also strongly encourage you to obtain a copy of Bardach's *Eightfold Path*:

<https://www.amazon.com/Practical-Guide-Policy-Analysis-Eightfold/dp/1608718425>

We will distribute small sections in class, and talk about the material from the 4<sup>th</sup> edition. The book recently appeared in a 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. but there are not very many used copies available yet, so I did not wish to make you buy it. This is a very helpful book.

The course calendar here lists only required readings. Most weeks will have supplemental readings (often presented as part of the lecture) which will be made available on NYU Classes.

## Course Calendar

### PART I: INPUTS & OUTPUTS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

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#### Lecture 1: *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.

#### Lecture 2: *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.

#### Lecture 3: *“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.

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- 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.

Lecture 4: *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.

Note: *Reading Response No. 1 due before Lecture 5.*

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## PART II: INDIVIDUALS & PURPOSEFUL BEHAVIOR

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Lecture 5: *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:

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- Equilibrium
  - Coordination and the Prisoner's Dilemma
  - Democratically Dividing the Dollar
  - 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.
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Lecture 6: *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.
- 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*.

Lecture 7: *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.<sup>1</sup>
- 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/>.

*Note: Reading Response No. 2 is due in advance of Lecture 8.*

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### PART III: UNSATISFACTORY CONCLUSIONS

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Lecture 8: *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.

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<sup>1</sup> Allocate some time for reading this paper – particularly if you don’t know much about chicken farming or horse racing. These are the obvious downsides to this paper – but the upside is the clever accumulation of *types* of design options not found in many other academic articles, so I have kept it on this list (after some considerable debate).

Lecture 9: *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.

Lecture 10: **IN-CLASS EXAM, NO READING ASSIGNED**

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PART IV: INDIVIDUALS AND POLICY CHANGE

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Lecture 11: *What can you do? “Policy Windows” & “Information Cascades”*

Note: This is Lecture 10 for the Tuesday Section & 12 for the Monday Section

- **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*. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

- (Even more optional): Lynne Olson, *Those Angry Days*, Ch. 18 – although I’d encourage you to read the whole book if you have time.

Lecture 12: *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.

Lecture 13: *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).

Lecture 14: *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.

**FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE MAY 8<sup>th</sup>. You will turn this in via NYU Classes. Please note that in the spring semester grades have to be filed fairly quickly, so extensions are not possible. Work ahead.**