

## PUBLIC POLICY

G53.2371

Fall 2006

Tuesdays, 6:20-8:20 PM

726 Broadway, room 700

Prof. Lawrence M. Mead

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Hours: Tues 3-5 PM

or by appointment

This is an advanced course on policymaking in the American federal government. Students are presumed to have some prior background in public policy, either through employment or prior study. This course is aimed mainly at graduate students planning to do policy research for their Masters projects or Ph.D. dissertations.

I have two objectives. The first is to teach, or to review, leading theories of policy analysis and the policymaking process at an advanced level. The second is to teach an approach to public policy research that connects policy analysis with political analysis. In the policy literature, these subjects are usually separate. But in my conception, one first develops a position about how best to solve some major public problem, on the merits, and then *goes on* to analyze why actual policy falls short of that ideal. A tension is expected between desirable policies and political and institutional constraints. Each is understood and critiqued in terms of the other. A policy perspective can position research closer to the reasoning that policymakers themselves do. It can also yield new insights into the nature of the regime.

The readings including leading examples of policy research along these lines. Students will write papers developing their own research topics.

### Readings

The course will use these texts, in about this order. All are on sale at the book store and also on reserve at Bobst. Buy as many as you are able:

Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Michael C. Munger, *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices* (New York: Norton, 2000).

Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, revised ed. (New York: Norton, 2002).

Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999).

Allen Schick, with the assistance of Felix LoStracco, *The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process*, revised ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2000).

Kevin R. Kosar, *Failing Grades: The Federal Politics of Education Standards* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 2005).

Derek Bok, *The Trouble With Government* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Lawrence M. Mead, *Government Matters: Welfare Reform in Wisconsin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

In addition, for students with a limited background in federal institutions and policy processes, I recommend:

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

In the course schedule below, required assignments come mostly from the above books. Some articles and selections are also assigned. A copy of them may also be purchased at New University Copy and Graphics, 11 Waverly Place, phone 212-473-7369. The recommended items are not on reserve or on sale, but most of them can be found at Bobst or on Bobst e-journals.

## Requirements

There will be a midterm and final examinations, which will each count 20 percent of the grade. There will also be a paper of about 20 pages, due at the end of the course, in which students work out a study design for an actual research project in public policy. The assignment will be distributed later. This paper will count 40 percent of the grade. The remaining 20 percent will be given for participation in class.

## Schedule

The following are the dates of each session, with the subject and readings for each. Readings *must* be completed before class to profit from the discussion and contribute to it:

**Sept. 5, Introduction: The Policy Approach:** The development of the policy field. An approach to policy research stressing both policy analysis and political analysis. Contrast to other approaches:

### *Required:*

Howlett and Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy*, ch. 1.

Lawrence M. Mead, "Public Policy: Vision, Potential, Limits," *Policy Currents* (newsletter of the Public Policy Section of the APSA), February 1997: 1-4.

Dennis J. Palumbo, "Bucking the Tide: Policy Studies in Political Science, 1978-1988," in *Policy Studies Review Annual, Volume 10: Advances in Policy Studies Since 1950*, ed. William N. Dunn and Rita Mae Kelly (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992), ch. 2.

### *Recommended:*

Paul Sabatier, "Political Science and Public Policy," *PS*, vol. 24, no. 2 (June 1991), pp. 144-7.

Yehezkel Dror, *Public Policymaking Reexamined* (Scranton, PA: Chandler, 1968), chs. 1-2, 14.

William T. Gormley, Jr., "Institutional Policy Analysis: A Critical Review," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Winter 1987), pp. 153-69.

**Sept. 12, The Economic Paradigm 1:** How economists understand the goals of government, and criticisms of this approach.

*Required:*

Howlett and Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy*, ch. 2.

Munger, *Analyzing Policy*, chs. 2-4, 8, 12.

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, chs. 1-5.

*Recommended:*

Charles W. Anderson, "The Place of Principles in Policy Analysis," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 73, no. 3 (September 1979), pp. 711-23.

Ronald Coase, "The Problem of Social Cost," *Journal of Law and Economics*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1960), pp. 1-44.

Richard O. Zerbe, Jr., and Howard E. McCurdy, "The Failure of Market Failure," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1999): 558-78.

**Sept. 19, The Economic Paradigm 2:** The economic approach to the optimization of policy, and criticisms of it:

*Required:*

Howlett and Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy*, chs. 4, 7.

Munger, *Analyzing Policy*, chs. 1, 9-11.

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, introduction, chs. 7-8, 10-14.

*Recommended:*

Amitai Etzioni, "Mixed Scanning: A 'Third' Approach to Decision-Making," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 27 (1967), pp. 385-92.

John Forester, "Bounded Rationality and the Politics of Muddling Through," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 44 (1984), pp. 23-30.

Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through'," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Spring 1959), pp. 79-88.

Aaron Wildavsky, *Speaking Truth to Power: The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), pp. 1-25, 41-85.

**Sept. 26, The Policy Process:** The stage model of policymaking, and recent criticisms of it. The formative role of agenda setting. Implementation and evaluation.

*Required:*

Howlett and Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy*, chs. 3, 5-6, 8-11.

Baumgartner and Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, chs. 1-6, 9, 12.

*Recommended*

Malcolm Goggin, Ann O'M. Bowman, James P. Lester, and Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., *Implementation Theory and Practice: Toward a Third Generation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), introduction, ch. 1.

Paul A. Sabatier, "The Need for Better Theories," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), chap. 1.

**Oct. 3, Policy Advocacy:** How policy entrepreneurs form and sell policy solutions, the most global form of policy analysis. Experts as entrepreneurs. The case of airline deregulation.

*Required:*

Munger, *Analyzing Policy*, ch. 5.

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 2003), chs. 6, 8.

Paul A. Sabatier and Hank C. Jenkins-Smith, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Assessment," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), ch. 6.

Stephen Breyer, *Regulation and its Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), ch. 16.

*Recommended:*

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

Richard R. Nelson, *The Moon and the Ghetto*, New York: Norton, 1977; chs. 1-3.

**Oct. 10, The Politics of Policy:** Lowi's types of policy and other approaches to understanding the politics aroused by policymaking. The question of how easily interests can mobilize:

*Required:*

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, ch. 9.

Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory," *World Politics*, vol. 16 (July 1964), pp. 677-715.

James Q. Wilson and John J. DiIulio, Jr., *American Government*, 6th Ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1995), ch. 15.

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), introduction, ch. 1.

James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. vii-xxiv.

*Recommended*

Theodore J. Lowi, "Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 32, no. 4 (July/Aug. 1972), pp. 298-310.

George D. Greenberg et al., "Developing Public Policy Theory: Perspectives from Empirical Research," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 71, no. 4 (Dec. 1977), pp. 1532-43.

**Oct. 17, Bureaucracy:** The powerful influence of organization on policymaking:

*Required:*

Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, chs. 1-7.

Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 17 (March 1972), pp. 1-25.

*Recommended:*

Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond, "Rethinking Allison's Models," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 86, no. 2 (June 1992), pp. 301-22.

James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984): 734-49.

Terry M. Moe, "The New Economics of Organization," *American Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 4 (November 1984): 739-77.

**Oct. 24, Midterm examination**

**Oct. 31, Budgeting:** The evolution of the federal budget process. The federal deficit problem and the politics thereof. Recent developments.

*Required:*

Schick, *Federal Budget*, chs. 2-6, 9, 11.

Alice M. Rivlin and Isabel Sawhill, eds., *Restoring Fiscal Sanity 2005: Meeting the Long-Run Challenge* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2005), chs. 1, 6.

*Recommended:*

Anthony Downs, "Why the Government Budget is Too Small in a Democracy," *World Politics*, vol. 12 (1960), pp. 541-63.

V.O. Key, Jr., "The Lack of a Budgetary Theory," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 34, no. 6 (December 1940), pp. 1137-44.

Allan H. Meltzer and Scott F. Richard, "Why Government Grows (and Grows) in a Democracy," *The Public Interest*, no. 52 (Summer 1978), pp. 111-18.

**Nov. 7, Education:** The merits and politics of federal education standards.

*Required:*

Kosar, *Failing Grades*, chs. 1-3, 6-7.

*Recommended:*

Chester E. Finn, Jr., and Frederick M. Hess, "On Leaving No Child Behind," *The Public Interest*, no. 157 (Fall 2004): 35-56.

Diane Ravitch, *National Standards in American Education: A Citizen's Guide* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1995).

Eric A. Hanushek and Margaret E. Raymond, "Does School Accountability Lead to Improved Student Performance?" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 297-327.

**Nov. 14, Governmental Performance:** How to improve the performance of the federal government in several areas of domestic policy.

*Required:*

Bok, *Trouble with Government*, introduction, chs. 1, 3-7, 11-13.

*Recommended:*

Derek Bok, *The State of the Nation: Government and the Quest for a Better Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

Harold L. Wilensky, *Rich Democracies: Political Economy, Public Policy, and Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

**Nov. 21, Welfare Reform:** The substance and politics of welfare reform in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

*Required:*

Mead, *Government Matters*, chs. 1, 3, 5, 6, 11-13.

Steven Camp-Landis, "State Political Culture and TANF" (available at [www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/mead/mead\\_home.html#Teaching](http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/mead/mead_home.html#Teaching)).

*Recommended:*

Lawrence M. Mead, "Policy Research: The Field Dimension," *Policy Studies Journal* 33, no. 4 (November 2005): 535-57.

Pamela Winston, *Welfare Policymaking in the States: The Devil in Devolution* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002).

**Nov. 28, Student Presentations:** members of the class will present summaries of their papers.

**Dec. 5, Student Presentations:** members of the class will present summaries of their papers.

**Dec. 19, Final examination,** 6:20-8:20 PM, 726 Broadway, room 700.

**Papers due no later than the final exam.**