

Public Policy 510 Syllabus

The Politics of Public Policy Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8:40-10am Fall 2016

Prof. Shobita Parthasarathy
4202 Weill Hall Ph: 764-8075 E-mail: shobita@umich.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30pm or by appointment ([sign up here](#))

GSI: Dina Emam
Office TBD E-mail: demam@umich.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays, 1-3pm or by appointment

This course uses a cross-national approach to help students understand the dynamics of the political environment, and to develop strategies to engage with it. Students will learn how to be effective participants in public policymaking, as analysts, administrators, and advocates, by gaining tools to help them assess a political environment, recognize the unique challenges that it creates, and explore what motivates and constrains the various actors in it and maximize the success of their political and policy objectives. Students will learn these skills in comparative perspective, with exposure to the domestic policymaking environments in the United States, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. Thus, students will also learn how to use comparison as a political and policy analysis tool. A comparative perspective to understanding the political environment offers the following benefits: 1) It clarifies analytical tools and political strategies, by showing how they work (or don't work) in different contexts; 2) It offers alternative approaches and models for politics and policymaking; 3) It brings the factors unique to the target political environment into sharp relief, providing clues to the more permanent aspects of a particular society; and 4) It helps the analyst understand how the target political environment fits in the global arena. In this course, we will explore a number of case studies in comparative perspective, including debates about immigration, public health, genetically modified organisms, dam-building, and energy. With each of these countries and case studies, we explore and compare the various actors in the political environment: governments, interest groups, social movements, advisory committees, and the corporate sector. This course is required for Ford School students and for the STPP Program (For more information on the STPP Program, please see: <http://stpp.fordschool.umich.edu>).

Overall, the course trains students:

- To think critically about the process of policymaking
- To identify and map the interests, stakeholders, institutions, and political cultures that surround any issue, particularly in different domestic policy environments, and to understand how these interests form and operate differently in different places;
- To assess the factors of a political environment relevant to policy advocacy and engagement.
- To anticipate the issues and challenges that may arise when they are engaged in the policymaking process in different domestic political environments;
- To improve their written and oral communication skills;
- To work in teams; and
- To understand the policymaking environments of countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in comparative perspective with the United States.

Requirements for this course include careful reading of assignments **before** class sessions, mandatory attendance **and** participation in class, multiple writing assignments of varying lengths and styles, group writing assignments, an oral presentation, and multiple opportunities for self and group reflection and assessment. Grading and information about the assignments is provided in the **Assignment Guide** for the course. **Please read it VERY carefully (and continue to refer to it over the course of the semester.)** You will need to become familiar with the course's [Canvas site](#). All assignments must be submitted via Canvas, in the "Assignments" section. Many of the course readings will be posted in the Canvas "Resources" section.

Office Hours: To sign up for my office hours, click [here](#). If you can't make it to our office hours, both Dina and I are available by appointment.

Course policies:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will be harshly penalized. For more information on what constitutes sourcing, see UM's plagiarism handout: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/handouts/plagiar.pdf>. For *all* papers, I expect proper sourcing and citation. I do not care which method (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.) you use, so long as you are consistent through the paper. Also, when citing a source over the course of multiple sentences, cite after the first sentence. In addition, *do not use Wikipedia as a direct source*. It is anonymously produced, with un-vetted contributors from all over the world, so the information you find there should *never* be automatically trusted as legitimate. That said, I understand that **Wikipedia** can be extremely useful to introduce you to a particular topic. My suggestion is that you use it to learn the basics about a particular subject, and then follow the links provided there (or the insights you gain) to find a more credible source.

Laptops: I will permit the use of laptops (and other electronic devices) in the classroom, on an honor system. Electronic devices can be helpful for easy access to the readings and note-taking, but they should be used only for PubPol 510-related activities. If Dina or I discover *anyone* doing non-510-related activities on the laptop during classtime, then that person will get a zero for class participation for that day. I reserve the right to ban laptops in the classroom, but I hope I won't have to!

Response to Emails: Dina and I will do our best to respond to your emails in a timely fashion. That said, do not expect immediate responses. Allow at least 24 hours for a response.

Participation: As you will note from the Assignment Guide, active participation (not simply attendance) is an important part of this course. It gives you an opportunity to actively engage with course material and with your classmates. It is also required, in order to receive a good grade in the course. Active participation involves: 1) coming to all classes; 2) participating at least once per class; 3) making valuable contributions based on ongoing classroom discussion, the lectures, and readings; and 4) knowing when you've been dominating the conversation and pulling back. We'll be discussing some sensitive topics in class, so please be respectful in your contributions and aware of the variety of perspectives on all issues. In addition, in order to active participation, I reserve the right to "cold call" students (i.e., call on students who have not raised their hand to participate). That said, in order to receive

a good participation grade, you will have to both volunteer to participate *and* respond well to cold calls.

If you anticipate that you might have trouble participating in class, please come and speak with me. I will be happy to give you strategies to increase and improve your participation.

Grades: There are multiple assignments in the course, which means that at any given time, there are many moving parts. It is tempting to think that the first few papers are inconsequential, because they seem to be worth relatively little in the grand scheme of the course. However, if you find yourself doing poorly on the early papers, this is a worrisome sign of your comprehension of course concepts and development in writing skills—and foreshadows your performance in the more heavily-weighted assignments due later in the semester. If you are performing poorly on the first papers (e.g., consistently scoring below the mean), please speak with Dina or I immediately, to see how you can improve your performance. The longer you wait, the more difficult it will become to improve your grade.

If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to help us determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

Assignment/Grade Breakdown (more information is available in the Assignment Guide):

Class participation (including reading responses):	15%
Short Memo #1:	5%
Stakeholder Memo:	10%
Research Memo:	15%
Group Comparative Political Environment Assessment:	15%
Strategy memo:	15%
Roundtable oral presentation:	10%
Initial writing self-assessment, politics reflection, and final self-critique:	10%
Peer questions and critiques:	5%

Syllabus: While the syllabus is fairly stable (especially for the first few weeks), I reserve the right to make slight changes to it. I do not expect, however, the themes, assignments, or even the readings to change significantly. If I do make even a slight alteration, I will tell you at least a week in advance.

Class and Assignment Schedule

Tues., Sept. 6: Introduction to the Course

I. Introduction to Comparative Politics

Thurs., Sept. 8: American Politics in Comparative Perspective

Conceptual Tools: To begin to identify and differentiate participants in political debates and identify different political strategies.

When reading, consider and prepare responses to the following questions:

- Who were the major players in the health care and climate change debates (include institutions, decisionmakers, experts, and stakeholders)
- What were the major issues of controversy/negotiation in the two debates?
- What role does politics play in the policy process?

Skocpol, Theda (2013). "Naming the Problem: What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming." Prepared for the Symposium on *The Politics of America's Fight Against Global Warming*. pp. 21-95.

Read the Assignment Guide for 510 and come prepared with questions and requests for clarification.

Tues., Sept. 13: The Nuts and Bolts of the Political Process

Conceptual Tools: To understand the concept of political structure and consider its influence in the policy process. We will also begin to identify the distinct dimensions of US political structure.

- What is unique about the political process in the US context? What are the roles of the different branches of government? And what are the implications of its status as a "common law" system?
- What does *comparing* the two US debates tell you about the politics of policymaking in this country?

Skocpol, Theda (2013). "Naming the Problem: What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming." Prepared for the Symposium on *The Politics of America's Fight Against Global Warming*. pp. 96-130.

Thurs., Sept.15: Political Structure in Comparative Perspective

Conceptual Tools: To understand how political structure differs across policy environments, and how these structural differences influence both the process and substance of policymaking.

- What are the similarities and differences among the political structures (institutions and laws) among the countries discussed in the two articles?
- Can you identify political institutions that seem similar on the surface across countries, but actually behave quite differently (e.g., legislatures, courts)? How are they different? Why?
- Are there cultural differences that might be important in understanding the behavior of these institutions?

Kathryn Harrison (2010). "The Comparative Politics of Carbon Taxation." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*. 6: 507-529.

Katherine Boothe and Kathryn Harrison (2009). "The Influence of Institutions on Issue Definition: Children's Environmental Health Policy in the United States and Canada." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*. 11.3: 287-307.

Tues., Sept. 20: Understanding Political Culture

**** Short Memo #1 Due at 1:10pm (before class)! ****

Conceptual Tools: To introduce the concept of political structure and consider its influence in the policy process. We will also identify and compare political culture across national contexts.

- What is issue framing? Who frames an issue? How does issue framing shape its political outcome?
- How do historical, geographic, or other aspects of national *cultural* context shape how an issue is framed?
- Can you think of durable aspects of political culture from your home country? How do they shape policymaking on a consistent basis?

Shobita Parthasarathy (forthcoming). *Patent Politics: Life Forms, Markets, and the Public Interest in the United States and Europe*. University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2017. Selected pages.

Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim (2009). "Containing the Atom: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and Nuclear Power in the United States and South Korea." *Minerva*. 47: 119-146.

Thurs., Sept. 22: Understanding Stakeholders

Conceptual Tools: To understand what a stakeholder is (and how their role in the policy process compares to other participants), and to classify them as outsiders or insiders in the political process based on their tactics.

Assignment (after doing the reading): Find an example of a stakeholder that operates at the national level in any country (a group that you think behaves like an interest group or like a social movement). Using the readings, assess whether this organization seems more like an interest group or a social movement. Why do you think this?

- What is the organization's history and mission? How does the organization you have chosen try to influence policymaking (what arguments and tactics does it use)?
- How would you try to understand this organization given the readings for this week? On what basis, for example, does it try to convince people (including the government) to support it?
- How is it different from government institutions, or experts?

Walker, Jack (1991), *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press: Chapter 2.

Snow, David A. (2010). *A Primer on Social Movements*. New York: W. W. Norton: Chapter 1.

Tues., Sept. 27: Identity, Diversity, and Politics

Conceptual Tools: To understand how an individual's social and political position shapes how they see and understand the world, including their approaches to politics and policy, and to consider how policymakers should incorporate diverse perspectives into policy.

Paul Longmore (2003). *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. Chapter 13.

Take the "Race Test", one of the Implicit Association Tests available at UnderstandingPrejudice.org.

Bruce Drake (2015). "[Divide between blacks and whites on police runs deep.](#)" *Factank: news in the Numbers*. April 28.

US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (2016). *Investigation of the Baltimore City Police Department*. Executive Summary.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1995). "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man." *The New Yorker*. October 23. pp. 56-65.

Thurs., Sept. 29: Identity, Diversity, and Politics in Comparative Perspective

Conceptual Tools: To understand how identity politics have evolved and figure quite differently in different policy environments, and to consider the role of political culture in shaping these identity politics.

Joan Wallace Scott (2007). *The Politics of the Veil*: Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 and 2 (Chapter 5 recommended, but not required.)

"[Swim Day for Women in France Sparks Controversy.](#)" *Al-Arabiya*. August 5, 2016.

**** Politics Reflection Due Friday, September 30th, 5pm! ****

**** Group Stakeholder Proposal Due Sunday, October 2nd, 5pm! ****

**** Roundtable Group Meetings during the week of October 3rd! ****

Tues., Oct. 4: Session with the Writing Instructors
Preparatory Assignment TBD.

II. Stakeholder Strategies

Thurs., Oct. 6: Stakeholders and Framing

Conceptual Tools: To become familiar with the concept of framing, and to understand how to develop and deploy successful frames to achieve political objectives (based on the broader policy environment)

- How do stakeholders invoke specific frames in their political advocacy? What tactics do they use?
- How do they try to ensure that their framing becomes the dominant approach to solving the social/policy problem?
- What makes a particular frame more or less successful in a policy debate?

Assignment (after doing the reading): Think of one example of how a stakeholder has framed its political arguments in order to gain supporters for its position. How does the stakeholder use language and images to support this frame? What makes this frame particularly historically or culturally resonant? What are the competing frames—deployed by opposing stakeholders—in this debate?

Emily S. Kolker (2004). "Framing as a cultural resource in health social movements: funding activism and the breast cancer movement in the US 1990-1993." *Sociology of Health and Illness*. 26.6: 820-844.

Elizabeth Borland (2004). "[Cultural Opportunities and Tactical Choice in the Argentine and Chilean Reproductive Rights Movements](#)." *Mobilization*. 9.3: 327-339.

**** Writing Self-Assessment Due Friday, October 7th, 5pm! ****

Tues., Oct. 11: Stakeholders and Political Strategy in Comparative Perspective

Conceptual Tools: To understand, and be able to predict, how similar stakeholders might operate—particularly in terms of their attempts to influence the policy process—in different political environment (due to structural and cultural differences).

- What are the similarities and differences between the political strategies used by health advocates and businesses in these articles?
- How might the strategies of these groups be shaped by their context, the historical moment, and the issue that they work on? (And how might their strategies change in a different context?)
- How might you develop the strategy of a stakeholder you support based on the readings for today?

Vineeta Yadav (2008). "Business lobbies and policymaking in developing countries: the contrasting cases of India and China." *Journal of Public Affairs*. 8:67-82.

Jacqueline Adams (2002). "[Art in Social Movements: Shantytown Women's Protest in Pinochet's Chile](#)." *Sociological Forum*. 17.1: 21-56.

Thurs., Oct. 13: Stakeholders and Social Networks

Conceptual Tools: To understand how social networks, and coalition-building in particular, shapes politics. Students will learn how to think strategically about the coalition-building process.

- In what ways do social networks shape politics?
- How might the nature of social networks differ depending on the kinds of groups and issues involved, and geographic location?
- How might online social networks differ from those that are developed in person or in particular communities?

Francesca Comunello and Giuseppe Anzera (2012). "Will the Revolution be Tweeted? A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Social Media and the Arab Spring." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*. 23.4: 453-470.

Cordero Guzmán, Nina Martin, Victoria Quiroz-Becerra, and Nik Theodore (2008). "Voting with their Feet: Nonprofit Organizations and Immigrant Mobilization." *American Behavioral Scientist*. 52.4: 598-617.

Tues., Oct. 18: FALL STUDY BREAK, NO CLASS!

Thurs., Oct. 20: Stakeholders and the Politics of Expertise

Conceptual Tools: To understand and be able to engage in expertise politics in order to achieve policy goals

- What factors shape how policy domains identify and define relevant knowledge and expertise?
 - And how do policy domains maintain these definitions even when challenged?
- What strategies to stakeholders use to challenge definitions of relevant knowledge and expertise in a policy domain?
- How might calls for “evidence-based” policymaking be political in and of themselves?

Gwen Ottinger (2010). “Buckets of Resistance: Standards and the Effectiveness of Citizen Science.” *Science, Technology, and Human Values*. 35: 244-270.

Dianne Scott and Clive Barnett (2009). "[Something in the air--civic science and contentious environmental politics in post-Apartheid South Africa.](#)" *Geoforum*. 40(3): 373-382.

**** Friday, October 21st, 5pm, Stakeholder Memo Due! ****

III. The Politics of Government Institutions and their Expertise

Tues., Oct. 25: Bureaucratic Politics

Conceptual Tools: To understand how bureaucracies work, and in particular, how to analyze their efforts to engage in evidence-based policymaking within the political environment.

- What is the function of the bureaucracy in democratic contexts? (And in non-democratic contexts?)
- How does national context shape bureaucratic decisionmaking?
- How does the role of, and attitudes toward, civil service compare across countries?

John Abraham (2002). “Regulatory Science as Culture: Contested Two-Dimensional Values at the US FDA.” *Science as Culture*. Vol. 11, No. 3: 309-335.

Asuncion Lera St Clair (2006). “Global Poverty: The Co-Production of Knowledge and Politics.” *Global Social Policy*. Vol. 6, No. 1: 57-77.

Thurs., Oct. 27: Bureaucratic Politics in Comparative Perspective

Conceptual Tools: To explore, and be able to predict, how a country’s political culture and structure might shape how its bureaucracies identify and use evidence and expertise for policymaking.

- According to Jasanoff and Wiktorowicz, how do bureaucracies think differently in different countries?
- Why do these bureaucracies think differently, and what are the consequences?
- How might these bureaucratic differences influence the strategies of multi-national corporations or NGOs invested in regulation?

Sheila Jasanoff (1991). “[Acceptable Evidence in a Pluralistic Society.](#)” In *Acceptable Evidence: Science and Values in Risk Management*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mary E. Wiktorowicz (2003). “Emergent Patterns in the Regulation of Pharmaceuticals: Institutions and Interests in the United States, Canada, Britain, and France.” *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law*. Vol. 28, No. 4. 615-658.

IV. Political Strategy in the Developing World

Tues., Nov. 1: Political Advocacy in Non-Democratic Contexts

Conceptual Tools: To understand the challenges and opportunities that non-democratic contexts pose for political actors seeking to create social and policy change.

- How does the Chinese political environment shape political advocacy in the country (think about arguments and tactics)?
- How does the scope and style of political advocacy in China compare to other countries that you know about?

China Development Brief (2013). *The Diversification of Public Advocacy in China*. A Special Report from China Development Brief, Sponsored by the Canada Fund. Chapters 2-5.

Thurs., Nov. 3: Comparative Cultures of Mobilization

Conceptual Tools: To identify, unravel, and predict advocacy strategy in the developing world (in comparison to the developed world).

- In what ways were the Narmada Dam protests uniquely Indian?
- How does the Indian environmental movement compare to its counterparts in other countries, which we've read about this term or which you know about personally or professionally?

Assignment: Come to class prepared with an example of stakeholder activity from a developing country other than India, which you think effectively illustrates the political culture or values of that country.

Sanjeev Khagram (2004). "[India's Narmada Projects: Historical Genesis and the First Transnational Reform Campaign](#)." *Dam and Development: Transnational Struggles for Water and Power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha (2009). "[Ecological Conflicts and the Environmental Movement in India](#)." *Environmental Issues in India: A Reader*. Edited by Mahesh Rangarajan. White Plains, NY: Pearson ELT.

**** Research Memo Due on Friday, November 4th, 5pm ****

Tues., Nov. 8: Group Memo Discussion; Reflecting on How National Context Shapes Policymaking

- How do US, German, and British approaches to biotechnology differ?
- Why have these countries adopted such different approaches?
- What does Jasanoff's analysis tell us about the national structural and cultural factors that shape politics and policy?
- What uniquely national factors do you think have shaped the political debate on your roundtable topic?

Jasanoff, Sheila (2005). "[In the democracies of DNA: ontological uncertainty and political order in three states](#)." *New Genetics and Society*. 24(2): 139-156.

V. Politics in the Courtroom

Thurs., Nov. 10: The Courts as a Site of Politics

Conceptual Tools: To understand the role of the courts in the policy process, and the challenges and opportunities of using the court system to make policy change.

- How do stakeholders use the courts in order to conduct political/policy advocacy?
- What specific constraints shape the use of courts for policymaking in the United States?
- How might you advise a stakeholder interested in using the courts for creating policy change in the United States? What makes the US courts an effective or ineffective site for policy change (particularly in comparative perspective)?

Molly Ball (2015). "How Gay Marriage Became a Constitutional Right." *The Atlantic*. July 1.

On the Media (2015). "[Plaintiff Shopping](#)." WNYC. October 9.

Bonine, John E. "Standing to Sue: The First Step in Access to Justice." Mercer University Law School lecture, January 1999.

****Group Comparative Political Envt Assessment Memo due Monday, Nov. 13th, 8:40am****

Tues., Nov. 15: The Comparative Politics of the Courts

Conceptual Tools: To understand how national context shapes the use and role of the courts in making social and political change, and to assess whether the courts are an appropriate venue for political action in a particular national context.

- How might legal standing rules in different countries affect the use of the courts by political actors?
- How does political culture and structure shape the role of the courts vis-à-vis policymaking?

Rajamani, Lavanya (2007). "Public Interest Environmental Litigation in India: Exploring Issues of Access, Participation, Equity, Effectiveness and Sustainability." *Journal of Environmental Law*. 19(3): 293-321.

Sheila Jasanoff and Dogan Perese (2004). "Welfare State or Welfare Court: Asbestos Litigation in Comparative Perspective." *Journal of Law and Policy*. Vol. 12, No. 2. pp. 619-639.

V. Roundtables

**** Roundtable Press Release is due on Canvas, Wednesday, Nov. 16th, noon ****

Thurs., Nov. 17: Roundtable #1

**** Peer Critiques due at the beginning of the next class period****

Tuesday, Nov. 22: Roundtable #2

Thursday, Nov. 24: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tuesday, Nov. 29: Roundtable #3

Thursday, Dec. 1: Roundtable #4

Tuesday, Dec. 6: Roundtable #5

Thursday, Dec. 8: Roundtable #6

Thursday, Dec. 13: Semester wrap-up; Considering Comparative Politics

****Roundtable Self/Group Critique due Friday, December 14th at 5pm on Canvas****

**** Strategy Memo due Tuesday, December 20th at 10am on Canvas ****