Fall 2014

PUBLIC POLICY 510
The Politics of Public Policy: Global Issues and International Relations
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Ford School of Public Policy

Day and Time: Tues-Thurs, 2:40-4:00    Professor Susan Waltz
1230 Weill Hall      Office:  3227 Weill Hall
GSI Amey Sutkowski, 3202 Weill Hall   Office Hours: Tues/Thurs by appointment
Email: sutkowsa@umich.edu    Email: swaltz@umich.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Prospective analysts and advocates hoping to influence global issues and foreign policy need to understand the mechanics of the international system and the motivations of the actors that operate within it. This course will introduce students to the dynamics of global politics and international relations. Nation-states remain the preeminent actors on the international stage, but a range of organizations and non-state actors increasingly challenge their primacy. How can we understand the interests and interactions of these various actors? How do they identify issues to address, and how do they devise effective strategies for dealing with policy concerns? What are their preferences, and what are the limits placed on them? How can policymakers shape international processes to improve outcomes? In this class we will consider options available to international actors based on their attributes and capacities, as well as the constraints imposed by norms, institutions and other actors.

In exploring such questions, this course aims to provide:
- Familiarity with concepts and perspectives commonly used in the study and practice of international relations and foreign policy
- Familiarity with global institutions that comprise the political environment of international policy-making
- Understanding of the policy process and the importance of political considerations
- Analytical skills and enhanced understanding of policy analysis
- Technical writing skills (emphasizing short papers, sharp organization, persuasive argument)
- An opportunity to develop knowledge about several issues/problems currently on the international agenda
- An opportunity to hone and test analytical skills by applying them – as part of a small group – to the analysis of one international issue

ASSIGNMENTS and GRADING
How will you develop these skills and knowledge base? In part through class discussion, but in at least equal part through your own work in applying concepts to a particular substantive issue. Early in the course, you will be asked to indicate your personal interests from a list of current problems on the global agenda – for example, fighting terrorism, preserving biodiversity or confronting the AIDS epidemic. From that input several student groups will be formed, each working on a different concern. Most of the papers you write for this course will relate to this one topic, and during the last weeks of the course, each group will present its work to the class during a roundtable. In this way, you will be able to apply the concepts introduced in class and develop some level of knowledge/expertise on a single issue.

Further information about the policy project and other short assignments is provided in a separate Assignment Guide for the course. The Assignment Guide also includes information on grading and weight allocated to each assignment. In addition to the papers and roundtables, the main course requirement is to keep up with assigned readings and participate in class discussions.
CTOOLS and CLASS LISTSERV
The CTools site for this course can be accessed through https://ctools.umich.edu. Throughout the course, announcements, documents and links will be posted to the site. Please check your email regularly for announcements.

READINGS
Students are expected to review all the required readings before class. I realize, however, that preparation time may be limited and you will inevitably have to prioritize some readings over others. In general, readings are listed in a logical sequence for the topic, usually beginning with a “teaser” to illustrate how the particular issue arises in the real world of international politics. Hopefully you will enjoy reading these and they will help make the course material more lively and interesting. In the electronic version of the syllabus, I have also marked in red font one or two “must reads” for a given class. These are core readings for the particular topic, and from time to time I may randomly ask individual students to comment on them. Please be prepared!

All of the readings for this course are listed in the syllabus. With the exception of International Organizations, they are available online and can be accessed in multiple ways (through live links on the syllabus posted to the CTools site or through pdf files or urls posted on CTools under the Resources tab). One textbook has been ordered for this course and is available from booksellers in town:


Recommended for students without a strong background in IR:
Kaufman, Joyce P. A Concise History of US Foreign Policy, Rowman & Littlefield, 2013. (ordered at booksellers)

ATTENDANCE
Class attendance is mandatory (and is simply an expected aspect of professional behavior). Absences are noted and affect the class participation grade.
COURSE OUTLINE

Some of the readings below present conceptual material—implying that you should read for content. Others offer example of concepts, approaches or policy writing—implying that you should read to understand the illustration.

Readings marked as “teasers” are intended to help you see the relevance of some conceptual or theoretical material to current policy debates. Please read those quickly and move on.

If it’s not clear to you why a particular reading has been included, please ask!

Selections marked in red font are “must reads” for a given class.

Introduction

Sept 2. Course Basics
- Foreign Policy: http://www.foreignpolicy.com. (Bring to class if you have a hard copy.)
- The Cable, blog at Foreign Policy: http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/.
- UN Wire (a free e-mail newsletter). Sign up at: https://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/index.jsp.

Sept 4. Diving Right In: Ways of the World
(This will probably be challenging, but please read entire paper attentively, not just abstract…We’ll use for an in-class exercise on Sept 4 and will return to this article later in the course.)

Part I: International Affairs, Alternative Templates and the Policy Process

Sept 9. Policy work – what it’s all about. What is distinctive about international (or global) policy issues? What kinds of issues commonly arise and what challenges confront the policy professional with an interest in contemporary world issues? What is the connotation of the word “policy” in an international context? Is there a reasoning process unique to policy questions, and what is the relationship between policy work and academic research?

Readings for in-class discussion and exercises

Sept 11, 16, 18. During these three class periods, we will explore some of the sub-strata of policy work – the values, beliefs, and orientations that shape ideas and policy solutions and that are used to justify “good” policy. How do differing perspectives shape evaluation of policy outcomes? Do the same values/beliefs that shape domestic policy carry over to international and global concerns? What is the role and place of opinion in policy work? Note that this issue reappears throughout the course, and arises especially on October 30.

These questions lead naturally to a discussion of the main theoretical perspectives that lie behind many well-regarded policy publications. If you are unfamiliar with these perspectives, your ability to read and interpret policy publications – and contribute to broad policy discussions – will necessarily be limited.
Some of the readings below present, unpack or engage debates about these perspectives; others employ, embed or illustrate them.

**Sept 11. Values, Diversity and Policy Goals**


**Sept 11-16. Alternative perspectives on International problems: Global Public (Collective) Goods or National interest?**

  - Excerpts on national interest: pp 120-122.

**Sept 18. Theoretical approaches to international relations and foreign policy**

- [Teaser] Ken Waltz obituary. May 19-2013
- [Teaser] Dresner blog, "Why Obama Needs to Choose Whether He’s a Liberal or a Realist on Syria.”
  - http://www.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/09/03/obama_needs_to_choose_whether_hes_a_liberal_or_a_realist_on_syria

Optional Readings that are in some way illustrative (available on ctools):

- "McCain: On foreign policy. I may have more in common with Obama than with some in own party” Foreign Policy’s The Cable, April 19, 2013.
  - http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v01/d1
- Joseph Nye, "What China and Russia Don’t Get about Soft Power,” Foreign Policy, April 2013
  - http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/29/what_china_and_russia_don_t_get_about_soft_power
- Walt, "Signs You May Be a Liberal Imperialist," Foreign Policy, May 2013
- Mabry, Marcus. “Condi is a Realist” Excerpt from “Think Again: Condoleezza Rice.” Foreign Policy, May/June 2007.

**Sept 23, 25, 30 SKILL-BUILDERS.** These three class periods focus on the understanding, presentation, and analysis of policy issues. They are directly related to assignments that are component parts of the course project.
Sept 23. Backgrounders and FAQs. HEADS UP: this class period relates to the first component of your course project, the Backgrounder. We’ll consider what they are, how they’re used, and how to prepare them.


Backgrounders from Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.cfr.org/publication/by_type/backgrounder.html. Policy backgrounders come in many shapes and sizes and you may find it useful to look at some of the CFR backgrounders as examples. For your own project backgrounders, however, please follow carefully the directions in the Assignment Guide.

Sept 25. Tackling Analysis: What is the dictionary definition of analysis? What are the implied commonalities among global trends analysis, political risk analysis, foreign policy analysis and content analysis? What is the relationship between academic research/analysis and policy analysis? HEADS UP: This class period relates to the separate analysis papers required for your policy projects.


Sept. 30. Framing. HEADS UP: This class period relates to the second assignment in your course project, the Framing Memo (due Oct 9).

- Waltz Handout on Framing – ctools.

**Part III: Institutions in Global Politics**

To make or assess policy recommendations for issues that cross international boundaries, policy professionals need a good understanding of the various kinds of actors that exist, the institutions and frameworks within which decisions are made, and the broad types of policy tools and choices that can be made. Where you begin depends in some part on the kind of issue you’re looking at – and who the main actors are. Traditional approaches to IR emphasize the state, because for 300 years state interests have dominated international relations and overshadowed institutional constraints (including international law). That remains the case for most international crises, but it is less true for many of the broad issue areas, like trade, development and environmental concerns. In this course, we’ll begin with the broad issue areas, and return to the question of power and state interests later in the semester.


Historically, large states have often acted on their own (via bilateral foreign policy), independent of an institutional context. Increasingly, though, European states conduct foreign policy within the context of the EU, and the US likewise pursues some of its foreign policy objectives within the constraints of a specific institutional setting. Small and medium states tend to pursue most of their foreign policy within institutional contexts. Obviously, you’re not in a good position to analyze or propose policy-related actions if you’re not
familiar with the rules and patterns of institutional arrangements. So: what is international law and what can we reasonably expect from it? What are the two global institutional frameworks, and where do we start in efforts to understand how they work?

- Hurd, *International Organizations*, Ch. 1, “Introduction to International Organizations” and re-read Ch. 2, “Theory, Methods, and IOs, including pp. 28-37.


**Global Frameworks – The Bretton Woods System (World Bank, IMF, WTO and system of foreign currency exchange).** What obligations do member states have, and what factors influence compliance?


Hurd, *International Organizations* – Chapter 3, “The WTO” and Chapter 4, “IMF and World Bank” (concentrate on Ch 4)
Bretton Woods Project (“Critical Voices on the WB and IMF”), http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org

Oct 9. The UN Framework. **Global Frameworks – The UN.** What exactly is the UN and how is it structured? Why doesn’t UN work like “United Federation of Planets” in Star Trek?


Hurd, *International Organizations*, Ch. 5, “UN I: Law and Administration” and Ch. 6, “UN II: Peace and Security.”

Oct 14. Fall Study Break, no class

Oct 16. **Regional IGOs as institutional frameworks.** There are hundreds of IGOs. What do they all have in common? In what sense do they provide frameworks for international policy-making? The EU and NATO are commonly recognized as the most “successful” regional IGOs. What accounts for their success?

[Teaser] Atlantic, “The Euro is Still Doomed, in Two Charts” 2013

Hurd, *International Organizations*, Ch. 10, The EU and Regional Organizations.

Part IV. **Actors on the Global Stage**

Oct 21. **The Array of Actors in International Relations.**
For good reasons, nation states are considered the major players in global affairs. But the global stage is actually pretty crowded, and states aren’t the only players. Who are the other actors and what role do they play? What concepts and analytical tools can help the policy analyst or advocate understand the real or potential influence that non-state actors might wield?

1. IOs as Actors
   - Hurd, pp. 29-30

2. International Courts
   - Hurd, International Organizations, p. 29; Ch. 8 “The International Court of Justice” and Ch. 9, “The International Criminal Court”

3. NonState Actors

Oct 23. NGO/NSAs as Advocates. To what extent do Advocacy NGOs have power and influence in global politics? What role do they play and under what conditions are they most effective?


Human Rights Advocacy and the History of International Human Rights Standards, humanrightshistory.umich.edu – all 3 pages in section on Making Policy Decisions, http://humanrightshistory.umich.edu/policy-decisions/ and the page on Torture, with Rodley’s narrative (both items, the webpage and the narrative) - http://humanrightshistory.umich.edu/problems/torture/

Discussion: For your roundtable topics, do NSAs seem to have a role comparable to that of Amnesty International on torture? In what institutional context(s) are they active and effective?

Oct 28. States as Political Actors: Exercising Sovereignty. States are considered the main actors in international relations—and indeed it has not been so long ago that they were considered the only actors worth studying. What is a state, and how do states differ? In particular, what makes a state “strong”? What does it mean for a state to “fail”? What is sovereignty, and how does it relate to state strength and power?


SWOT analysis http://erc.msh.org/quality/itools/itswot.cfm. (May defer to Oct 30)
Oct 30. **Statecraft and Foreign Policy Analysis:** How, in a practical sense, can we evaluate foreign policy? How can a foreign policy success or failure be gauged? Is it always and only a matter of opinion (and values), or are there analytical tools that policy analysts can use? The topic of “foreign policy mistakes” leads to a broader question: How do we assess the quality of a foreign policy position or recommendation? How can statecraft be evaluated? And . . . what is the place of values, beliefs, ideology, etc. in assessing the quality of a policy? What else besides values, beliefs, etc. bears on policy analysis?


Nov 4, 6, 11. **The Case of US Foreign Policy**

Nov 4. **Introducing US Foreign Policy.** For opening class discussion: What, according to Koh, is the President’s structural advantage with regards to foreign policy?


Class period will focus on the US Foreign Policy apparatus – institutional framework, roles and players. The following materials are available on ctools:

- Foreign Policy Roles of the President and Congress [http://fpc.state.gov/6172.htm](http://fpc.state.gov/6172.htm)
- Organizational chart – US Department of State [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99494.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/99494.htm)

Nov 6-11 **US Foreign Policy Inputs and Constraints**

What are the contours of US foreign policy and what external factors constrain an Administration? Are critics unusually harsh in their assessment of the Obama Administration’s foreign policy, or is this just situation normal? These two class periods focus on the role of Congress and public opinion in shaping US foreign policy as well as the interplay between domestic and international factors.

Colby, Eldridge and Lettow, Paul. “Have We Hit Peak America?” Foreign Policy, July/August 2014.

Discussion/Analysis: Topics and Readings TBA (Possible US-China relations, CFR Nov 20).

Nov 25. Review/Open Forum

Nov 27. Thanksgiving

Part V: Issues in International Affairs

Dec 2, 4, 9. Policy Roundtables

Friday, Dec 12, 4-6 PM. Policy Roundtable debrief
Please note: The Course Debrief/Discussion will take place during the final-exam time period scheduled by the University for this course. Please note that attendance for this session is mandatory. Students who do not participate in this period will have points deducted from their final grade.

Final papers (together with related project papers) accepted on Friday, December 12 or by noon, Tuesday December 16.