

Public Policy 510: Politics of Public Policy

Fall 2018

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Instructor: Jonathan Hanson
jkhanson@umich.edu
4223 Weill Hall, 615-1496
Office Hours: Tues. 1:00–2:30, Fri. 11:30–1:00, or by appointment

Graduate Student Instructor: Anna Pudimat
apudimat@umich.edu
3212 Weill Hall, Mailbox 171
Office Hours: Tues. 2:00–4:00, or by appointment

As analysts of public policy, we use social science tools to assess policy options from a technical standpoint. We emphasize systematic analysis of empirical data and a more detached perspective. This is not how the policymaking process typically operates in real-world conditions, where various interests clash and fight to win policy outcomes that are favorable to their own objectives. The perspectives of “experts” with scientific training may be treated with skepticism or regarded as irrelevant.

The central goal of this course is to give policy practitioners the skills necessary to understand the political nature of the policymaking environment and to operate within it effectively. This involves the ability to identify the various stakeholders and participants in the policymaking process, to discern what motivates these actors and shapes their interests, and to understand the institutional, social, economic, and cultural factors that structure this environment. In short, we learn to approach the policymaking process from a political perspective and to think strategically about our actions.

This course is comparative in nature. Although many of the cases we discuss will come from the American political context, we draw upon cases from many other countries as well. By looking across different contexts, the comparative approach helps identify factors that are critical for understanding a particular political context but that are less obvious without a basis for comparison. The comparative approach also enables us to assess a wider range of alternatives, fostering the spread of good ideas.

Course objectives:

- To understand the policy process;
- To identify the range of interests, stakeholders, institutions, and other factors that shape the policy-making environment around an issue;
- To develop strategies that respond to the the particular challenges in a given political context;
- To develop written and oral communication skills critical for being an effective participant in policymaking;
- To build capacity to work well with others in group settings

Class Meeting Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, class meetings are Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30–4:00 pm in 1210 Weill Hall.

Readings

Most reading assignments are available on the course Canvas site (<http://canvas.umich.edu>) or through links to electronic holdings in the University of Michigan library. Some readings must be purchased, such as the cases from the Harvard Kennedy School Case Program (<http://case.hks.harvard.edu>).

Assignments and Grading

Your grade for this course will be determined by your performance on a variety of different assignments and class participation. These assignments are described in detail in the Assignments Guide on Canvas.

Class Participation	15%
Briefing memo	5%
Stakeholder Analysis memo	10%
Short Policy memo	15%
Policy Environment Assessment group memo	10%
Roundtable presentation	15%
Self-assessments and self-critique	5%
Peer questions and critiques	10%
Long Policy memo	15%

Since this course is largely discussion-based, class participation is an important element of this course. It is expected that you will come to class having completed the readings in advance. I reserve the right to give a brief reading quiz without warning should I sense that too many students are not prepared.

All writing assignments are expected to be turned in by their respective deadlines, which will typically be the time that class starts on the day the assignment is due. You will upload a PDF-formatted file to Canvas through links in the Assignments folder. Rather than your name, put only your student ID number at the top of the page.

Late assignments: Since your real-world policy memos will have deadlines that cannot be changed, we will follow the same practice in this course. A grade deduction of 10% per day will be applied for late assignments. Please note that Canvas records the time an assignment is uploaded and will automatically flag any assignment that is turned in late. If there are extenuating circumstances, such as a family emergency or serious illness, please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Communication skills: a central objective of this course is to help you improve your written and oral communication skills for addressing a policy audience. The ability to write clearly, succinctly, and persuasively is critically important to being an effective practitioner in this field. Policy writing has some unique features, among them an emphasis on clarity and efficiency, that may differ from other forms of writing that you have done in the past. Writing assignments are typically short, but this part of what makes them difficult.

You are encouraged to make use of the Ford School's excellent writing tutors. Appointments are available through the following link: <http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/>. Another great resource is the Sweetland Writing Center: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/>. No matter how good the quality of your writing is at present, you will surely benefit from these resources.

The last part of the course consists of roundtable discussions. Members of the class will be divided into groups of 5-6 students. Each group will work on a particular policy question, and each member of the group will take on a particular role: government official, interest group representative, etc. Your job will be to advocate for your position on the issue, convincing the members of the audience (i.e. the rest of the class) to support your position on the issue.

In addition to your roundtable presentation, class discussions will offer an important opportunity for you to practice your oral communication skills. There are many ways to be an effective class participant: making an insightful comment, asking a question, showing good listening skills, and through overall engagement. Sometimes we will debate matters that are controversial or generate strong emotions. Your ability to discuss these issues respectfully and without rancor or personal attacks is essential.

The final course letter grade reflects the Ford School's guidelines. An A is awarded for work that is Excellent, an A- for work that is Very Good, a B+ for work that is Good, a B for work that is Acceptable, and a B- for work that is below expectations for graduate work. You should know I do not have a predetermined formula to convert numeric point totals into these categories. It would be a mistake, for instance, to assume that a grade of 10 out of 16 points on a writing assignment translates into a D.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that students are familiar with the Ford Schools expectations for academic integrity as described at <http://fordschool.umich.edu/academics/expectations>, which adhere to the academic integrity policies for Rackham Graduate School. Violations of these policies will be taken seriously.

Students with special needs

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.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impacts students' academic performance. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and/or University Health Service (UHS). For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

Inclusivity

Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community

Please refer to <http://fordschool.umich.edu/academics/expectations> for a full statement on the Ford School's academic expectations.

September 5: Introduction to the Course

September 10: The Policy Process

James E. Anderson (2014). "The Study of Public Policy." In *Public Policymaking*, chapter 1. Cengage Learning.

Pete Earley (2016). "Behind the Scenes Account of How Mental Health Reforms Became Law: Told by Sen. Chris Murphy." Blog post.

September 12: Policymaking in Comparative Perspective

Anneliese Dodds (2018). "Why Compare Public Policies?" In *Comparative Public Policy*, chapter 1. Palgrave.

Jerry McBeath and Jonathan Rosenberg (2006). "Introduction." In *Comparative Environmental Politics*, chapter 1. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

September 17: Theories of Public Policymaking

- Turn in roundtable topic preferences

Stella Z. Theodoulou (2013). "In Search of a Framework to Understand the Policy Process." In *Public Policy: The Essential Readings*, Stella Z. Theodoulou and Matthew A. Cahn, eds. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

Frank M. Baumgartner, Bryan D. Jones, and Peter B. Mortensen (2014). "Punctuated Equilibrium Theory:

Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking.” In *Theories of the Public Policy Process*, Paul A. Sabatier and Christopher M. Weible, eds. Boulder: Westview Press.

Bui Thi Thu Ha, Tolib Mirzoev, and Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay (2015). “Shaping the Health Policy Agenda: The Case of Safe Motherhood Policy in Vietnam.” *International Journal of Health Policy and Management* 4(11): 741-746.

September 19: Theories of Public Policymaking continued

Christopher M. Weible and Paul A. Sabatier (2007). “A Guide to the Advocacy Coalition Framework.” In *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis*, chapter 9. Boca Raton: Taylor & Francis.

Evans School of Public Affairs Electronic Hallway (2009). “Changing Mandatory Drug Sentencing Laws on the Federal and State Levels.”

September 24: Institutional and Cultural Contexts

Elmer E. Schattschneider (1960). “The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System.” In *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America*. New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston.

Miriam Smith. (2005). “The politics of same-sex marriage in Canada and the United States.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 38(2): 225-229.

September 26: Institutional and Cultural Contexts continued

Ellen M. Immergut (1990). “Institutions, Veto Points, and Policy Results: A Comparative Analysis of Health Care.” *Journal of Public Policy* 10(4): 391-416.

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

KSG Case 2062.0. “Pricing Carbon: The Birth of British Columbia’s Carbon Tax.”

October 1: Agenda Setting

- Briefing memo due by beginning of class.

Thomas A. Birkland (2011). “Agenda Setting, Power and Interest Groups.” In *Introduction to the Policy Process*. New York: Routledge.

Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram (1993). “Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy.” *The American Political Science Review* 87(2): 334-347.

October 3: Actors Inside Government

Thomas A. Birkland (2011). “Official Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy.” In *Introduction to the Policy Process*. New York: Routledge.

Donald P. Haider-Markel, Mark R. Joslyn, and Chad J. Kniss (2000). "Minority Group Interests and Political Representation: Gay Elected Officials in the Policy Process." *The Journal of Politics* 62(2): 568-577.

October 8: Actors Outside Government

- Group Stakeholder Proposal due October 8 by 5 pm

John W. Kingdon (2011). "Outside of Government, But Not Just Looking In." In *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*. Boston: Longman.

Jack Walker (1991). "The Mobilization of Political Interests in America." In *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

October 10: Political Activists

Jelani Cobb (2016). "The Matter of Black Lives: A New Kind of Movement Found its Moment. What will its Future Be?" *The New Yorker*, March 14, 2016.

Elahe Izadi (2016). "Black Lives Matter and America's Long History of Resisting Civil Rights Protesters." *The Washington Post*, April 19, 2016.

Dan Gunderson (2017). "'Not Invisible Anymore': Standing Rock a Year After Pipeline Protests." *Minnesota Public Radio*, September 13, 2017.

Peter Walker (2016). "Malheur Occupation is Over, but the War for America's Public Lands Rages On." *The Conversation*, February 19, 2016.

October 15: Fall Break

October 17: Social Movements

David A. Snow (2010). "Conceptualizing Social Movements." In *A Primer on Social Movements*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

David S. Meyer (1993). "How Social Movements Matter." *Contexts* 2(4): 30-35.

Sarah A. Soule and Brayden G. King (2006). "The Stages of the Policy Process and the Equal Rights Amendment, 1972-1982." *American Journal of Sociology* 111(6): 1871-1909.

Corrine McConnaughey (2016). "4 Lessons for Today's Women's Marchers from the Suffrage Movement." *The Washington Post*, January 26, 2017.

October 22: In-Class Writing Exercise

October 24: Public Opinion

John Zaller (1992). *Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapt. 3 and 12) <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1017/CBO9780511818691>.

Alan Sung-Soo Yang (2003). *Mass Opinion Change and Social Activism: The Politics of Knowledge and the Modern Lesbian and Gay Movement*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Chapter 1.

October 29: Public Opinion and Truth

- Stakeholder Analysis memo due October 29 by 11:59 pm

Deborah Stone (2012). “Facts.” In *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Caroline Schlauffer, Fritz Sager, and Iris Stucki (2018). “The Political Use of Evidence and Its Contribution to Democratic Discourse.” *Public Administration Review* 78(4): 645-649.

Amanda Taub (2017). “‘Kompromat’ and the Danger of Doubt and Confusion in a Democracy.” *The New York Times*, January 15, 2017.

Elizabeth Kolbert (2017). “Why Facts Don’t Change our Minds: New Discoveries About the Human Mind Show the Limitations of Reason.” *The New Yorker*, February 27, 2017.

Megan Sharma et al. (2016). “Zika Virus Pandemic: Analysis of Facebook as a Social Media Health Information Platform.” *American Journal of Infection Control* (in press).

Quealy, Kevin (2017). “How Readers React to Political News Stories They Don’t Like: By Ignoring Them.” *The New York Times*, February 21, 2017.

October 31: The Politics of Expertise

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

U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking (2017). “Introduction: Vision for Evidence-Based Policymaking.” In *The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking*, chapter 1.

Michelle Cottle (2017). “The Congressional War on Expertise.” *The Atlantic*, July 9, 2017.

Lena H. Sun and Juliet Ellperin (2017). “CDC Gets List of Forbidden Words: Fetus, Transgender, Diversity.” *The Washington Post*, December 15, 2017.

November 5: The Politics of Expertise

Kristin Anderson Moore (2006). "How Can Basic Research and Children and Families Be Useful for the Policy Process?" *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* 52(2): 365-375.

Tom Nichols (2017). "How America Lost Faith in Expertise: And Why That's a Giant Problem." *Foreign Affairs* 96(2): 60-73

Eric Lipton and Brooke Williams (2016). "How Think Tanks Amplify Corporate America's Influence." *The New York Times*, August 7, 2016.

Annie Waldman (2017). "Big Pharma Quietly Enlists Leading Professors to Justify \$1,000-Per-Day Drugs." *ProPublica*, February 23, 2017.

Charles Ornstein and Katie Thomas (2018). "Top Cancer Researcher Fails to Disclose Corporate Financial Ties in Major Research Journals." *The New York Times*, September 8, 2018.

Anthony N. Washburn and Linda J. Skitka (2017). "Science Denial Across the Political Divide: Liberals and Conservatives are Similarly Motivated to Deny Attitude-Inconsistent Science." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* (online first), 1-9.

November 7: Bureaucratic and Regulatory Politics

Cornelius M. Kerwin and Scott R. Furlong (2011). *Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy*, 4th Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Chapter 2 (Canvas).

Matthew McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 3(2): 243-277.

November 12: Bureaucratic and Regulatory Politics

- Policy memo due Monday, November 12 by 5 pm.

KSG Case 1349.0. "Taking on Big Tobacco: David Kessler and the Food and Drug Administration."

KSG Case 1737.0. "'Dealing With The Devil': The Tobacco Control Negotiations Of 1997-98."

November 14: Policymaking Through Litigation

Martha Derthick (2003). *Up in Smoke: From Legislation to Litigation in Tobacco Politics*. Washington: CQ Press.

Evan Gerstmann (2005). "Litigating Same-Sex Marriage: Might the Courts Actually Be Bastions of Rationality?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38(2): 217-220.

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

November 19: Policymaking Through Litigation

- Group Comparative Political Assessment memo due Monday, November 19 by 5 pm.

David S. Meyer and Steven A. Boutcher (2007). "Signals and Spillover: Brown v. Board of Education and Other Social Movements." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(1): 81-93.

Timothy D. Lytton (2004). "Using Litigation to Make Public Health Policy: Theoretical and Empirical Challenges in Assessing Product Liability, Tobacco, and Gun Litigation." *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics?* (Winter 2004): 556-564.

Alia Beard Rau (2017). "Alliance Defending Freedom: Fighting the Culture Wars from a Scottsdale Office Park." *Arizona Republic*, August 24, 2016.

November 21: Politics of Program Evaluation

- Roundtable Press Release due by 2:30 pm.

Eleanor Chelimsky (1987). "What Have We Learned about the Politics of Program Evaluation?" *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 9(3): 199-213.

KSG Case 1958.0. "Michelle Rhee's IMPACT on the Washington D.C. Public Schools."

November 26: Policy Roundtable # 1

November 28: Policy Roundtable # 2

December 3: Policy Roundtable # 3

December 5: Policy Roundtable # 4

December 10: Policy Roundtable # 5

Wednesday, December 19: Long Policy Memo due