

W3921, Sect. 007: The Politics of American Policymaking
Columbia University
Judith Russell
Fall 2012 Wednesday 11 - 12:50 pm

Office Hours 728 IAB
Mon., Tues, Wed 1-4:30 pm
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This seminar directs readings and research on public policymaking in the American federal government. It is designed to help students think analytically about the ways in which the structures, processes and actors at the heart of public policymaking interact. It examines how political institutions--the executive and legislative branches--are organized and motivated to produce policy, the politics of government organization, bureaucratic operation and survival, how the budget process drives policymaking processes, policy structures and relationships that have emerged out of custom and practice, theories and models of decision-making, concepts of rationality and choice, agenda-setting, political innovation, and judicial and interest group roles in policy formation. Specific policy areas we will engage as case studies are: economic and employment policy, healthcare policy and policy responses to terrorism, war and disaster.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Attendance is taken in this class and your professor takes it seriously. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet that circulates.

Participation: Lively classroom discussion and active participation is expected. Students are to be informed in their contributions. This means all readings are required and should be read before the class for which they are assigned. Selected readings will be read by the entire class and discussed in our weekly meetings. More specifically, each student will be responsible for presentations on the readings and leading class discussion two times during the semester. That means a small group will collaborate prior to each class on the issues and questions that guide our discussion. Those assignments will be made in our first class meeting.

A **20-25 page analytical research paper** on a topic of your selection is due on **December 5**. You are expected to consult with me prior to **October 3** when a two-page statement of your proposed research paper is due. This will include a title, thesis, and overview of your argument and proposed bibliography. Research proposals submitted after the due date will receive a 2 pt grade penalty for every day they are late. **All** students should read Howard S. Becker's Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book or Article, 2nd Edition, a useful text on framing appropriate research questions. It is inexpensive (about \$12. in paperback; \$5. electronically) and available at the Columbia Bookstore.

This course provides the opportunity for extensive seminar writing and research guidance and consultation which will be discussed in our first classes.

Your final grade is calculated on the basis of 40% for your final paper, 30 % for presentations and 30% for participation and attendance.

READINGS

All readings are on reserve at Butler Library. Books are available for purchase at the Columbia University Bookstore.

REQUIRED BOOKS FOR PURCHASE

David Blumenthal and James A. Morone, The Heart of Power: Health and Politics in the Oval Office (University of California Press, 2009)

Arnold M. Howitt and Herman B. Leonard, Eds, Managing Crises: Responses to Large-Scale Emergencies (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2009)

Donald Kettl, Sharing Power: Public Governance and Private Markets (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1993)

John W. Kingdon, Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1995)

Judith Russell, Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003)

Harold Seidman, Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization, 5th Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Ron Suskind, Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and The Education of a President (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2011)

Aaron Wildavsky and Naomi Caiden, The New Politics of the Budgetary Process, Fifth Edition (New York: Pearson Longman, 2003)

Recommended:

Howard S. Becker, Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book or Article, 2nd Edition (Chicago: Uni. of Chicago Press, 2006)

George E. Shambaugh IV and Paul J. Weinstein Jr., The Art of Policy Making: Tools Techniques and Processes in the Modern Executive Branch (New York: Longman, 2003)

RESERVES

Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," in The American Political Science Review Vol LXIII September 1969 No 3

Samuel Beer, "In Search of a New Public Philosophy," in The New American Political System, ed. Anthony King, ch1

Katherine Boo. 2004. "The Churn: Letter from South Texas." *The New Yorker*. 80(6): 62-(This article is available on The New Yorker Online

The Brookings Institution, *Bending the Curve: Effective Steps to Address Long-Term Health Care Spending Growth*. http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/0901_btc.aspx

Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, "The Dynamics of Agenda-Building" (1972)

Timothy Conlan and Francois Chantal, "The Rehnquist Court and Contemporary American Federalism" in *Political Science Quarterly* Vol 116 (Summer 2001) 353-275

Anthony Downs "Up and Down with Ecology: The 'Issue Attention Cycle'" in *The Public Interest* No 28 (1972) 38-50

James Fallows, "He Was Slick Thank God," *The Atlantic online*, February, 2001

Peter W. Galbraith, "Iraq: The Way to Go," in *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 54 No. 13 August 1, 2007

Atwal Gawande, "The Cost Conundrum: What a Texas town can teach us about healthcare," in *The New Yorker*, June 1, 2009
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/06/01/090601fa_fact_gawande

David Goldhill, "How American Healthcare Killed My Father," in *The Atlantic*, , September 2009. <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200909/health-care>

William Greider, "The Education of David Stockman," *The Atlantic online*, February, 1981

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

Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style of American Politics," *Harpers Magazine*, November 1964

Ellis Katz, "American Federalism, Past, Present, Future" in The U.S. Information Service's Electronic Journal -- Issues of Democracy, April 1997
<http://www.ucla.edu/~ras2777/amgov/federalism.html>

Paul Krugman, "How Did Economists Get It So Wrong?" in *The New York Times Magazine*, September 6, 2009

Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19 (1959), 79-88

Robert Reich, "The Limping Middle Class," in *The New York Times Sunday Review*, September 4, 2011 (SR6)

Charles Lindblom, "Still Muddling, Not Yet Through," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 39, (1979), 517-526

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," Chapter VIII in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946)

James Q. Wilson, "New Politics, New Elites, Old Publics," in *The New Politics of Public Policy*, ed. Marc K. Landy and Martin A. Levin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), Ch 10

The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (New York: Norton, 2004)

TOPICS AND READINGS

September 5 Introduction to the Policy Process in the US

How do we approach public policy? How has the policy field developed? What are prominent theories of the policy process? What is the relationship between politics and public policy? Why can't we seem to solve problems anymore?

The Next New Thing: "Let's Hear Those Ideas: In America and Britain governments hope that a partnership with "social entrepreneurs" can solve some of society's most intractable problems" *The Economist* August 12, 2010 (handout)

Richard Hofstadter "The Paranoid Style of American Politics" (handout)

Recommended:

Stephen Goldsmith, *The Power of Social Innovation: How Civic Entrepreneurs Ignite Community Networks for Good* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010)

September 12 Agenda Setting and Decision-making

How do issues and problems become public policy? Problem formation and definition. Issue attention, public attention and policy demands. Policy research and history. Accidents. Non-decisions. Rationality and bounded rationality (garbage cans). Public choice. Incremental, institutional approaches, advocacy coalitions. What is the role of the public?

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd Ed

Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19 (1959), 79-88

Hugh Hecló, "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment," in The New American Political System, ed. Anthony King (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), Ch. 3

Recommended:

Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, "The Dynamics of Agenda-Building" (1972)

Anthony Downs "Up and Down with Ecology: The 'Issue Attention Cycle'" in *The Public Interest* No 28 (1972) 38-50

Charles Lindblom, "Still Muddling, Not Yet Through," Public Administration Review, Vol. 39, (1979), 517-526

Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis" in *The American Political Science Review* Vol LXIII Sept 1969 No 3.

September 19 Federalism, [D]evolution and Shared Policy Responsibility

How have patterns of US federalism affected key policy areas? How has the business/government relationship shaped public private patterns of policymaking and implementation?

Donald Kettl, Sharing Power: Public Governance and Private Markets (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1993) Chs 1, 2, 5,6,7,9

Ellis Katz, "American Federalism, Past, Present, Future" in The U.S. Information Service's Electronic Journal -- Issues of Democracy, April 1997.
<http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/~ras2777/amgov/federalism.html>

Timothy Conlan and Francois Chantal, "The Rehnquist Court and Contemporary American Federalism" in *Political Science Quarterly* Vol 116 (Summer 2001) 353-275

Recommended:

Stephen Goldsmith, The Power of Social Innovation: How Civic Entrepreneurs Ignite Community Networks for Good (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010).

Timothy Conlan, From New Federalism to Devolution: Twenty-Five Years of Intergovernmental Reform (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1998) Chs 1, 7, 8,11,12,14

September 26 Institutional Arrangements: Public Servants, Policy Advisors and Politicians

Problems of Governability. Theories of bureaucracy and modes of governance. Administrative reform and accountability. Corruption, impropriety and wrongdoing (public sector ethics, administrative tradeoffs-efficiency and equity).

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," Chapter VIII in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology

Harold Seidman, Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization, 5th Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

October 3 The Budget Drives the Policymaking Process

The budget is the measure of our national priorities. How does the budget process reflect the trade-offs between politics and process?

Two-page research proposals due

Aaron Wildavsky and Naomi Caiden, The New Politics of the Budgetary Process, Fifth Edition (New York: Pearson Longman, 2003)

Recommended:

“The Education of David Stockman,” by William Greider, *The Atlantic online*, February, 1981

October 10 Economic Policymaking: The Consequences of Economic Ideas

Can the economy be controlled? How much influence does any president have over the economy?

Ron Suskind, Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and The Education of a President (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2011)

Judith Russell. Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty Chapter 2.

“He Was Slick Thank God,” by James Fallows, *The Atlantic online*, February, 2001.

Paul Krugman, “How Did Economists Get It So Wrong?” in *The New York Times Magazine*, September 6, 2009.

Robert Reich, “The Limping Middle Class,” in *The New York Times Sunday Review*, September 4, 2011 (SR6)

Recommended:

Ron Suskind, The Price of Loyalty; “The Education of David Stockman,” by William Greider, *The Atlantic online*, February, 1981

October 17 Employment Policy: The Significance of Institutional Arrangements

In a capitalist economic system, why can't everyone who wants to work get a job?

Judith Russell. Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty

Katherine Boo. 2004. “The Churn: Letter from South Texas.” *The New Yorker*. 80(6).

“Special Report on The Future of Jobs : The Great Mismatch, “*The Economist*.
September 10, 2011 3-17 (handout)

“Left Behind” in *The Economist*, September 10 2011. 77-76 (handout)

October 24 Healthcare Policy: Presidents and the Significance of Big Ideas

David Blumenthal and James A. Morone, *The Heart of Power: Health and Politics in the Oval Office* (University of California Press, 2009)

Atwal Gawande, “The Cost Conundrum: What a Texas town can teach us about healthcare,” in *The New Yorker*, June 1, 2009
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/06/01/090601fa_fact_gawande

October 31 War-making

How does war policy develop? What are the intellectual, political and policy origins and goals of the Iraq war? How do we leave? What are the limits of the executive branch in wartime? Who has responsibility for US prisoners of war? How do we define, prosecute, and carry out relations with enemy operatives at home and abroad today?

Mark Danner, “Iraq: The War of the Imagination,” in *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 53 No.20 December 21, 2006.

Peter W. Galbraith, ‘Iraq: The Way to Go,’ in *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 54 No. 13 August 1, 2007

TBA Reading on Hamdan decision

Recommended:

Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden. From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004)

George Packer, *Assassins’ Gate: America in Iraq* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2005)

Ron Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine: Deep Inside America’s Pursuit of its Enemies Since 9/II* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2006)

Ron Suskind, *The Way of the World: A Story of Truth and Extremism in an Age of Extremism* (New York: Harper, 2008)

Robert Woodward, *State of Denial, Bush at War. Part III* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006)

November 7 Public Policy in Crisis and Disaster: Who Benefits? Who Pays?

All public policy is not based on rationality, efficiency, equity or reason. How do American communities cope with disaster? What is the policy responsibility of the federal government? What are the roles of the business community and/or state and local political actors?

Arnold M. Howitt and Herman B. Leonard, Eds, Managing Crises: Responses to Large-Scale Emergencies (New York: CQ Press, 2009) Chs TBA

Recommended:

<http://www.academicinfo.net/katrina.html>

Douglas Brinkley, The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast (New York: William Morrow, 2006)

November 14 Topic and Readings TBA

Nov. 21, 28, Dec. 5 STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION