

**PS 5150 SEMINAR IN PUBLIC POLICY**

Dr. Tatyana Ruseva, Spring 2013

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**Class time:** Monday 6:15- 9 P.M.

**Instructor:** Dr. Tatyana Ruseva

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**Office:** Ann Belk Hall 2051

**Office hours:** T/Th. 1-3 pm  
& by appointment

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This is a graduate level seminar in public policymaking. We will discuss a number of theories of the policy process, and the actors and institutions involved in formulating, implementing, and analyzing policy. We will also spend some time evaluating substantive policy areas including environmental, energy, health, and social policy.

**Required Texts and Readings**

1. Kingdon, John W. 2003. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Harper Collins.
2. Stone, Deborah. 2002. *Policy Paradox*. Norton.
3. Gormley, William Jr. and Steven Balla. 2013. *Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance*. Sage: CQ Press.
4. Smith, Kevin and Christopher Larimer. 2013. *The Public Policy Theory Primer* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Westview Press.
5. Sabatier, Paul A. 2007. *Theories of the Policy Process* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Westview Press.
6. Vig, Norman J. and Michael Kraft. Eds. 2009. *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, CQ Press. 7th Edition
7. Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Theda Skocpol 2010. *Health Care Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press.

All other readings will be posted on AsULearn. *I reserve the right to assign additional readings.* Naturally, completing the readings is integral to your success in this course.

**Course Requirements**

• Critical Reviews	30 % of grade
• Participation & Discussions Leadership	20 % of grade
• Midterm Exam	20 % of grade
• Final Paper	30 % of grade

Your grade will be based on a combination of your participation, discussion leadership, written work, and the examination. All written work will be reduced by 10% for each day it is late.

### **Critical Reviews (30%)**

Each student will write 5 critical reviews during the semester. In these reviews, summaries should be kept to a minimum. Instead, the purpose is for you to critically evaluate the theoretical and methodological findings of the readings for the week - you should review all the required readings in a given week. Please, write a single review and attempt to integrate the readings rather than treating them separately. Papers should be approximately 2 pages in length (text) and should be well-organized, proof-read, and scholarly in nature. Proper citation is required. Print and bring your reviews to class. These are worth 6% points each, for a total of 30% of your grade. Major political science journals often have examples of these toward the end of each edition.

### **Participation & Leadership of Class Discussions (20%)**

You are expected to not only attend class but participate in the class discussions. Therefore, it is critical (and required) that you complete the readings as assigned. Your participation grade will be based on your verbal discussions of the materials each week. Participation and leadership of class discussions will account for 20% of your final grade.

At the first class meeting, one or more students will be chosen to lead the class discussion for each week (I will do the first reading—week 3). Each student will lead or co-lead the discussion a couple of times over the course of the semester. The student(s) should prepare study questions based on the material and hand them out at the beginning of class. It might be a good idea to coordinate with the other students leading the class discussion that week.

### **Final Paper (30%)**

You will be expected to complete a research paper of about 20 pages (between 4500 and 6500 words in length). Specific guidelines are included at the end of this syllabus. Your paper must conform to strict academic standards for substance and style. *Proper spelling, punctuation and grammatical correctness are absolutely essential.* Throughout the semester I will require written updates on your progress, in the form of a brief 1-2 page proposal and sample bibliography. These updates will be graded as part of your final grade for the research paper. The final paper is due on May 6, 2013 by 10 PM.

### **Policy on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

If you have any questions about whether a particular practice constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask me or contact the Dean of Students. Other items such as your rights in grievance procedures related to academic integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.appstate.edu>. *Plagiarism* and other forms of academic misconduct will be dealt with under the strictest terms provided for under ASU policy. In most cases, plagiarism will result in a failing grade and a formal report to the Dean of Students office.

*Plagiarism* is using another person's words, ideas, artistic creations, or other intellectual property without giving proper credit. A student must give credit to the work of another person when he/she does any of the following:

- a. Quotes another person's actual words, either oral or written;
- b. Paraphrases another person's words, either oral or written;
- c. Uses another person's idea, opinion, or theory; or,
- d. Borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, unless the information is common knowledge.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

### **1/14 Introduction to the course: Why public policy?**

- Balko, R.2004. [What you eat is your business](#).
- Smith, Kevin, and Christopher Larimer. 2013. Chapter 1 “Public Policy as a Concept and a Field (or Fields) of Study”. In *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. Westview Press, pp: 1-24.
- Stone, Deborah. “Introduction: Why this book?”. In *Policy Paradox*, pp: 1-15.

### **1/21 MLK Day – No class**

### **1/28 Justifications for Public Policy I: Market Failure and Distributional Goals**

- Weimer, D. and A. Vining. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed), Chapters 5 & 7
- Stone, Deborah. 2002. *Policy Paradox*. Parts I and II, pp:19-153

### **2/4 Justifying Public Policy II: Government Failure and Remedies**

- Weimer, D. and A.Vining. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed), Chapters 8 & 9
- Stone, Deborah. 2002. *Policy Paradox*. Parts III and IV, pp:155-377

### **2/11 Policy Typologies and the Policy Sciences**

- Lasswell, Harold D., 1970. “The Emerging Conception of the Policy Sciences”, *Policy Sciences*, 1 (Spring) p.3-14
- Lowi, T. 1972. “Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice”, *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 32, No. 4. (Jul. - Aug., 1972), pp. 298-310
- Smith, Kevin, and Christopher Larimer. 2013. Chapter 2 “Does Politics Cause Policy? Does Policy Cause Politics?” In *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. Westview Press, pp:25-45
- Theodolou, Stella and Matthew Cahn. 2013. Part 3: Theories on the Policy Process. Readings 20, 21, 22, and 23 (pp:123-151).

### **2/18 Decision Making and Public Policy Making**

- Lindblom, Charles. 1959. “The Science of Muddling Through.” *Public Administration Review*. 19:79-88
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1967. “Mixed-Scanning: A Third Approach to Decision-Making.” *Public Administration Review*. 27:385-392.
- Lindblom, Charles. 1979. “Still Muddling, Not Yet Through.” *Public Administration Review*. 39:517-532.
- Theodolou, Stella and Matthew Cahn. 2013. Reading 4 “Bounded Rationality and Rational Choice Theory”, pp: 23-30.

**2/25 Decision Making and Organizational Choice**

- Simon, Herbert A. 1965. "Administrative Decision Making." *Public Administration Review* 25:31-37
- Cohen, Michael, James March, and John Olsen. 1972. "The Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice." *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 17:1-25.
- Smith, Kevin, and C. Larimer. 2013. Chapter 3 "Who Makes Decisions? How Do They Make Decisions? Actors and Institutions". In *The Public Policy Theory Primer*, pages: 73-97.

*Recommended:*

Simon, Herbert A. 1944. "Decision-Making and Administrative Organization" *Public Administration Review* 4:16-30.

Ostrom, Elinor. 2007. "Institutional Rational Choice: An Assessment of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework." In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pages: 21-64.

**3/4 Policy Networks and Advocacy Coalitions**

- Sabatier, Paul and Chris Weible. 2007 "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications" In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. by P. Sabatier, pp:189-222.
- Theodolou, Stella and Matthew Cahn. 2013. Reading 9 "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment", pages: 69-78.
- Smith, Kevin, and Christopher Larimer. 2013. Chapter 4 "Where Does Policy Come From? The Policy Process". In *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. pp: 73-97.
- Nohrstedt, Daniel. 2008. "The Politics of Crisis Policymaking: Chernobyl and Swedish Nuclear Energy Policy." *The Policy Studies Journal* 36:257-278.

*Recommended:*

Sabatier, Paul A. 1988. "An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning Therein." *Policy Sciences*. 21:129-168.

**3/11 SPRING BREAK**

**3/18 Midterm Exam**

**3/25 Agenda Setting and the Streams Approach**

- Kingdon, John W. 2003. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*.

*Recommended:*

Theodolou, Stella and Matthew Cahn. 2013. Reading 44 "The Structure and Context of Policy Making", pp:287-299.

Zahariadis, Nikolaos. 2007. "The Multiple Streams Framework: Structure, Limitations, Prospects". In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. P. Sabatier, pages: 65-92.

**4/1 Agenda Setting and Punctuated Equilibrium**

- True, James L., Bryan D. Jones and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2007. "Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking". In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. P. Sabatier, pages: 155-188.
- Theodolou, Stella and M. Cahn. 2013. Reading 24 "Agendas and Instability", pp: 151-157.

**4/8 Social Construction and Policy Design**

- Ingram, Helen, Anne Schneider, and Peter DeLeon. 2007. "Social Construction and Policy Design." In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul Sabatier. Westview Press, pp:93-127.
- Smith, Kevin, and Christopher Larimer. 2013. Chapter 8 "Whose Values? Policy Design", In *The Public Policy Theory Primer*. Westview Press, pp: 171-195.
- Nowlin, Matthew C. "Theories of the Policy Process: State of the Research and Emerging Trends" *Policy Studies Journal*, 39 (1):41-60.

*Recommended:*

Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. 1990. "The Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools." *Journal of Politics*. 52:510-529.

**4/15 The Bureaucracy**

- Gormley, William, and Steven Balla. 2013. *Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance*. Sage: CQ Press.
- Teodoro, Manuel P. 2009. "Bureaucratic Job Mobility and the Diffusion of Innovations." *American Journal of Political Science* 53 (1): 175–89.

**4/22 Environmental Policy**

- Vig, Norman J. and Michael Kraft. Eds.2005. *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*. SAGE. – Selected Chapters TBA.

**4/29 Health and Social Policy: The Welfare Race to the Bottom?**

- Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Theda Skocpol 2010. *Health Care Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press.
- Volden, Craig. 2002. "The Politics of Competitive Federalism: A Race to the Bottom in Welfare Benefits?" *American Journal of Political Science*. 46: 352-363

*Recommended:*

- Smith, Kevin, and Christopher Larimer. 2013. "New Directions in Policy Research", In *The Public Policy Theory Primer* (2nd ed.). Westview Press, pp: 197-220.
- Schlager, Edella. 2007. "A Comparison of Frameworks, Theories, and Models of Policy Processes." In *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul A. Sabatier. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 293–320.

**Final Paper Due: Monday, May 6 by 10:00 pm**

## **Requirements and Guidelines for the Research Paper**

This paper is an opportunity for students to become expert on a particular policy question of their choosing. The core of the paper is an *evaluative literature review*, followed by a research design illustrating how one might contribute to questions left unanswered by this literature.

There are bad and good literature reviews. First and foremost, a good review tells a story. The extant literature is what you use to tell the story, and the story itself can highlight new or underappreciated implications of theory, reveal what we do and do not know about particular topics, employ new frames to examine old questions, etc. Second, good reviews are centered around ideas, not studies. Studies are aggregated in various ways to illustrate elements of the questions and ideas. Moreover, the same study may help to illuminate different elements of the story. Thus, crafting a good literature review is more like painting a picture or weaving fabric than like stacking blocks or running a hurdle race, where studies are viewed as obstacles to overcome as quickly as possible. For examples of good literature reviews, take a look at the first chapter of Baumgartner and Jones' *Agendas and Instabilities in American Politics*, R. Douglas Arnold's *The Logic of Congressional Action* and Christopher Bosso's *Pesticides and Politics* – though keep in mind that these reviews were written with a purpose different from yours.

The above suggests the major requirements for this paper. **The first requirement is that the paper be question driven.** Obviously, the types of questions that might motivate the paper could originate from the key questions for policy scholars discussed in class (e.g. delineating public from private choices, understanding the behavior of public officials and the targets of public policy, and others). This is not an exhaustive list of the types of questions one might ask. What this first requirement eliminates is papers that seek to provide descriptive summaries of particular policy areas (i.e. a description of environmental regulation in the US; a comparison of US and French nuclear power programs, etc.). This does not mean that papers cannot have substantive content – it simply means that the focus of the paper should be on a theoretically-driven question, not policy substance. For instance, one might examine changes in US environmental regulations over time that have redrawn the line between public and private decisions, or officials (bureaucrats) in the US and French nuclear programs. Given the short length of the paper, your question should be relatively narrow. I strongly encourage you to discuss your questions with me prior to beginning your research.

**The second requirement is that the approach to answering the question be grounded in at least one relevant theoretical perspective.** Evaluating evidence in light of various theoretical perspectives is our best assurance that the story told by this evidence will be relevant to other times and other places. A theoretical framework is what distinguishes “a pile of bricks from a house”, to use a metaphor from the readings. You will be exposed to several theoretical lenses during the semester and different theories of policy choice or policy-relevant behavior. You are certainly not limited to using one theoretical lens. Indeed, some of you might decide to contrast competing theoretical perspectives and use existing empirical knowledge to assess the relative utility of each. After identifying a relevant theoretical framework and familiarizing yourself with it and its implications, your next task in this paper is to evaluate the framework empirically.

**The third requirement of the paper, then, is to employ previous empirical research in an effort to test the utility and accuracy of the theoretical perspective in question.** For example, if your question is about the behavior administrative officials in policy making, and you choose Niskanen's proposition that bureaucrats act to maximize their discretionary budgets you would gather the previous work in this area that tests hypotheses derived from the Niskanen model. To give another example, if your question is about the effectiveness of environmental regulations, you might place your inquiry within a theoretical framework of regulatory policy making, then gather and summarize existing empirical research on the topic. Keep in mind, however, that the answer(s) to your question will never be binary (i.e. bureaucrats do or do not act to maximize their discretionary budgets, regulations are effective or ineffective). I expect greater nuance in your answers to the questions, such as under what conditions are certain behaviors or outcomes more or less likely. Your conclusions should be driven by what you find in the empirical literature. Research is not undertaken to prove a point, but to answer a question. If you know (or probably are convinced you know) the answer before you ask the question, you need a new question. I also expect that you evaluate existing research with a critical eye.

One goal of evaluative literature reviews is to identify important question(s) left unanswered (or only partially answered) by the extant research. **Thus, the forth requirement of the paper is that you should identify an important unanswered question, clearly illustrate its theoretical and practical relevance, and sketch a research design that would allow you to answer this question.** With regard to the latter, you are invited to employ your knowledge from Scope and Methods or consult with me.

**The fifth requirement of the paper is that it incorporates material from at least one book or article published before 1980.** Familiarity with and acknowledgement of intellectual histories and classic works is important. Your choice of this material should make a substantial contribution to the paper. In most cases, early literature will be most relevant for the question and theory sections, though it may be relevant for the evidence section, as well. A good place to search for these "seminal" works is in the references of more recent books and articles. Do not select the material haphazardly, nor do you incorporate it in a simple, cosmetic manner (e.g. the parenthetical reference "Smith 1959").

My hope is that the above requirements will help you understand where smaller questions fit in the scheme of "big" questions about public policy, cultivate an ability to extract observable and testable implications from theory, and identify what we do and do not know about important policy questions. I envision a paper about 20 pages long, with proper academic citations, grammar and style. The structure should include five sections at a minimum:

- 1) The "big" question
- 2) Theory section
- 3) Evidence/ empirical literature
- 4) The unanswered (or partially answered) question and why it may be relevant to policy theory and practice
- 5) Proposed research design