Politics and Public Policy
Fall 2004
The George Washington University, Department of Political Science

Political Science 229.11
Thursday, 6:10pm-8:00pm, Monroe 204

Instructor: Eric Lawrence
Office: Old Main 414D
Office Hours: Mondays 1-3, or by appointment
Office Phone: 994-4826
E-mail: edl@gwu.edu
Course web site: On Blackboard

Course Description: This course examines the relationship between politics and public policy in the United States political system. The course is organized into four primary sections. First, we will study several issues that must be confronted when analyzing public policy—what theoretical perspectives are appropriate for the subject matter, how to bring order to the disparate political outcomes we call “public policies”, and how decisions are made by actors in the policy process. Second, we will examine the politics of key U.S. political institutions that structure and limit policy debates. Third, we study the relationship between the public and public policy, with both broad publics (public opinion) and narrow publics (interest groups). Fourth, we conclude with an examination of several key aspects of the policy process, agenda setting, implementation, and diffusion.

Required Texts (available in GW Bookstore):


All other required readings will be available through Blackboard.

Requirements: Each student is expected to read the required reading, attend class, and constructively participate in seminar discussion. This is not a lecture class, so the success of the seminar depends critically on the engaged participation of the class members. Each student will (co)lead discussion twice during the semester. The schedule of seminar leadership will be determined in the first class meeting. For the weeks that you are leading discussion, you need to (1) send a set of three or more thought provoking questions to all of the seminar members via blackboard, by midnight on the Wednesday before the seminar meets and (2) send me a succinct, two page critical essay assessing the week’s required readings. Each student will also write an integrative essay, due December 2nd, that will survey the literature on a topic of your choosing and argue on behalf of research that would advance our understanding of the topic. Doctoral students may write a research paper (also due December 2nd) in lieu of the integrative essay. All students must submit a one-page paper proposal to me by November 4th. The proposals will not be graded, but they will allow me to provide guidance on the paper prior to your writing it. Finally, “we will have an in-class final exam on a date to be announced.”
Grades: I will base your course grade on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation/discussion leadership</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short papers (2)</td>
<td>10% each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrative Essay/Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Course Calendar:

September 9th: **Overview of the Course and the Subdiscipline**

**Required:**
McCool, pp. 1-27.

**Supplementary:**

September 16th: **Organizing Theories in Public Policy**

**Required:**
McCool, pp. 105-111, 162-173.

**Supplementary:**

September 23rd: **Policy Typologies**

*Discussion leaders: Butcher, Austin, Dalton, Sachariah*

**Required:**
McCool, pp. 174-177, 244-250


**Supplementary:**


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**September 30th: Decision Making in Public Policy**

*Discussion leaders: Trent, Hubbard, Dalton, Heberlein*

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**Required:**


**Supplementary:**


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**October 7th: Congress and the Courts**

*Discussion leaders: Melton, Pope, Dovey, Coventry, Hoffman*

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**Required:**

*Congress:*

Kingdon, chapter 2.


*Courts:*

**Supplementary:**

**October 14th: The Presidency**

*Discussion leaders: Austin, Monosky, Baxter, Gordon*

**Required:**

**Supplementary:**

**October 21st: The Bureaucracy**

*Discussion leaders: Dovey, Scott, de Paz-Castro, Pope, Baxter*

**Required:**
Supplementary:

October 28th: **Separation of Powers**

*Discussion leaders: Hassan, Butcher, Corlies, Gordon, Melton*

Required:

Supplementary:

November 4th: **Interest Groups, Policy Subsystems, and Social Movements**

*Discussion leaders: Nagarajan, Coventry, de Paz-Castro, Hoffman, Parker*

Required:
Kingdon, chapter 3.
McCool, pp. 251-255, 380-389
Truman, David. “Interest Groups and the Nature of the State.” [In McCool, pp. 32-40]

Supplementary:
Freeman, J. Leiper. “The Subsystem in Perspective.” [In McCool, pp. 256-261]
November 11th: **Public Opinion and Policy Feedback**

*Discussion leaders: Hawkes, Corlies, Geyer, McKinnon*

**Required:**


**Supplementary:**


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November 18th: **Agenda Setting and Problem Definition**

*Discussion leaders: Scott, Parker, Hassan, Geyer, Nagarajan*

**Required:**
Kingdon, Chapters 4-8.


**Supplementary:**

December 2nd. Implementation and Oversight

Discussion leaders: Monosky, Heberlein, Hawkes

Required:


Supplementary:


December 9th: Diffusion of Innovations

[Note that this date is tentative as of September 9, 2004]

Discussion leaders: Hubbard, McKinnon, Sachariah, Trent

Required:


Supplementary:


Note: The schedule, policies, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.