POLS 6310-01
THE POLICY PROCESS
FALL 2022

Time: Thursday, 7:15—10:00
Place: XVH 117
Professor: Bob Cropf, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: By appointment

BOOKS TO PURCHASE
The following books are on order at the SLU Bookstore or online:

Edlin and Shaefer, $2 a Day.
Smith, Kevin B. and Christopher W. Larimer, The Public Policy Theory Primer, 3rd Edition
Stone, Deborah, Policy Paradox, The Art of Political Decision Making, 3rd Edition

COURSE RATIONALE
Is the US policy process broken? If so, can it be fixed? These are not merely academic questions but ones that matter greatly for the future well-being of the American political system, indeed for the future health and happiness of American citizens. In order to determine whether the policy process is broken, we must understand what it is and how it is supposed to work. Pols 6310 will introduce students to the literature, concepts, and theories of public policy making in the US. This course focuses on the politics of policy agenda setting (i.e., getting the government to focus on certain problems), how coalitions are formed to enact policies or dismantle them, and the important role that implementation plays in policy success. The emphasis in the readings will be on different concepts for understanding the policy process – concepts that are applicable in diverse settings.
The central questions that organize the seminar revolve around issues of getting policy done or undone. Does the process currently advantage certain groups (political or economic interests) over others? Are these advantages mainly political or institutional (this makes a big difference if reforms are needed)? What might this mean for the larger democratic process? What, if anything can or should replace the current paradigm and how we think about who should benefit from public policy?

POLICY DOMAIN
Seminar participants are required to select a policy domain to use as their case materials throughout the semester. A policy domain is a policy arena where there are coherent policy networks and ongoing debates. Examples are health policy, welfare policy, or local economic development policy. Students will apply the models and concepts that we discuss in the seminar to their policy domains. To focus your analysis, you will be required to select a particular policy or decision within your policy domain. Within health policy, for example, you could focus on the Affordable Care Act (ACA); or in welfare policy, the 1998 Welfare Reform Act signed into law by Bill Clinton. What was the process of formulation and implementation? Alternatively,

what is the process of trying to repeal and replace it? What groups advocated for and against? How did these groups stack up in terms of resources and political clout? The policy should be at least three years old and thus be fully documented and have some track record in implementation. Students may choose a policy at the national or state or local level, but it may be preferable to pick a major national law for a number of reasons, including that national laws tend to have more secondary literature documenting the policy process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
This class is a hybrid online-traditional one consisting of weekly online assignments that students complete for in-class presentation and discussion. The professor will also provide a focused lecture in each class giving the background and tools necessary for students to complete the online assignments for the following class.

        Your grade will be based on the following approximate percentages:
1. Completion of online assignments, class presentations and participation…………………………………………….   50%
2. Seminar project (issue framing paper and final project) … 30%
3. Final exam. (online)…………………………………...... 20%

Issue-framing paper: You will be required to write a between 20 and 25-page paper comparing and contrasting different ways of framing issues in your policy domain. The key to a good paper will be documenting how different groups frame the issue differently and how the framings can be viewed as part of a political strategy to contest the issue. This paper will have five parts:

- Introduction: A brief description of your policy domain, the specific policy you are exploring, and the importance of the problem you are addressing to society
- Brief Legislative History: The problem the legislation was meant to address, the key provisions of the policy you are highlighting for analysis, and the current state of the policy (i.e. is it firmly established or are there attempts at repeal or modification).
- The framing arguments of Key Stake Holders: Possible questions to answer in approaching this analysis are: did the issue move from episodic to thematic? Is the policy category being contested – redistributive, regulatory, etc.? What major morality tale is being appealed to? How are context, numbers, messengers, etc. being used? Is the policy branch or root?
- A policy domain map illustrating who the different players are and their connections
- A discussion of the different policy and political consequences that flow from the differing frames

The paper together with a three to five slide power point presentation displaying your domain map, a description of the key players and the different policy consequences flowing from the competing frames will be created and discussed during the 12/01/22 and 12/08/22 classes. **Final products will be due no later than 5:00 P.M. on Thursday Dec.8.**
Class presentations and participation: The success of each class depends heavily on the input students provide based on completion of the online assignments. Therefore, it is imperative that

assignments are completed and posted in time for others to understand and reflect on the material.

Finally, each student will present his or her final project to the seminar at the end of the semester. The final project is a continuation of the framing paper.

Final seminar project:
To demonstrate your knowledge of and facility with the class materials, you will be creating a policy campaign using power point and/or other media to convince relevant publics and legislators that your policy issue belongs on the public agenda, should be framed in a particular way, and result in legislation that will achieve a desirable policy outcome. In creating this presentation, you will need to be able to defend certain challenges such as why one problem definition over another; how the politics surrounding the issue can be managed; what model of policy process are you assuming and why? This will require you to write a policy memo to accompany your presentation. This policy memo will essentially be an expansion of your midterm domain analysis.
Presentations of your material will begin 12/01/22 and conclude 12/08/22**.** The completed projects are due no later than **5 pm on 12/08/22**. The final examination is online and will be released on 12/13 and due by 11:59 pm on 12/15.

 COURSE OUTLINE and ASSIGNMENTS:
Policy Process: August 25, 2022: Class1 -*Introduction to course and policy process*
First part of class: Orientation/Introductions/Initial Statement of Policy Domain/Specific Policy of Interest; where you fit on the political typology scale (https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/?group=bb82400b8712e2a438121883743ba7dd). **Please take the survey before class so you will be prepared to discuss the results.**
 Second part of class (after 5-minute break): Your Brain on Politics: RAM vs System 1 and 2; Discussion of Class Political Preference; Class structure/Assignments
Preparation for Class Two:
Read:
Public Policy Theory Primer – Chapter 1
Policy Paradox – Preface and Chapter 1
Watch:
The Fog of War (rent from Amazon for approximately $3.00 or another streaming provider)
The Influence of Policy TED talk (link provided)
Post:
To Journal:
Five bullet points summarizing your main "takeaways" from the "Fog of War"
Considering Stone's discussion, which of the two dominant paradigms (Market v. Polis or RAM v. Politics or System 2 v. System 1 thinking – where the first item in the pair represents the dominance of rational thought and the second the dominance of reflexive, subconscious, non-fact driven thought) best captures the policy process as it applies to your policy domain and specific policy. Why? (2 short paragraphs)
One strategy you think would be helpful in overcoming our Political Preference Narrative by achieving a state of "being consciously ignorant," i.e. activating System 2 thinking

To Discussion Board:
A paragraph discussing the The Washing Post Reports Podcast (see link in Canvas). See information on doing this assignment in Canvas.

In two or three succinct sentences, comment on two of your colleagues' discussion board entries that you find intriguing, disagree with, or can expand upon.

N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday August 31 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: September 1, 2022: Class 2 – *How policy originates in a problem, either real or perceived*

First Part: Class discussion of issues raised by Stone, Fog of War, little changes making big impacts, changing narratives, and relevance to your policy domain/policy legislation

Second Part: Myths, Problems, and the role of organizations in muddling through the policy process

Wrapping Up: Discussion of next assignments

Preparation for Class Three:
Read:
Public Policy Theory Primer – Chapter 2
$2 a Day—Introduction and Welfare is Dead
Post:
To Journal:
Explain how the RAM contributes to the rise in the type of poverty described in $2 a Day
A paragraph describing the Morality Tales various stake holders appeal to in advancing their case for or against welfare policy. What is (are) the Morality tale(s) informing your policy?
To Discussion Board:
What was the "problem" that Clinton's welfare reform (POWRA) was designed to "fix"? How was the problem framed by Clinton? By opponents?
In two or three succinct sentences, comment on two of your colleagues' discussion board entries that you find intriguing, disagree with, or can expand upon.
N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday Sept 7 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: September 8, 2022: Class 3 – *what role does ethics play in policy?*
First Part: Class discussion of   how models play out in real life: applications of RAM, SOPs, BHAGs, and policy levels in welfare/poverty policy and in the policy you are focusing on
Second Part: What does ethics have to do with it? Morality as a basis for political decisions
                Discussion of next assignment
Preparation for Class Four:
Read:
$ 2 a Day – Perilous Work
The Public Policy Theory Primer – Chapter 3
Watch:
Morality as the basis for political decisions
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SOQduoLgRw)
Post:

To Journal:
In a succinct paragraph, give 3 reasons why you think raising the minimum wage can be viewed as an ethical issue. Now offer a counter-argument why it shouldn't.
Chapter 3 in The Public Policy Primer again draws our attention to decision making – provide two sentences, one describing the ethical framework you think undergirds or flows from public choice theory and models like Tiebout and one describing the ethical framework informing cooperative, face to face problem solving.
To Discussion Board:
How do the morality surveys match up with the political typology survey you did in week 1? In other words, did your political type align with the morality "type"? If you have any issues with the survey, what are they?
In two or three succinct sentences, comment on two of your colleagues' discussion board entries that you find intriguing, disagree with, or can expand upon.
N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday 9/14 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: Thursday September 15, 2022: Class 4 – *how ideas of morality inform policy*
First Part   Class discussion – do ethics really have a place in policy discussions?
Understanding where evil lurks when paradox remains invisible and SOPs go unexamined.
Second Part   How moral beliefs shape our view of what government should and should not do: the role of Framing in the policy process
                Discussion of next assignment
Preparation for Class Five:
Read:
$2 a Day – A Room of One's Own; By Any Means Necessary
Public Policy Theory Primer – Chapter 4
Policy Paradox – Chapters 2, 3, and 4
Post:
To Journal:
Focusing on a specific policy within your policy domain of interest, bullet point in brief, descriptive statements how:
- Issues of equity are framed
- Issues of efficiency are framed
- Issues of welfare are framed

To Discussion Board:
 Briefly describe the competing policy narratives that attempt to frame the welfare policy debate (as described in $2 a Day) and suggest one reason why one narrative seems more compelling than the other/or are they equally compelling?
In two or three succinct sentences, comment on two of your colleagues' discussion board entries that you find intriguing, disagree with, or can expand upon.
N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday 9/21 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

 Policy Process: Thursday September 22, 2022: Class 5 - *Elements of Framing*
 First Part Class discussion - the dynamics of crafting a compelling policy narrative

Second Part -- Specific Elements of Framing; Discussion of next assignment
Preparation for Class Six:
Read:
$2 a Day – A World Apart, Conclusion
Policy Paradox - Chapters 5 and 6
Online Report "Features of Narratives" (https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/publication/the-features-of-narratives-a-model-of-narrative-form-for-social-change-efforts/)
Post:
To Journal:
Using Stone's discussion of liberty and security, bullet point answers to the following:
In the strategy for framing your policy area, what following elements are present on each side of the debate?

- Appeal to the value of positive or negative liberty?
- Focus on a particular level of harm?
- Incentives based on libertarian paternalism?
- Articulation of security concerns at the political, psychological or scientific level or a combination of these?

To Discussion Board:
The Frameworks Institute works in a wide variety of policy domains. Write a brief paragraph focused on the following questions. Does the report suggest narrative strategies for framing your policy issue in a way that more effectively achieves the goals you espouse? If your specific policy domain is not mentioned, using welfare policy are there techniques that might be more effective in articulating policy goals? How are those who are opposed to the policy outcomes you desire framing the issue? In two or three succinct sentences, comment on two of your colleagues' discussion board entries that you find intriguing, disagree with, or can expand upon.
Getting ready for Class Six:
The first hour of class will be devoted discussing your issue framing paper which is due October 6. To expedite the process, **it is recommended that you bring an outline of the issue-framing paper to class** so you will have thought about the material before the class. Review the work of your colleagues, the readings, the lecture slides, and the on-line material and class discussion and the work you've done thus far, preparing you for discussing the following sections:

- Introduction: A brief description of your policy domain, the specific policy you are exploring, and the importance of the problem you are addressing
- Legislative History: The problem the legislation was meant to address, the key provisions of the policy you are highlighting for analysis, and the current state of the policy (i.e. is it firmly established or are there attempts at repeal or modification), the key stake holders (pro and con) who are focused on the issue
- The framing arguments of Key Stake Holders: Possible questions to answer in approaching this analysis are: do any of the frames follow the rubrics suggested by the Frameworks Institute? Did the issue move from episodic to thematic? Is the policy category being contested - redistributive, regulatory, etc.? What major morality tale is being appealed to? How are context, numbers, messengers, etc. being used? Is the policy branch or root? -

We will go around the class and each student will discuss the above three sections.

N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday 9/28 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: Thursday, September 29, 2022: Class 6 – *Bringing it altogether: Writing the Issue Framing Paper*
First Part   The writing workshop; Discussion of next assignment
Preparation for Class Seven
Read: Policy Paradox Chapters 7 and 8
Post:
To the Discussion Board:
Your three to five slide power point presentations displaying your domain map, a description of the key players and the different policy consequences flowing from the competing frames
In a brief paragraph, comment on two of your colleagues' power point presentation, noting any further questions or themes needing further elaboration.

N.B. All required discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday 10/5 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: Thursday October 6, 2022: Class 7 – So what did you learn?
First Part: Focused discussion of policy domain maps
Second Part: How is Change Even Possible?
Your first project including slides should be posted to the Journal no later than 11:59 P.M., October 6.

Preparation for Class Eight
Read:
Policy Paradox – Chapters 9 and 10.
Post:
To Discussion Board:
Analyze the narrative stories defining and contesting your policy issue by describing in two or three sentence bullet points:

- The type of story it is, using Stone's story types

- The metaphors used to frame the issue

- Any use of synecdoche

- The way numbers are used

- The causal theories offered

- How the policy sorts interests and align costs and benefits

- The decision strategies of problem definition (rational analytical or polis)

In a short paragraph or two comment on your partners' story analysis – what would you like to see further elucidated?

N.B. All required discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday 10/12 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process. Thursday, October 13, 2022: Class 8 – The Art of Persuasion

First Part   Discussion of Stone and Crafting a Persuasive Policy Argument
Second Part   Agenda Setting and the role of policy subsystems; Discussion of Next Assignment

Preparation for Class Nine:
Read:
Smith and Larimer, Chapter 5
Policy Paradox, Chapter 11
Post:
To Discussion Board:

Using the policy you are working with as a test case, briefly critique each of the models below noting how the model does or does not apply to the action of key players in the process:

- Advocacy coalitions
- Punctuated Equilibrium
- Muddling Through
- Multiple Streams and Windows

Your critique should take the form of four short paragraphs.
Describe one key organization in your policy subsystem. In your judgement has it contributed to or hindered activities in the current macro political system?
Briefly contrast the role played by the policy subsystem in two of your colleagues' specific policy area with how it functions in your policy domain. For example, is the subsystem working to advance or slow down the implementation of the policy?

N.B. All required discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday 10/19 at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: Thursday, October 20, 2022: Class 9 – *The use and abuse of government agencies in the policy process*

First Part   Discussion of Change Models and the role of Policy Subsystems
Second Part The Deep State: Government Bureaucrats – Enemies of the People? Discussion of Next Assignments
Preparation for Class Ten:
Read:
Smith and Larimer, Chapter 7
Stone, Chapters 12, 13, and 14
Post:
To Journal:

An example of where a key agency in your policy domain made recommendations that were ignored by the macro political establishment.
An example of where a key agency recommendation was embraced by the macro political system.
An example of how a key agency used incentives or rules to gain compliance

To the Discussion Board:
A short reflection (a paragraph or two) on the meaning of the phrase, "experts should be on tap, not on top" and discuss the appropriate role of "facts" in the current policy climate.
After reviewing the work of your colleagues, briefly note whether you agree or disagree with two colleagues' analysis of the proper role of experts and the role of facts in the current policy climate. Why or why not?
N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

No class on October 27 because of Fall Break

Policy Process: Thursday, November 3, 2022: Class 10 – *Government and the Private Sector*
First Part Discussion of government bureaucracy, the role of expertise, and incentives to gain compliance
Second Part   Government, the private sector, and the role of partnerships; Discussion of next assignment
Preparation for Class Eleven:
Read:
Smith and Larimer, Chapter 8
Stone, Chapters 15 to the end
Post:
To Journal:
Suggesting that our policy/politics are in a state of churn is a bit of an understatement.
Considering your policy domain and the specific policy you are focusing on, give examples of the following:
- The contested arguments that rely on different interpretations of the rights involved
- The contested arguments that rely on different definitions of rights (positive – negative)
- The power dynamics employed to change the course of the policy

To the Discussion Board:
A brief description (one or two paragraphs) of elements of implementation processes that have helped or hindered the advancement of your policy (top down vs. bottom up, drift in the policy goals, etc.).
After reviewing the work of your colleagues', in two short paragraphs describe what the similarities and differences in implementation processes of two posts compared to your policy issue. Do the differences account for different rates of success or acceptance?

N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: Thursday, November 10, 2022: Class 11 – *Money Ball – Policy in the age of Darkness*

First Part   Discussion of the current political/policy climate and attempts to expand/contract the rights and powers of stakeholders in particular policy domains.
Second Part The role of dark money in current policy debates; Discussion of next assignments

Preparation for Class Twelve:
Read:
Smith and Larimer, Chapter 8 to the end
Post:
To Journal:
A short paragraph describing the new directions in policy research articulated by Smith and Larimer (i.e. incorporation of brain science) that seem promising in understanding what is happening in your policy domain.
To the Discussion Board:
A description of the players in your policy domain that have the most influence. Are they obvious or hidden? Are their arguments appealing or repellent? Why
In two or three succinct sentences, comment on two of your colleagues' discussion board entries that you find intriguing, disagree with, or can expand upon. What is similar of dissimilar to your policy area?

N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday at 11:59 P.M., the day before class.

Policy Process: Thursday, November 17, 2022: Class 12 – *Social Media, Politics and Policy*

First Part   Discussion of hidden or not so hidden influences on policy and how brain science helps us understand the policy process
Second Part Social Media and Public Policy; Discussion of next assignment

No class on Thursday November 24. Enjoy Thanksgiving!

Preparation for Class Thirteen:
Go to:
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=policy+impacts+of+social+media
Watch:

Impact of Social Media on Politics and Public Policy

IpsosGlobalAdvisor
And

[How can social media impact the government? | Clay Shirky](#)

[TED Archive](#)
Post:
To Journal:
A one paragraph reflection on Mike Colledge's assertion that because of social media, political parties will become like record labels.
A one paragraph reflection on the assertion by Clay Sharky that social media's ability to create anti-power threatens not only autocracies but also democracies.
To Discussion Board:
A social media clip that effectively demonstrates the use of social media in your policy area
Review the media clips of your colleagues and provide a brief critique of two of them focusing on their likely effectiveness, use of facts, and how visuals impact the message.
Definitions of your assigned terms
Any comments, need for clarification or further development of study guide terms you think are needed
Those presenting, work on presentation
N.B. All required journal and discussion board entries must be posted by Wednesday 11/23 at 11:59 P.M.

Policy Process: Thursday, December 1, 2022: Class 13 – *Wrapping it up/Presentations*
7:15—8:30 Presentations
Second Part Discussion, clarification of study terms
Preparation for Class Fourteen:
Work on final project and presentation
Review for the final exam

Policy Process: Thursday, December 8, 2022: Class 14 – *Presentations/Final Thoughts*
7:15 – 8:30   Presentations
8:30 – 8:45 Class evaluation
N.B. The completed projects are due posted to the Journal no later than Thursday. Dec.8 at 7:00 P.M.

Policy Process: Final Exam will online due 12/15/22 by 11:59 pm.