OVERVIEW

One of the recurring themes in American history is the desire to remove politics (that great beast!) from policy making. Fortunately or unfortunately, we live in the real world. In that environment, politics matters. Decision makers commonly hold different values and interests, and attempt to advance them through a variety of means (e.g., deployment of resources, advantageous issue framing). Outcomes frequently reflect participants’ skills, clout, etc. Persuasive arguments and efforts to achieve mutual gain through negotiation are also important, although commonly underestimated. Additionally, the role of political entrepreneurs is especially critical.

This course asks students to embrace the notion that politics matters, and then go beyond that. My aim is to develop your ability to diagnose the political factors that affect outcomes. The ultimate goal is to improve your effectiveness in the policy arena. At the same time, I intend that people appreciate the subtlety and importance of ethical obligations.

This course focuses mainly (although not exclusively) on the development stage of the policy process, and particularly efforts to secure enactment of legislation. I find legislative battles especially useful for illustrating key analytical points. However, students should remain aware that politics enters other forums and stages, including policy implementation.

SPECIFIC LEARNING GOALS

At the end of PPA 210 it is expected that students will:

1. Understand a useful way of thinking about how and why policies are adopted: the “multiple streams” (Kingdon) model;

2. Understand the critical role of “policy entrepreneurs” in policy development;
3. Understand how policy problems are identified and policies may be attached to them;

4. Appreciate the role of the policy community in developing policy options;

5. Understand the pervasive nature of collective action problems and their impact on political mobilization;

6. Understand the role of the media in issue framing;

7. Understand different ways that political conflict may be resolved;

8. Understand the ethical subtleties of role obligations facing political entrepreneurs and other policy actors;

9. Be able to engage in more effective policy negotiations and deliberations than would have been possible at the beginning of the course;

10. Be able to move effectively between abstract political science concepts and concrete situations facing actual political actors;

11. Be able to write effective short memos and papers; and

12. Appreciate that constructive policy change is possible to achieve even in a highly political environment.

CONDUCT OF THE SEMINAR

The term "seminar" is accurate. Conventional lectures will be limited and classes will be discussion oriented. While I will guide the conversation, summarize points, and draw lessons, the bulk of class time will be devoted to exchange about course topics, in-class exercises, etc.

Student participation is therefore not a luxury; it is essential to a successful course. I expect that students will come to class consistently, be prepared to discuss the week's readings, and be prepared to accept special in-class assignments such as leading a critique of a particular argument from the literature.

READINGS

The following books are required and available at the Hornet Bookstore.


There are also a few articles and case studies that will need to be downloaded from the Internet, as specified later in the syllabus. Additionally, a small number of readings not available in electronic form will be on two hour reserve at the University library. You will need to either read these articles at the library or copy them and read them at your leisure.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There will be two short papers, a take home mid-term examination, and a timed final examination that you will be able to complete at home. Assignment due dates are specified in the syllabus.

Course grades will be determined in accordance with the following weights:

- Paper #1 (agenda setting memo) 15%
- Take home mid-term examination 20%
- Paper #2 (ethics paper) 20%
- Final examination 30%
- Class participation 15%

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED CLASSES

Late assignments will not be accepted. At my discretion, a student who misses a deadline may be given a make-up assignment. Whether or not a penalty will be assessed depends on the reason (e.g., a family emergency constitutes a good reason; a competing requirement for another course does not).

You should inform me prior to class if you must miss class on a specific day. Except under very unusual circumstances, a student who misses three classes will be penalized one entire grade (e.g., a B+ for the course will become a C+), and a student who misses more than three classes will receive a failing grade.
CLASS SCHEDULE

I. THE POLITICS OF POLICY MAKING: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Introduction

January 30

Read: “From Research to Policy: The Cigarette Excise Tax” (download from the Case Program, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; instructions will be forwarded to you)

Discussion Questions
1. Why did the work of Eugene Lewit and his colleagues have an influence on the policy process? What prevented their findings from being mired in obscurity?
2. Who was (or who were) the entrepreneur(s) in this case, and why?

B. The “Three Streams” (Kingdon) Framework

February 6

Read: Zahariadis, chapters 1-2, 7
Note: based on input from students in prior years, I suggest you start with chapter 1, then move to chapter 7 which summarizes all the main arguments in the book, and then return to chapter 2.

Discussion Questions
1. What accounts for the different results in Britain and France with respect to privatization?
2. How does “streams” theory differ from the “rational” theory of policy making?

February 13

Paper #1 (agenda setting memo) due

Read: Zahariadis, chapters 4, 5, and 7 (review)

Discussion
Come to class prepared to discuss your assignment

II. DEEPER INTO THE PROBLEM STREAM

A. Focusing Events
February 20


Discussion Questions
1. What exactly is a focusing event? What is not a focusing event?
2. To what extent were the September 11 terrorist attacks similar to other focusing events? To what extent were they different?
3. Consider the arguments that Ellen Martin and I make about the likelihood of compensation in the aftermath of another terrorist attack. Do you agree?

B. The Role of the Media

February 27

Read: Roy L. Behr and Shanto Iyengar, “Television News, Real World Cues, and Changes in the Public Agenda,” Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 49 (Spring, 1985); Shanto Iyengar, “Framing Responsibility for Political Issues: The Case of Poverty,” Political Behavior, Vol. 12 (March, 1990); download both from JSTOR (you will probably need access to a Sacramento State computer)

View During Class: “Control Room”

Discussion Questions
1. How are the media able (and unable) to influence the public through issue framing?
2. Do the media influence the public opinion, or vice versa?

III. DEEPER INTO THE POLITICAL STREAM

A. The Collective Action Problem and the Mobilization of Interests

March 5

Read: Robert Axelrod, The Evolution of Cooperation, selection; Robert H. Frank, Luxury Fever, selection (on reserve in library); Edward Lascher, “Lessons from the Collective Action Game” (to be distributed after the exercise)
In-Class Exercise: “The Collective Action Game”

Discussion Questions
1. What is the “collective action problem?” How may it affect willingness to engage in political action?
2. How can the collective action problem be overcome?

March 12

Read: Stimson, entire book

Discussion Question
1. So, if people are generally uninterested in politics, and have relatively little incentive to pay attention to public affairs, can public opinion be meaningful?
2. What drives people’s views of political leaders?
3. Given Stimson’s arguments, what should we expect in the 2008 presidential election?

March 19

Take Home Mid-Term Exam Due

Read: Symposium on democracy and inequality in Perspectives on Politics, December, 2004, pp. 651-689 (if possible, I will make these readings available to you electronically)

Discussion Questions
1. How might rising inequality affect political participation, and why?
2. Who is to blame for lack of participation by low-income people?
3. What, if anything, is the connection between the collective action problem and lack of political participation?

IV. MOVING FROM AGENDA TO DECISION, PART ONE: BUILDING A WINNING COALITION

March 26

Read: Chávez, entire

Discussion Questions
1. In the Proposition 209 campaign, how did each side believe it needed to frame the issue to be most successful? Why?
2. To what extent did Proposition 209 serve as a good grass roots organizing tool? Why?
3. How does a ballot initiative campaign differ from other ways to
secure a policy change (e.g., an effort to win passage of a bill through the regular legislative process)?

V. MOVING FROM AGENDA TO DECISION, PART TWO: NEGOTIATIONS

April 9 (no class on April 2: spring break)

Read: Fisher, Ury, and Patton, parts I and II

Discussion Questions
1. Why is productive negotiation often so hard for people?
2. How can people negotiate more effectively?

In-Class Exercise: “The Ugli Orange Case”

April 16

Read: Fisher, Ury, and Patton, parts III, IV, and V

Discussion Questions
1. To what extent can someone negotiate effectively if the other party is in a stronger position?
2. Is lying fair in negotiations? Is it effective?

In-Class Exercise: “Bradford Development”

VII. THE ETHICS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

April 23


Discussion Questions
1. What justifies ethical principles in the area of public policy and administration?
2. To what extent can/should religious influence ethical principles?
3. Despite our differences, can we come to common ethical understandings?
4. What should we think about Charles-Heri Sanson, the “executioner of Paris?” And if we condemn him, what does this imply for others who use their professional status to justify behavior that harms others?
April 30

**Paper #2 (ethics paper) due**

**Read:** “The Case of the Segregated Schools” (download from the Kennedy School of Government case program)

**Discussion**
Come to class prepared to discuss your assignment

VIII. MOVING FROM AGENDA TO DECISION, PART THREE: DELIBERATION

**A. Deliberation and the Reasoning Process**

May 7

**Watch:** "Twelve Angry Men" (to be viewed prior to class)


**Discussion Questions**
1. How did the jurors in “Twelve Angry Men” overcome errors in reasoning?
2. Why might deliberation improve the reasoning process? Why might deliberation fail to do so?

B. Deliberation and Moving Beyond Entrenched Positions

May 14

**Read:** "California Welfare Reform" (download from the Kennedy School of Government case program); Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher, “Collaborative Policymaking: Governance Through Dialogue” (available at: http://www-iurd.ced.berkeley.edu/pub/WP-2000-05.pdf)

**Discussion Questions**
1. To the extent Swoap and Agnos made progress in the welfare reform case, why did this occur?
2. What circumstances encourage people to engage in genuine deliberation about what is right? What circumstances encourage people to “play to the crowd?”
3. To what extent can the lessons of the welfare reform case be applied in other circumstances?