

**SYLLABUS FOR U221 –
PUBLIC POLICY: PROCESS, INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNANCE
(C-255 and Pol Sci-221A, seminar A)**

Department of Planning, Policy and Design,
School of Social Ecology
University of California at Irvine
Fall 2012 - Sections 54435; 52500; 67847

Professor: **David L. Feldman**
Office: **300G Social Ecology I - Tel.: 824-4384**
Hours: **9-10 Th. and by appt.**

Class meeting: **Tues. & Thurs. 11:00-12:20**
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Introduction:

Public policy investigates what government does or, in other words, the outcomes of decisions made at local, regional, national, and international levels of governance. It also studies the consequences brought about by these decisions – and the processes leading up to them. This course explores three central, interrelated questions regarding the nature of governmental decision-making processes and institutions having as their aim the enactment, implementation, and evaluation of public policy: 1) what frameworks, explanatory theories, and ways of knowing illuminate why & how certain policies are made? 2) What is the role of the policy analyst - an academically trained professional - in *predicting, designing, and evaluating* policies? And, 3) what are the consequences of different policy designs on societal welfare and well-being, public discourse and interaction, and on democracy itself?

While we focus on public policy generally, and not upon specific policy areas per se, attention will be paid to how *particular policies are established and changed*, as well as the implications of these changes on specific areas of public life (e.g., health care, the environment, cities). My objectives are four-fold:

- **To help you understand the motives for, and causes of, various policies as manifested in the role of key actors in the policy process** including interest groups, institutions, and “policy entrepreneurs,” and their sources of power and influence.
- **To make you aware of the various tools, approaches and methods used to exert influence upon the policy process**, including (but not limited to) lobbying, public participation through advisory or other bodies, administrative rule making, and demands for information.
- **To illuminate how public decisions are put into practice or, in other words, how policies are implemented and revised.** We also explore the scope of public decisions – why does “thick” government characterize some policy areas while others are “thin?”
- **To introduce how policy processes and outcomes are evaluated** vis-a-vis contending philosophies regarding how we determine whether governmental outcomes are beneficial, and how policy success – variously defined – is maximized, while policy failure is minimized.

Readings (for purchase):

1. Levin, Martin and Martin Shapiro. 2004. *Transatlantic Policymaking in an Age of Austerity*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
2. Radin, Beryl. 2000. *Beyond Machiavelli - Policy Analysis Comes of Age*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
3. Stone, Deborah. 20012. *Policy Paradox - The Art of Political Decision-making, 3rd edition*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Reserved Readings (on course EEE homepage):

1. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Root, Hilton S. 2002. *Governing for Prosperity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
2. Bovens, Mark, and Paul Thhart. 1996. *Understanding Policy Fiascoes*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction publishers.
3. Ellis, Ralph D. 1998. *Just Results: Ethical Foundations for Policy Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
4. Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, 2nd Edition*. New York: Harper Collins.
5. Pal, Leslie and R. Kent Weaver (eds.) 2003. *The Government Taketh Away: The Politics of Pain in the United States and Canada*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Requirements:

To facilitate dialogue, and discussion, regular attendance is **expected**. Each class will be devoted to a specific issue or topic and will feature a brief lecture interspersed with frequent discussion and Q&A. Readings, scheduled to coincide with a session's topic, should be read prior to class to ensure meaningful discussion. Furthermore, each student is responsible for the following products:

- Students will be divided into “subsets.” On alternate dates, as noted in the syllabus, each of you in that subset is responsible for a brief, **electronically submitted** (2-3) page paper that, drawing upon the reading and discussion, addresses a specific question found in the syllabus for that specific date. Each student is responsible for 2 papers, each worth 25% of the final grade, for a total of 50%.
- Students will also be responsible for a final paper, 12-15 double-spaced pages in length. The paper may be on any topic but **MUST** be connected to **ONE** of the subjects outlined on the course syllabus, and incorporate class readings (*you may, bring in additional materials – but this is NOT required*). This paper will be due Tuesday, December 11th – and will be submitted in lieu of a final exam. It should be transmitted electronically, as a Word document 35%.

- Class participation: students are expected to actively participate in discussions, by asking questions as well as raising salient issues. For this reason participation is important and expected15%.

Class Schedule

First class: 9/27 **What is public policy – what does it encompass?**
 Levin and Shapiro, Introduction.

Week #1: 10/2-4 **Contributions of the social and behavioral sciences to public policy**
 Read: Stone, Part I

Week #2: 10/9-11 **Empirical and normative approaches to policy analysis**
 Read: Stone, Part II; Ellis, Introduction and Chapter 1.

Writing assignment – Group A: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, in what ways is public policy a prescriptive, as well as descriptive discipline? What values should guide its study, and toward what audiences should policy analyses and investigation be directed (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – 10/11th)**

Week #3: 10/16-18 **Public participation, levels of development, and democracy**
 Read: Bueno de Mesquita and root, Chapters 7-8; Pal and Weaver, chapter 1.

Writing assignment – Group B: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, discuss the importance of public policy to democracy. What reforms in governance process (e.g., participation, decentralization, development) facilitate or impede democracy? (2-3 pages) **(DUE – 10/18th)**

Week #4: 10/23-25 **Interest articulation and agenda-setting in policy formulation**
 Read: Stone, Part III; Kingdon, Chapters 5-7. **NO CLASS 10/25!**

Week #5: 10/30 & 11/1 **Information and expertise as inputs into decisions**
 Read: Radin, Chapters 1-4.

Writing assignment – Group C: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what makes policy makers choose to elevate an issue for governmental attention? What roles are played by information & expertise, position & role, and power in elevating an issue’s attention (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – 11/1st)**

Week #6: 11/6-8 **Objectives of the policy process I: distributing benefits to society**
 Read: Levin and Shapiro, Chapters 1-4.

Writing assignment – Group A: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, how do some policies allocate or distribute benefits to certain groups and not others? What factors determine why only some groups receive these benefits? What form do these benefits take (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – 11/8th)**

Week #7: 11/13-15 **Objectives of the policy process II: redistributing benefits, regulating behavior**
 Read: Levin and Shapiro, Chapters 5-9.

Writing assignment – Group B: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what distinguishes regulatory, distributive, and re-distributive policies? How do their objectives differ? Is it possible for a single public policy to be two or even all three types simultaneously (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – 11/15rd)**

Week #8: 11/20 **Policy design - implementation and multiplicity of interests**
Read: Radin, Chapters 5-8; Stone, Part IV.

Writing assignment – Group C: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what factors determine successful implementation of public policies? What are the major barriers to effectively implementing policies, and what criteria should we weigh before doing so (2-3 pages)? **(DUE – 11/20th)**

Week #9: 11/27-29 **Evaluating policy outcomes – and understanding evaluators**
Read: Ellis, Chapter 6; Bovens and Thart, chapter 2.

- **NO CLASS THURSDAY NOVEMBER 22nd** -

Week #10: 12/4-6 **Conclusions – the future of public policy: how must we study it?**
Read: Levin and Shapiro, Conclusions; Ellis, Chapter 7.

Tuesday, December 11th: final 12-15 page paper due - electronically.

Course Policies:

DROPS: Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 2.

ADDS: Must be submitted by 5PM of week 3 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 3.

CHANGE: Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. From week 3 through 6, you must use the Student Access system to submit a request for a grade option change. No exceptions will be considered after week 6.

Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please discuss this with me during the first week of class AND please register with the Disability Services Center (<http://www.disability.uci.edu/>). In order for you to receive any type of academic accommodation, I will need formal notification from the Disability Services Center during the first two weeks of the quarter of the type of academic accommodations to which your disability entitles you.