The Evergreen State College
Masters Program in Public Administration
Foundations of Public Policy Winter 2016
Syllabus as of 11 20 15
Tuesdays 6p-10p Sem II Room TBD

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"Public Policy" is the sexy alter ego of public administration. The study of policymaking tantalizes us; if we can unlock the secrets to how and when big policy decisions are made, and have an impact on those decisions, we can also benefit groups and causes we care about. As we enter a Presidential election year, it will be fascinating to watch the multitude of factors and forces that will seek to affect the outcome. The candidates and their supporters seek to win, and thus to have the power to shape the ideological and policy preferences of the new Administration. The winner, however, will confront a political system that is arguably at its most polarized since the pre-Civil War era, both nationally and at the state level.

This course will provide an overview of the concepts and issues in the field of public policy. As the first course in the TESC MPA program policy concentration, it is intended to provide an introduction to the study of public policy processes and to the practice of policy analysis. We will examine the political and economic rationales offered for public intervention in our society and economy, analyze the many factors influencing the policy process, and critique the models analysts have created to describe it. Policy analysts have a vital role in the policy process through their *ex-ante* analysis of proposals to take action on public problems, and their evaluation of programs that have been implemented. We will contrast a two categories of approaches to policy analysis—a classic approach epitomized by rational consideration of alternatives, and their benefits and costs, and an interpretive model that features deliberative processes at the core of democratic systems of governance. Our goal is to provide guidance for future policy analysts in our representative democracy, a system in which marginalized groups still find it difficult to gain entrée to the policy process.

Course learning objectives. Students will gain:
1. Improved understanding of the complex nature of public problems in several policy arenas;
2. Improved understanding of the many factors influencing the policy process, as well as models used to describe it;
3. An understanding of critical skills and concepts of policy analysis and ability to apply a variety of policy analysis techniques;
4. Improved analytical and writing skills.

We will read 5 texts plus a variety of shorter articles, governmental reports, and research studies, and discuss these in class. Lectures, films, guest presentations and workshops will be featured during our class sessions. Students will write several short papers, and prepare one longer paper, on which they will deliver a presentation the last day of class.

Credit and Evaluation**:** Students will receive 4 credits at the completion of the course if all course requirements have been successfully completed. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late (without having made arrangements before the due date), or multiple absences may be grounds for denial of credit. Partial credit will be awarded only under unusual circumstances. Consistent with MPA program requirements, a self evaluation will be required for credit.

<u>Expectations:</u> All students are expected to contribute to a well functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. Evergreen e-mail will be used for communication about class work; course documents will be available on the course Canvas site. Faculty will be prepared for class, responsive to questions and provide prompt feedback on completed assignments.

Texts

Baumgartner, Frank, J. M. Berry, M. Hojnacki, D.Kimball, B. Leech (2009). *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press . ISBN-13: 978-0226039459.

Dunn, William (2011). *Public Policy Analysis 5th Ed.* New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 9780205252572

Kamarck, Elaine (2013*). How Change Happens…or Doesn't*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. ISBN 9781588269393.

Okrent, Daniel (2011). *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. New York: Scribner. ISBN-13: 9780743277044

Radin, Beryl (2013). *Beyond Machiavelli: Policy Analysis Reaches Midlife, 2nd Edition.* Washington: DC: Georgetown Univ. Press. ISBN-13: 9781589019584.

Optional texts (if you haven't read them, at least skim through to get the gist of each author's arguments).

Bardach, Eugene (2012). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving***,** 4th Edition, CQ Press, 2012. ISBN 1608718425

Stone, Deborah (2012). *Policy Paradox.* New York: WW Norton. *Read chapter 1 on the polis vs. the market.*

Articles and other readings. (Available at the course Canvas site unless otherwise noted). Note that additional, optional readings will also be posted to Canvas for each week if you wish to go into greater depth on a particular subject).

Anderson, J. E. (2003). *Public policymaking: An introduction.* Ch. 1. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, pp. 1 – 34.

Binder, Sarah and Thomas Mann   (2011). "Constraints on Leadership in Washington." *Issues in Governance Studies 41.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Bryson, John M. "What To Do When Stakeholders Matter…." *Public Management Review.* 2004 6(1), 21-53.

Cassidy, John (2008). "Economics: Which Way for Obama?" *New York Review of Books*. Volume 55, Number 10. June 12.

Hajer, Maarten A. & Hendrik Wagenaar (2003). Introduction: *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*, Cambridge University Press.

Halpern, Sue (2015). "How Robots & Algorithms Are Taking Over." *New York Review of Books*. April 2nd.

Hofstadter, Richard (1964). "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" *Harper's Magazine*, November, pp. 77-86.

Joy, Bill (2000). "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us." *Wired*. April 1.

Mintrom, Michael (2010). "Doing Ethical Policy Analysis." In *Public Policy: Why ethics matters,* J. Boston, A.Bradstock, and D. Eng, Eds.Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Nowlin, Matthew (2011). "Theories of the Policy Process: State of the Research and Emerging Trends." *The Policy Studies Journal, Vol. 39, No. S1*.

Popkin, Samuel (2006). "Changing Media, Changing Politics." Review of *All the News That's Fit to Sell* by James Hamilton. *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jun., 2006), pp. 327-341.

Salamon, Lester (2001). "The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action." Chapter 1 of *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance.* New York: Oxford.

Assignments. Please complete in 11 or 12 point font, double spaced. Include page numbers. Post to the course Canvas site by 5 p.m. on the date noted.

1. **Assignment 1. Public Policy Observation.** Attend in person a government or non-profit public meeting of your choice (not something you've attended before or are attending for work). Check the agenda in advance to ensure they will be discussing a policy at the meeting. Assess where the organization is in their policy process around that issue and what factors are playing a role in decision making. To what extent is the issue a *public* policy issue? How have formal or informal policy analysis influenced the process, if at all? Over what time span has the action on this issue occurred? Collect data on the timing of key events and include a brief chronology. If you wish, you may use "Time Toast" or "Dipity" technology (https://www.timetoast.com/**or** http://www.dipity.com/) and put the link in your paper. **Due January 5th, 5 p.m. 2-3 pages.**

2. **Assignment 2. Is Congress "broken"?** This week's readings consider the state of the U.S. Congress as well as Hofstadter's prescient depiction of "the paranoid style" and its influence on American politics. What is YOUR analysis of this problem? If you could change the system, what would be your goal? What ONE change would you make to move it in that direction? **Due January 12th; 2-3 pages.**

3. **Assignment 3.** Write a 2-3 page seminar paper on the Kamarck text. **Due Jan. 19th; 2-3 p.**

4. **Assignment 4.** Complete a bill analysis of a bill proposed before the U.S. Congress or Washington state legislature. It may be an analysis of a proposed bill or one already enacted. Follow the template provided on Canvas, where sample bill analyses will be posted. Additional details on the assignment will be covered in class and posted to Canvas. **Due January 26th. 2-3 p.**

5. **Assignment 5.** Come to class with a ***one paragraph*** proposal for your final paper project (see Assignment 9). Define the problem; explain why this is a *public policy* problem. **Due Feb. 9th.**

6. **Assignment 6.   Postmodern Policy Analysis: A Thought Experiment.** After reading the book chapter by Hajer & Wagenaar, write a short paper in which you sketch out how a "postmodern" policy analyst would apply this approach to a policy issue, preferably the one that is the focus of your final paper. **Due: Feb. 9th. 2-3 pages.**

7. **Assignment 7.   Technology and the Future**. "Science and Technology Policy" is deeply contradictory. Every developed country uses public policy to encourage the growth of a high-tech sector. Yet as the articles by Halpern and Joy point out, the creations of this sector, from artificial intelligence and genetic engineering to nanotech and robotics, pose a threat not only to our economic and social model (based on widespread employment) but potentially to human life itself. How in your view should public policy manage this dilemma? **Due: Feb. 16th. 2-3 pgs.**

8. **Assignment 8.   Prohibition vs. Pot.** What historical parallels, if any, can be drawn between the US experience with prohibition of alcohol, and prohibition of marijuana? How will the current muddled state of marijuana policy play out in the years ahead? Skim a few sources on the current state of this issue in the U.S. (see the document posted to Canvas). Consider the policy model suggested by Okrent, and the various models summarized by Nowlin. Do any of them provide helpful guidance? **Due February 23nd.   2-3 pages.**

9. **Assignment 9.   Final paper.** Research and write a 10 to 15 page policy brief. Explore an important issue in depth and provide recommendations to policy makers. Additional details on this assignment will be provided in class and posted to Canvas. **Due: March 8th**.
Presentation: Prepare a 5 minute presentation summarizing your findings; be prepared to deliver it March 8th. If possible, we will present these in the campus TV studio**.**

Policy Studies and Policy Analysis Resources. Useful webpages:

Library of Congress/Thomas**:** http://thomas.loc.gov/;
Congressional Budget Office: http://www.cbo.gov/;
U.S. Government Accountability Office**:** http://www.gao.gov
Washington, JLARC**:** http://www.leg.wa.gov/JLARC/
Cato Institute: www.cato.org
Center for Budget and Policy Priorities: http://www.cbpp.org/.
Progressive Policy Institute**:** http://www.ppionline.org/
The Urban Institute: http://www.urban.org/index.cfm
Brookings: http://www.brookings.edu/;
The Heritage Foundation, http://www.heritage.org/
Washington Policy Institute: http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/index.html
Kaiser Foundation hc syllabus page: http://www.kaiseredu.org/syllabus.asp?id=98Ehlers report on technology: at http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/house/science/cp105-b/toc.html.

Tentative Schedule winter 2016: Subject to Change

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
1 Jan 5th	Policy: what it is and why it matters Competing concepts of the public; Rationales for public action	Anderson (2003) Ch. 1; Dunn, Ch. 3	Assignment 1.
2 Jan 12th	The "Paranoid Style" and the Struggle to Frame Public Problems. Systems & Institutions: Is Congress broken? Does $ control politics?	Baumgartner, et al,Ch. 1, 5, 10; Binder and Mann (2011); Hofstadter (1964)	Assignment 2.
3 Jan 19th	Models of the policy process; do they survive a clash with the "real world" of US politics? Bill Analysis workshop	Kamarck (2011); Nowlin (2011)	Assignment 3.
4 Jan 26th	Policy analysis I: Conceptual foundations, ethical principles Stakeholder analysis & workshop	Radin , Ch. 1-5; Bryson (2004); Dunn Ch. 1,2; Mintrom (2010).	Assignment 4.
5 Feb 2nd	Policy Analysis II: Policy options; tools for public action Is a "nudge" enough? Policy analyst panel	Cassidy (2008); Dunn, p. 310-319; Salamon (2001) Ch. 1.	**Nothing due!**
6 Feb 9th	Policy Analysis III: Bardach and Beyond: CBA vs. postmodern policy	Dunn, Ch. 5-8 Hajer & Wagenaar (2003); Radin , Ch. 6-9.	Assignment 5; Assignment 6.
7 Feb 16th	Time, History and Technology. Case study I: Technology Policy: Robots, AI and The Singularity Seminar on Part I of Okrent's *The Last Call.*	Joy (2000); Halpern (2015). Okrent (2011) Part I	Assignment 7
8 Feb 23rd.	Case Study II: Pot: What can we learn from alcohol Prohibition? Policy communication Panel on marijuana policy.	Okrent (2011) Parts II-IV. Dunn, Ch. 9 Skim sources on marijuana policy	Assignment 8.
9 March 1st	Lobbying & the Media Panel on lobbying.	Baumgartner, et al (2009) Ch. 2-4, 6-9, 11, 12; Popkin (2006).	**Nothing due!**
10 March 8th	Final Presentations		Assignment 9: Final paper