

GOV 36: THE MAKING OF AMERICAN PUBLIC POLICY
Spring Quarter 2012

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Office: 304 Silsby Hall
Office Hours: Tues 4 – 5:30 and Thurs 11 – 12:30 and by appointment

Meeting Time: Tues and Thurs 2:00 – 3:50 and X-hour Wed 4:15-5:05

Course Description:

Americans have three broad ideals for the policymaking process. First, we want it to be democratic, meaning roughly that people affected by a policy have some influence over its design and implementation. Second, we want our policies to be based on solid knowledge and evidence, so that they have a good chance of accomplishing their intended purpose. Third, we want our policies to be—and be perceived as—not only effective and efficient but also morally right.

This course examines how policy actors think as they make decisions and try to influence policy designs, and how public policies accord or don't with the three ideals. The course is divided into four parts:

- 1) How do policy actors think? We will look at how they use both rhetorical strategies and rational scientific analyses to frame issues.
- 2) How do policy controversies turn on conflicting interpretations of deep and enduring values? We will explore the general ideals of equity, liberty, welfare, security and efficiency.
- 3) How do the major policy instruments "work" in theory and in practice?
We will look at two important generic policy instruments to govern people's behavior: incentives and rules.
- 4) How do citizens influence public policy and how does public policy in turn influence the health of democracy?

We will test these conceptual and theoretical questions with concrete examples, from economic policy, gun control, health care, freedom of speech, welfare, crime control, racial justice, voting rules, immigration and environmental policy. We will also devote attention to what might be called the grand debate in public policy: are markets or government better institutions for achieving social welfare and good governance?

Course Objectives:

This course doesn't aim to turn you into a research scientist, nor to make you an expert in a few policy areas. Rather, after taking this course, you should be able to understand and analyze news about politics and policy more deeply than you could before. And better yet, I hope you come out knowing why some of us political scientists think following politics is so much fun.

Reading Materials:

I have ordered the following books at Dartmouth Bookstore and Wheelock Books:

Deborah Stone *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* 3rd edition (2012)

Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*

Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics*

Lawrence Lessig, *Republic, Lost*

A copy of each of these books is also on reserve. Other readings will be on blackboard or on reserve. If I have assigned more than one chapter from a book, the book will be on reserve.

I may spontaneously add news articles to the day's assignment when something particularly apt and juicy crops up. I will let you know and post any articles on Blackboard under the assigned readings for the day.

Course Format and Requirements:

The class meets twice a week, plus three x-hour meetings scheduled on the syllabus, possibly others if the need arises. Generally I will talk for the first half of each session and structure a discussion for the second half, but I encourage questions and comments during the lectures.

I expect you to attend class regularly, have done the readings for each session, and participate actively in class. If you know in advance that your other commitments will require you to miss more than 4 classes, please don't take the course. If you need any special accommodations for a disability or family circumstances or any beyond-the-usual difficult situation, please talk with me.

There are four paper assignments, each of which asks you to apply some of the readings to analyze a policy topic. Specific assignments and reading materials for them are in the syllabus under their respective due dates. The papers are due April 4, April 16, May 14, and June 3. Each paper should be 3-4 pages, **4 pages maximum**, typed in **12-point font** with at least **one-inch margins** all the way around. (This formatting should give you about 1000 words. I'm not bananas about word count and won't throw you out if you go a couple of lines over. Just observe the the spirit of the law and I'll be happy.) Be sure to

put your name at top, and please use page numbers. Because the papers are all based on assigned readings, you may simply reference the readings with author name and page number in parentheses. If you do bring in any other materials, you should give full reference information using any standard citation style you wish.

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Please **bring a hard copy to class**, and post on Blackboard in the "Submit Papers Here" section for the respective assignment. We will discuss the assignment on the due date, so if you don't hand in your printed hard copy in class, you will be docked a full letter grade.

Grading

Four short papers 25% each
(but with subjective weighting of later papers more if they show a trajectory of learning and improvement)

Participation plus or minus
(After you read my chapter on Numbers, you'll see why I don't pretend to judge participation quantitatively or objectively.)

Nevertheless, I do have qualitative standards for good participation. Good participation doesn't necessarily mean having understood every aspect of the assigned material. It includes posing questions about concepts, arguments, or factual claims from the readings, and offering alternative interpretations. Process-wise, good participation means not only being an engaged listener and contributing comments about the readings or answers to questions. It also means constructive group leadership, such as helping classmates articulate their thoughts, summarizing the thread of a discussion, pulling the class back from digressions, and posing possible resolutions to disagreements.

Academic Integrity:

You are responsible for understanding and observing Dartmouth's academic integrity rules. Ignorance of these rules will not excuse you if you violate them. These rules and principles can be reviewed at:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~reg/regulations/undergrad/acad-honor.html> and
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/>.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

PART I: HOW POLITICAL ACTORS THINK ABOUT POLICY DECISIONS

Tues March 26: Introduction to the Course

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Introduction and Chapter 1 ("Market and Polis") (on Blackboard so you don't have to buy the book before deciding if you want the course)

Thurs March 28: Rationality

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, ch. 11 "Decisions"

Three decisions: Obama and gun control; Boy Scouts and gays; and doctors and the FDA

Peter Baker, "Obama Facing Critical Choice After Shooting," *New York Times* 16 Dec 2012.

Question: How does the implicit political model of decision making in this article about Obama's choice compare with the rationality model?

Kirk Johnson, "After Floating Idea of Lifting Ban on Gays, Scouts Delay Decision" *New York Times* 6 feb 2013

Steve Nelson, "Scouts Aren't Alone in Tolerating Bigotry," *Valley News* 17 feb 2013.

Question: What did the leadership of Boy Scouts of America "decide" about admit gays? Consider various stages of the non-decision.

Otis Brawley, *How We Do Harm*, ch. 6

Questions: what factors drive doctors' and FDA's decisions about a treatment? How does Brawley's description of medical policy decision-making compare with the rational model?

Tuesday April 2: Rationality and Morality

Stone, *Policy Paradox* ch. 5 "Liberty" only p. 107-125 (up to "Liberty-Equality Tradeoff")

Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*, chaps. 1, 5 and 7 (on reserve)

Questions :

1. Where do our political/moral values come from?
2. Where do you stand on Haidt's five moral foundations? Which are important to you?
3. Do you think JS Mill's "harm-to-others" criterion as expanded by me covers the other "moral foundations" put forth by Haidt? Why and why not?

Thursday April 4: Case Study: Should the Government Restrict Hate Speech?

Note: Paper Due in class today—assignment continues on next page

Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech*, pp. 1-6 and chaps. 3 and 4 (on reserve).

Anthony Lewis, *Freedom for the Thought We Hate*, chap 12.

American Civil Liberties Union, "Hate Speech on Campus" 1994

First Paper Due: Analyze the arguments for and against regulating hate speech to show how the authors draw on various concepts of harm and other moral principles to ground their position. Which argument(s) do you find most persuasive and why?

3-4 pages. Bring hard copy to class, and post on Blackboard.

PART II: ISSUE FRAMING

Tuesday April 9: Symbols, Stories and Numbers

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, chapters 7 "Symbols," and ch. 8 "Numbers"

Adam Davidson, "How to Make Jobs Disappear," *New York Times* 19 June 2012

Case: Environmental Policy

Carl Jensen, *Stories That Changed America*, "Rachel Carson" and excerpt from *Silent Spring* (pp. 117-124)

Question: How did Rachel Carson combine scientific analysis and narrative technique to change the dominant causal story about environmental policy in the 1970s?

Case: Gun Debate

Eric Lichtblau and Motoko Rich, "N.R.A. Envisions 'a Good Guy With a Gun' in Every School," *New York Times* 21 Dec 13

Erica Goode, "Even Defining 'Assault Rifles' Is Complicated," *NYT* 16 Jan 2012

Jeffrey H. Boyd, "The Increasing Rate of Suicide by Firearms" *New England Journal of Medicine* vol. 38, no. 15 (1983): 872-74.

"Sabrina Tavernise, "To Reduce Suicide Rates, New Focus Turns to Guns" *NYT* 13 Feb 2013.

Questions: In these articles, what's the problem and what's the solution? How do the authors and policy actors use stories, symbols and numbers to frame the issue?

Wed April 10 X HOUR Causal Stories

Stone *Policy Paradox*, ch. 9 "Causes"

Lawrence Lessig, *Republic, Lost* ch. 2 "Good Questions, Raised"

Case: Environmental policy and the media

Martin Boykoff and Jules Boykoff, "Climate Change and Journalistic Norms," *Geoforum* vol. 38 (2007): 1190-1204

Naomi Oreskes and Erin M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt* ch. 6 "The Denial of Global Warming" (skim) and Epilogue

Questions: How does the structure of the media shape the way the scientific causal story about climate change translates into popular understanding and policy influence? Does the influence of scientist-advocates on environmental policy now differ from their influence in Rachel Carson's day? How and why?

PART III: VALUES IN POLICY CONTROVERSIES

Thursday April 11 Security

Stone, *Policy Paradox* chap. 6 "Security" up to p. 151 top.

Case Study: Cops, Guns and Security

Frank Zimring, "How New York Beat Crime" *Scientific American* August 2011: 75-79

Joshua C. Hinkle and David Weisburd, "The Irony of Broken Windows" *Journal of Criminal Justice* vol. 36, no. (2008): 503-12.

Firmin DeBrabander, "The Freedom of an Armed Society," *New York Times* Opinionator, 16 Dec 2012.

Questions: What is security? Does intensive policing produce greater security in urban neighborhoods, and if so, by what definition and how? Does access to guns give citizens more security and more liberty?

Tues April 16 Equity (**NOTE: PAPER DUE TODAY**)

Stone, *Policy Paradox* Ch. 2 "Equity"

Case: Immigration Policy

Niklaus Steiner, *International Migration and Citizenship Today*, ch. 2 "Accepting Immigrants"

Mai Ngai, "Immigration Reform and the Elephant in the Room" *Dissent* blog 4 Feb 2013

<http://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/comprehensive-immigration-reform-and-the-elephant-in-the-room>

Paper #2 Due: Analyze how the specific policies and proposed policies for accepting immigrants described by Steiner and Ngai embody different concepts of equity. Use their discussion of other countries' policies and historical US policies to illuminate how a specific way of allocating immigrant visas might be considered *inequitable* by one of your standards of equity.

This is a tough assignment and requires some creative analytic thinking. Think of it as chocolate cake and have fun with it.

3-4 pages. Bring hard copy to class, and post on Blackboard.

Wed April 17 X HOUR Welfare

Stone, *Policy Paradox* Ch. 4 "Welfare"

Jacob Hacker, *The Great Risk Shift*, chap. 2

Questions: What is welfare? According to Hacker, in what ways do American social policies augment or decrease citizens' welfare? What is the big cultural shift in understanding of how best to produce welfare (or economic security Hacker's terms)?

Thursday April 18: Equity and Welfare

Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All-Politics*, chap. 1

Joseph Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*, Ch. 1 -2

David Brooks, "The Great Migration" *New York Times* 24 Jan 2013

Optional: John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath* excerpt "Who Should We Shoot?"

Question: Is inequality a problem? Why or why not according to the authors? And what do they mean by inequality? Of what and among whom?

Tues April 23: Efficiency

Stone, *Policy Paradox* Ch. 3 "Efficiency"

Ha-Joon Chang, "Most People in Rich Countries Are Paid More Than They Should Be", ch. 3 of *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism*

Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All-Politics*, chap. 2

Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*, Ch. 3 "Markets and Inequality"

Questions: Why does the US have such pronounced economic inequality? What are the causal stories about inequality these authors tell?

Wednesday April 24 X- HOUR

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, ch. 5 Liberty, pp. 125 to 128.

Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*, Ch. 4 "Why It Matters"

Lawrence Lessig, *Republic Lost* ch. 4 "Why Don't We Have Free Markets"- ch 5 "Why Don't We Have Efficient Markets?"

Question: How does each author argue that inequality has negative consequences for both policy and to frame and analyze issues politics? And what kind of negative consequences?

PART IV: POLICY INSTRUMENTS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Thursday April 25: Incentives

Stone *Policy Paradox* ch. 12 "Incentives" pp. 271-88

Ruth Grant, *Strings Attached: Untangling the Ethics of Incentives*, pp. 1-9 ("Why Worry About Incentives?" and 50-59 "Standards of Legitimacy"

Case Study: Performance Contracting in Welfare Administration

Janice Johnson Dias and Steven Maynard-Moody, "For-Profit Welfare: Contracts, Conflicts and the Performance Paradox" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2007), pp. 189-211

Question: The purpose of the welfare policy reform of 1996 was to structure public assistance as an incentive for the recipients to become economically self-sufficient through work. Do the incentives in performance contracting for work-to-welfare services meet Grant's three criteria for a legitimate use of power? Consider the four power relationships in this case: 1) the state and the company that operates its welfare services; 2) the company executives and the managers of the program; 3) the program managers and the line staff or case managers; and 4) the case managers and the clients.

Tues April 30

Wednesday May 1 X- HOUR— Rules

Stone *Policy Paradox* ch. 13 "Rules"

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, Introduction and ch. 1

Question: Michelle Alexander, like Rachel Carson, aims to profoundly change the way Americans see their society and ultimately, to change public policy. How does she use rhetorical strategies and numerical data to accomplish her purpose?

Thurs May 3 Case Study: Incarceration and Race

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, chaps 2-4,

MAY 9 AND 11: NO CLASSES

Finish reading *The New Jim Crow*

Work on paper due May 14

Tuesday May 14 Paper Due and Film in Class

Paper #3: Alexander argues that racially neutral rules in crime policy end up creating a racial caste system. Identify the specific legal rules she analyzes and trace the factors and causal mechanisms that convert these neutral rules into racially discriminatory policy.

3-4 pages, due in class. Bring hard copy and post on Blackboard.

PART V: PUBLIC POLICY AND DEMOCRACY

Thurs May 16: How does election policy shape political participation?

Richard K. Scher, *The Politics of Disenfranchisement*, ch. 4 and ch. 6 pp. 146-51 only.

Sam Wang, "The Great Gerrymander of 2012," *NYTimes* 2 Feb 2012

Jeremy Peters, "Waiting Times at Ballot Boxes Draw Democratic Scrutiny," *NYT* 4 Feb 2013

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, ch. 16 "Powers" pp. 354-64 only

Tues May 21 How do public policies shape interest mobilization?

Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Ch. 10 "Interests"

Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*, chs. 5-7.

Hacker and Pierson, *Winner-Take-All-Politics*, chaps. 4-7

Irene Bloemraad, "The Limits of de Tocquville: How Government Facilitates Organizational Capacity in Newcomers," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* vol. 31, no. 5 (2005): 865-87.

Thurs May 23: How does the structure and implementation of policy influence civic engagement?

Joe Soss, "Lessons of Welfare," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 2. (Jun., 1999), pp. 363-380.

Douglas Kriner and Francis X Shen, *The Casualty Gap*, chap. 3 and ch. 4, pp. 92-100 only; and last paragraph of Conclusion

Stone, *Policy Paradox* ch. 6 "Security" pp. 151-53.

Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged Welfare State* chap. 1

Tuesday May 28: How democratic is the American policymaking process?

Stieglitz, *The Price of Inequality*, chaps. 9 - 10

Lessig, *Republic, Lost*, chaps. 1, 9, 10, 15, 16.

MONDAY JUNE 3 at 5 pm: FINAL PAPER DUE

Assignment to be handed out