# Presentation Title: Politics and Policy

Slide 1:  
Politics, Political Thought, and Policy  
POSC 315: Introduction to Public Policy  
Lecture 1  
Week 1-2

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Slide 2:  
Theme of the Course:  
American Political Values  
Individualism  
Equality  
Community  
Patriotism  
Rule of Law  
Diversity  
Distrust of Government

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Slide 3:  
Let’s start with a couple of questions:  
Why do we have programs for reduced cost or free school lunches?  
Why is the primary responsibility for educating children and policing people left to state and local  
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Slide 7:  
Introduction  
We seek to understand and find solutions for public problems.  
We have many theories about how the policy process works.  
Many are  
interdisciplinary  
.  
We will focus on the  
politics  
of policy.  
How do we get from a problem to a solution?  
How do we get from a solution to a policy?  
How do we get from a policy to a program?  
How do we get from a program to an outcome?  
Across the political landscape, we have many different views about what things are problems, what are  
 the solutions to those problems, whether a government program is the best way to solve those  
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Slide 11:  
Politics and Public Policy Definitions:  
How did your friend, family member, or other person respond when you asked them to define  
 politics?  
policy?

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Slide 12:  
Politics and the Policy Process  
Politics  
is the process of making collective decisions, usually by governments,  
 to allocate public resources and to create and enforce rules for the operation of society.  
Politics  
is how we organize and govern ourselves; the art and science of  
 government.  
Public Policy  
is the course of action the government takes in response to an  
 issue or problem.  
Public policy is political because it takes place in the  
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Public policy addresses problems that are public or problems that some members of society  
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Slide 15:  
What is Public?  
Public versus Private come to us from the Latin  
publicus  
and  
privatus  
, from  
 Ancient Rome  
Publicus means “of the people” or “of the state”  
Privatus means “individual” or “personal”  
What is Public?  
Public (publicus)  
Private (privatus)  
Polis – the State  
The Household – private business  
Freedom  
Necessity  
Equality  
Inequality  
Immortality  
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Open  
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These distinctions begin to collapse from the 19th century onward.

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Slide 19:  
Political Theory, Quickly  
Political theory is the study of the ideas and values that underpin political systems and  
 institutions.  
We'll look at Western Political Theory in brief:  
Early Concepts: Gilgamesh (2500-ish BCE)  
One of the earliest written records of governance.  
Introduces the concept of two classes: rulers and subjects.  
Sets the stage for Western ideas about hierarchy and authority.  
The Greeks: Foundations of Political Philosophy (6th-3rd Century BCE)  
Socrates:  
Ethics and justice in governance.  
Plato:  
The "ideal state" ruled by philosopher-kings.  
Aristotle:  
Empirical approach to politics; governments must promote virtue and  
 balance.  
15th-17th Century Thinkers  
Machiavelli:  
Politics as power; pragmatism over idealism.  
Bacon:  
Knowledge as power; science and governance intertwined.  
The Enlightenment (17th-18th Centuries)  
Hobbes:  
Social contract; strong authority prevents chaos.  
Locke:  
Rights to life, liberty, and property; government must protect individual  
 freedoms.  
Rousseau:  
General will; collective good over individual interests.  
Montesquieu:  
Separation of powers to avoid tyranny.  
The American Regime  
Founding Fathers:  
Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton synthesized Enlightenment  
 ideals for the U.S. context.  
Key principles: liberty, equality, and a government of the people.  
Continuing influence: Lincoln, Roosevelt(s), King, and others, interpreting liberalism in  
 different eras.  
20th Century Theorists  
Rawls:  
Justice as fairness; prioritizing the least advantaged.  
Marx and Weber:  
Economic forces and power dynamics shape society.  
Dewey:  
Pragmatism and the role of public engagement in policy.  
Lasswell:  
"Who gets what, when, and how"—the essence of politics.  
The Evolution of Liberalism  
Liberalism evolves as a response to changing societal needs and economic conditions:  
Classical Liberalism:  
Rooted in the Enlightenment, emphasizing individual  
 freedoms, limited government, and free markets.  
Reform Liberalism:  
Emerges in response to industrialization; advocates for  
 government intervention to address inequality and promote welfare.  
Neoliberalism:  
Reacts to perceived inefficiencies of the welfare state;  
 prioritizes market solutions with reduced government roles.  
This progression reflects ongoing debates about liberty, equality, and the proper role of the  
 state.  
Why Political Theory and Public Policy?  
Political theory provides a foundation for understanding governance and policy.  
Public policy applies theory to real-world problems and solutions.  
Together, they inform how we think about and address public issues.  
Reveal fundamental beliefs about the role of the state that frame nearly all public policy debates.

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Slide 29:  
Policy for the Common Good  
Policy is a tool governments use to address public problems and improve society. It reflects collective decisions about priorities and values.  
Policy as Meaning-Making:  
Defines how society understands and prioritizes public issues.  
Policy as Action:  
A deliberate statement by government outlining what it will do—or choose not to do—about a specific problem.  
Policy as Value Delivery:  
Determines how goods, services, and opportunities are distributed and regulated.

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Slide 30:  
Policy Reveals Values  
“Policies are revealed through texts, practices, symbols, and discourses that define and deliver values including goods and services as well as regulations, incomes, status, and other positively or negatively valued attributes.”  
- Deborah Stone

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Slide 31:  
Change: The Basic Tension in Policy  
How does policy change happen?  
Through manipulation of existing norms?  
Through building relationships and coalitions?  
How does social learning occur?  
By adapting to new evidence or ideas?  
By responding to societal needs?  
What happens when change occurs outside government?  
Grassroots movements  
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

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Slide 32:  
Key Elements of Effective Policy  
Participation, Observation, and Capacity Building  
Participation:  
Who participates in the policy process?  
Who is excluded?  
How can participation become more meaningful?  
Observation:  
How do we know what is happening?  
How do we evaluate what works and what doesn’t?  
How do we identify problems effectively?  
Capacity Building:  
How do we empower individuals and communities to engage?  
How do we enhance the ability to implement solutions?

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Slide 33:  
The Common Will  
Policy is an attempt to translate the popular will into a political reality.  
In a liberal democracy, the popular will is expressed through elections; it is  
 derived from the people.  
When advocates convince the government to make a policy, one can claim the  
 government does so in the  
public interest  
.  
The Public Interest  
The assumed broader desires and needs of the public, in whose name policy is made.  
The public interest is a contested concept.  
The public interest is a political concept.  
The public interest is a moral concept.  
Hard to define:  
Who gets to define it?  
Advocates claim  
their  
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When something goes wrong, we claim the government is not acting in the public  
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Slide 36:  
Key Takeaways  
Politics and Policy:  
Tools for solving public problems and shaping society.  
Values Matter:  
Public policy reflects societal priorities, values, and decisions.  
Active Engagement:  
Understanding these concepts empowers meaningful participation in governance.  
Our Journey:  
This course will deepen your grasp of theory, practice, and the dynamics of policy creation.  
“The future depends on what we do in the present.”  
- Mahatma Gandhi

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