## Introduction to Public Policy

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### **POSC 315**

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# Introduction and Syllabus Overview

POSC 315 Syllabus

Read your Syllabus

Figure 1: Read your Syllabus

Defining Public Policy

What comes to mind when you hear the term "public policy"?

Word Cloud

Figure 2: Word Cloud

What is Public?

 $\textbf{Public} \ \ \text{refers to the people, the state, or the government. But also, public} \ \dots$ 

What is Public Policy?

**Public Policy** is what officials within government, and by extension the citizens they represent, choose to do or not to do about public problems.

### Thought Experiment

What can you do without government intervention?

Thought Experiment

Figure 3: Thought Experiment

# Many different ways to discuss public policy

- 1. **Intentions**: the purposes of government action
- 2. Goals: the stated ends to be achieved
- 3. Plans or proposals: the means to achieve the goals
- 4. **Programs**: the authorized means for pursuing the goals
- 5. **Decisions or choices**: specific actions that are taken to set goals, develop plans, and implement programs

## Policy Outputs and Outcomes

- 1. Policy Outputs: the formal actions that governments take to pursue their goals
- 2. Policy Outcomes: the effects that result from policy outputs

What's the difference?

Figure 4: What's the difference?

### The Basics

- ► **Institutions**: the rules, norms, and procedures that structure the behavior of individuals and organizations.
- ► **Government**: the institutions and political processes through which public policy choices are made with legal authority to govern or rule a group of people.
- ► **Government Institutions**: the US Constitution, Congress, the President, the Courts, the bureaucracy, and state and local governments.
- ► Federalism: the division of power between the national government and state governments; the division of power and authority on a geographic basis.

The Basics (cont.)

- ▶ **Politics**: the process of making and implementing decisions that apply to members of a group; concerns the exercise of power and the resolution of conflicts.
- ▶ **Policy Making**: the process by which authorities decide which actions to take to address a problem or set of problems.
- ▶ Policy Analysis: the process of identifying and evaluating policy options and their consequences.

### The Context of Public Policy

#### The Social Context

- ► Social Problems: conditions that are harmful to individuals or society and that require collective action to address.
- ► Social Values: the beliefs that people hold about what is good, right, and desirable.
- ► **Social Norms**: the unwritten rules that guide behavior in a society.
- Social Changes: the transformations in society that affect the way people live and work.

#### The Economic Context

- ► **Economic Problems**: conditions that are harmful to individuals or society and that require collective action to address.
- ► **Economic Policy**: the actions that governments take to influence the economy, such as setting tax rates, spending money, and regulating businesses.

#### The Political Contex

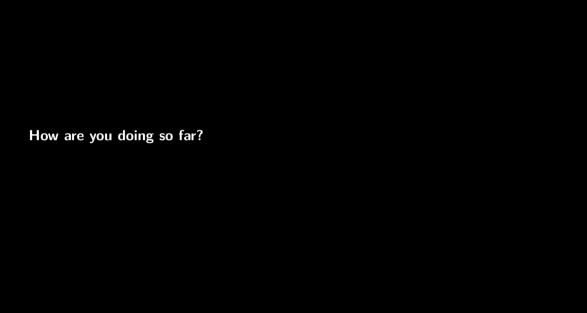
- ▶ Political Problems: conditions that are harmful to individuals or society and that require collective action to address.
- ▶ Political Party System: the organization of political parties and the competition between them.
- Trust in Government: the belief that government will act in the public interest.
- ▶ Ideology: a set of beliefs about the proper role of government in society.

#### The Governing Context

- ► Complex Governance Structures: the overlapping and interdependent relationships among government agencies, interest groups, and other organizations.
- Shared Responsibility: the idea that government, the private sector, and civil society all have a role to play in addressing public problems.

#### The Cultural Context

- ▶ Political Culture: refers to widely held values, beliefs, and attitudes, such as trust and confidence in government and the political process, or the lack thereof.
- ▶ Political Socialization: the process by which individuals learn about politics and acquire political values and beliefs.
- ▶ Political Participation: the ways in which people get involved in politics, such as voting, running for office, or joining interest groups.
- ► Cultural Differences: help to explain the wide variation in state and local public policies.



One more thing!

The Feels

Figure 5: The Feels

### For Next Time:

- ► Read Chapter 1 in the textbook
- Review the syllabus
- ► Check out the *Canvas* page for the course
- ► Sign up for *Kritik*