**PUBP 2010: Political Processes Fall, 2012**

Georgia Tech School of Public Policy

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Instructor: Richard Barke, [barke@gatech.edu](mailto:barke@gatech.edu), 404.894.8282, DM Smith 007

Office hours: W 1:30-3; appointments (by email) welcomed for other meeting times

**Course Purpose**:

Politics in the policy process is about *combining individual and social beliefs, values, and preferences about a public problem into a collective decision that, ideally, promotes the public interest*. In this course we focus on the procedures and institutions by which choices and values are created, shaped, and aggregated into public decisions, i.e., "politics." Our focus is both on the “why” (models and theories about why the process works as it does) and the “how” (knowledge about how citizens and professionals can be more effective as policy analysts or advocates).

The course will incorporate many examples from real-world politics and policy making, but this is neither a casual survey of current events nor an introduction to political science or American politics (POL 1101 or its equivalent is a prerequisite). You should already have a working knowledge about the US political system. The last portion of the course focuses on several domains of current politics and policy, to which they will apply concepts covered in the first part of the course. Students are expected to have a sincere interest in the policy process and to approach actual policy issues with a well-informed and critical perspective. Attention to current policy issues is essential.

**Learning Objectives**:

During the course we will examine a variety of aspects of policy studies and policy making. Your overall objective is to develop a coherent framework for understanding policy. It might be useful for you to focus your learning on how these aspects relate to an area of public policy of particular personal or professional interest. By the end of the course you should have more than a basic understanding of:

*• The relationship between social science and policy studies, and between policy analysis and advocacy*

*• Fundamentals of constitutional principles*

*• Differences between market decisions and political/policy decisions*

*• How people form political opinions and the roles of various stakeholders in policy making*

*• Basic models of the policy process*

*• How the media shape the political world and affect public policy*

*• Fundamental ideas about rational choice, its limitations, and its applicability*

*• The roles of official (institutional) and unofficial (interests) actors in policy making*

*• The roles of experts and laypersons in policy making*

*• Agenda-setting, issue-framing, and problem definition*

*• The impact of politics, facts, values, and narratives on policy formulation and implementation*

**Required Texts**:

* Michael Kraft and Scott Furlong, *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*, 4th ed., Sage.
* Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox,* 3rd ed., Norton.

Other assigned readings will be available over the web, via T2, or distributed in class.

**Course Format**:

Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before class and to come to class prepared to discuss both their positive reactions and their doubts and questions about the readings. Students are also strongly encouraged to raise questions related to current events and any policy-related experiences. You should become a habitual reader of a reputable national newspaper. Web sources will be suggested during class meetings.

**Assignments and Grades**:

Quizzes: 2 @ 15% 30% Group project 20%

Policy memo 25% Participation 5%

Final exam 20%

The quizzes (<45 minutes) will consist of short-answer questions that evaluate your reading efforts. The final exam will be a short-essay test. The policy memo will be a three-page presentation of a particular policy issue or problem, using a style and format suitable for submission to a policy making official. The participation grade will be based on students' contributions to class discussions. For a course such as this, discussion is essential; up to five points will be deducted from your course grade if you are reluctant to ask questions and offer comments.

  The class will be divided into several groups who will focus on the politics of specific political interests. Throughout the course students will need to be sensitive to the implications of class discussions and readings for their group topic, and will be called on to give occasional impromptu presentations about how this material relates to their topic. Students will draft editorials and letters-to-the-editor, and will give a group presentation at the end of the semester.

**Attendance and Participation**:

Students have a primary full-time job: being students. Like employees, they are expected to be at work (class). Also like employees, they are entitled to a limited number of unexcused absences (vacation days): most companies in the US allow workers two weeks or 10 days leave per year, or 4% -- if you'd prefer more, move to Europe -- so with 30 class meetings each student is allowed one unexcused absence. Excused absences (e.g., illness, job interviews, family crises) require written documentation and, when possible, prior notice. For each unexcused absence beyond one, your final course grade will be lowered by one-third of a letter grade.

Attendance is important but not sufficient. Students are expected to have done the readings before class, to come to class ready to discuss them.

**Controversies**:

Policy analysts and decision makers often must seek a balance between personal (subjective) views and professional (objective) norms. Any course on public policy and politics will cover subjects that are controversial and about which some may have strong personal opinions. Discussions about the policy implications of differing political values in society are encouraged in this class. We all have an obligation to treat different political values with respect. In a public policy course some positions might be taken primarily to advance argumentative and analytical abilities, while some will be utterly sincere. Particularly for policy students, recognizing the diversity of opinions and developing the personal ability to address others’ perspectives with civility are essential skills.

**Honor Code**:

It is your obligation to be familiar with the [Georgia Tech Honor Code](http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9), and to ask the professor if its application to any part of this course is unclear to you. Please pay particular attention to the definition of plagiarism. There are many guides online; a good example is Princeton's at <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/08/intro/>; be sure to read their "Examples of Plagiarism" and "Sample Citation Styles".

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Aug 21 Course Introduction, Definitions, Expectations**

**Aug 23 Politics, Policy, and Markets**   
• Stone, Introduction and ch. 1

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 1

**Aug 28 Constitution: The Owners' Manual**

• Constitution: Preamble, Articles 1-6

• Barke and Champlin, "Court Rulings on the Preamble" (T2)

• Madison, *Federalist* 10 (T2)

• Keith Whittington, "The New Originalism," *Georgetown Journal of Law and Public Policy* 2 (Summer 2004), 599-613. GT eJournals.

**Aug 30 Constitution: Operating Instructions**

• Constitution: Amendments

• Madison, *Federalist* 10 (T2)

• *National Federation of Independent Businesses v. Sebelius* (2012). Focus on Justice Roberts’ discussion of the Commerce Clause (pp. 15-27) and Justice Ginzburg’s response (pp. 18-31 of her dissent)

• "Rights," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, esp. Sections 1, 3, 4, and 5, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights/>

**Sept 4 Public Policy Goals: Equity and Efficiency**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 1

• Stone, chs. 2, 3

**Sept 6 Public Policy Goals: Welfare, Liberty, and Security**

• Stone, chs. 4, 5, 6

**Sept 11 Structures and Institutions: Federalism and Separation of Powers**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 2

**Sept 13 Structures and Institutions: Congress, Executive, and Informal Political Actors**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 2

• Richard F. Grimmett, "The War Powers Resolution: After Thirty Years," Congressional Research Service RL32267, March 2004. <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL32267.html>

• David Mayhew, from *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (T2)

• Richard Fenno, from *Home Style: House Members in their Districts* (T2)

• Mark Lilla, "The Tea Party Jacobins," *New York Review of Books*, May 27, 2010 (T2)

**Sept 18 Quiz 1; Processes and Tools: Theories and Models**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 3

• Barke and Gurley, ch. 2

**Sept 20 Processes and Tools: Agendas and Instruments**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 3

• Stone, ch. 13

**Sept 25 Policy Analysis: Introduction**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 4

• Stone, ch. 14

• Kash and Ballard, “Academic and Applied Policy Studies: A Comparison,” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 30, 597-611 (1987) (T2)

**Sept 27 Policy Analysis: Introduction**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 4

• Stone, ch. 15

**Oct 2 In-class Exercise**

**Oct 4 Problems and Inputs**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 5

• Stone, ch. 7, 8

• George Lakoff, *Talking Points*, chs. 1-3 (T2)

**Oct 9 Problems and Inputs**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 5

• Macrae and Whittington, "Assessing Preferences in Cost-Benefit Analysis," *.l of Policy Analysis and Management*, 7 (Winter, 1988), 246-263. (T2)

**Oct 11 Solutions and Outputs**

• Kraft and Furlong**, ch. 6**

• Stone, ch. 11

**Oct 16 Solutions and Outputs:**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 6

• Stone, ch. 9

**Oct 18 Solutions and Outputs**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 6

• Stone, ch. 12

• Thaler and Sunstein, *Nudge*, ch. 1 (T2)

**Oct 23 Quiz; Economic Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 7

**Oct 25 Economic Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 7

• Bryan Jones, “Bounded Rationality,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1999, 297-321. (T2)

**Oct 30 Budgets**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 7

• Additional current readings TBA

**Nov 6 Health Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 8

• Kaiser Family Foundation: What the New Health Law Means For you. Available on the web at: <http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Stories/2010/June/02/What-The-Health-Law-Means-To-You.aspx>

**Nov 8 Election Results; Health Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 8

• Kaiser Family Foundation, Medicare Primer, 2010. <http://www.kff.org/medicare/7615.cfm>

**Nov 13 Social Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 9

• Additional current readings TBA

**Nov 15 Social Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 9

**Nov 20 Education Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 10

• Additional current readings TBA

**Nov 22 Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Nov 27 Energy and Environmental Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 11

• Additional current readings TBA

**Nov 29 Energy and Environmental Policy**

• Kraft and Furlong, ch. 11

**Dec 4 Class Presentations**

**Dec 6 Class Presentations**