Introduction to Public Policy
Prof. John Krinsky
Fall 2014
Thursdays 2-4
Office hour: Thursdays 1-2 or by appointment or at City College (North Academic Center, room 4/136, 137th Street and Amsterdam Ave.) on Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-2, though please warn me.

Syllabus

This course is an introduction to public policy or the study of a large part of what states do within their borders, and what governmental leaders try to do—through a variety of institutions—about a wide range of issues. The course deals with policy as a process, rather than as accomplished fact, and through the lens of policy, considers the ways in which power, institutions, states, and subjects and objects of states take shape. Put differently, policy is a process in which people who want something try to get it, and often, people who don’t want it, try to prevent it; it’s a process in which people do things to other people, deeply affecting their lives, and hope to get the sanction of the state—a more universal legitimacy—for their actions, and, perhaps, too, to get employees of the state to carry out those actions for them. In many respects, then, the study of policy is the study of politics more broadly.

In most respects, the class will deal with what is often known as social policy, though the scope of public policy is clearly much larger. That is, it will revolve around areas in which my own expertise is greatest, for better or for worse. Examples will be drawn largely from discussions of welfare and housing policy, as well as from work I am doing with a wonderful colleague on the maintenance of New York City’s parks. On the other hand, much of the reading is more theoretical, at a more abstract level of analysis that will help you to think about the kinds of policies in which you are interested, whether or not you are fascinated with the questions posed by social policy or most taken by issues dealing with, say, energy policy or the regulation of telecommunications.

For the class, I will ask each student to choose an area of study and produce several products over the course of the semester about them, all leading to a final paper (more on this, below). Further, I will ask that each week, two students prepare short reaction papers on the readings—and with supplemental material, as needed—of no more than five pages. These should be sent to the class to read no more than 24 hours before class (i.e., by Wednesday at 4 pm). We will read these seminar papers as well as the assigned readings for discussion in class and their authors will lead discussion (usually with my energetic intervention and occasional taking-over…don’t be offended, please). As the course progresses and we become familiar with each other’s projects, please let these projects spill into the class reading.

For the student projects, I’d like you to produce the following:

1. A topic statement
2. A literature review
3. A methodological/analytic framework
4. A paper that you should think of as one that could be presented publicly at a conference (i.e., something that could eventually turn into a publishable paper but for which you won’t be able to accrue sufficient data in a busy semester’s time). You should think of this as being no more than 8,000 words in length, preferably including references.

Course Readings (will be available on Blackboard or I will send them to the class, as you prefer).

1. Introduction, no reading.
2. Boundaries of the Phenomenon: Bertell Ollman, from Dance of the Dialectic (Chapters 1, 5); Eugene Bardach, “The Eightfold Path” (pp. 1-42)


5. Policy institutions: Doug Guthrie and Elisabeth Clemens, from *Politics and Partnerships* (Chapter 1), Bob Jessop, “Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance,” David Meyer from *Politics of Protest* (Chapter 1)

6. Policy across settings: John Krinsky, from *Free Labor* (Chapter 2); Ira Katznelson, from *When Affirmative Action was White* (Chapters 2, 3). Supplemental (highly recommended): Michele Landis Dauber, from *The Sympathetic State* (Introduction).

7. The objects of policy: Helen Schneider and Laura Ingram, “The Social Construction of Target Populations,” Sanford Schram, Richard C. Fording, and Joe Soss, from *Disciplining the Poor* (Chapter 1).


10. Carrying out policy: Michael Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy* (Preface, Chapters 1, 2); Frank Ridzi, from *Selling Welfare Reform* (Chapter 3), John Krinsky and Maud Simonet from *Who Cleans Your Park?* (TBA)


12. Evaluating policy: Eugene Bardach (revisit), Deborah Stone, from *Policy Paradox* (Chapters 1, 7, 8) Testimony on Homeless Study, and Appleseed, Inc. report.


14. Conclusion