

Introduction to Public Policy

Prof. John Krinsky

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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)

3. Policy (and politics) as process: Paul Sabatier, from *Theories of the Policy Process* (Chapter 1), Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time* (Chapter 1), John Kingdon from *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (selections).
4. Policy and Power: James Scott, from *Seeing Like a State* (Introduction), James O'Connor from *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (Introduction), Charles Tilly, "War-Making and State-Making as Organized Crime".
Supplemental reading: John Mollenkopf, from *A Phoenix in the Ashes* (Chapter 2)
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).
8. Policy networks: Tanja Börtzel, "Organizing Babylon: On the different conceptions of policy networks," Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore, "Recombinant workfare, across the Americas," Andrew Rich, "War of ideas: Why Conservatives are winning," Michael Fabricant and Michelle Fine, from *Charter Schools and the Corporate Makeover of Public Education* (Chapters 2, 4).
9. Policy styles: Daniel Cohn, "Creating crisis, avoiding blame", Herbert Kaufman, "Emerging conflicts in the doctrines of public administration."
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)
11. Contesting policies: Cindi Katz, from *Growing Up Global* (Preface), John Krinsky from *Free Labor* (Chapters 3, 4), Sarah Soule and Brayden King, "The stages of the policy process and the Equal Rights Amendment."
12. Evaluating policy: Eugene Bardach (revisit), Deborah Stone, from *Policy Paradox* (Chapters 1, 7, 8)
Testimony on Homeless Study, and Appleseed, Inc. report.
13. Evaluating policy: Caitlin Cahill, "At Risk?", Picture the Homeless, "Banking on Vacancy", City Council
14. Conclusion