

GOVT 3325 – American Public Policy

Spring 2004

Prof: Scott Robinson

GR 2.537 (x4043)

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Office Hours: TR 12-1, R 6-7, and by appointment

TR 3:30-4:45

GR 2.302

Course Objectives:

The American government carries out a wide variety of activities. Federal officials make decisions about the safety of medicines, the allocation of federal officials to investigate terrorism, and the oversight of national parks. Local government officials decide where police officers are sent, what budgets fire departments receive, and how much high school teachers are paid. All of these diverse activities are policy decisions.

In this course, we consider various explanations for how the American political system decides what issues deserve attention, makes policy decisions, and implements those decisions.

This course also covers the basics of writing a term paper on a social science topic. We will discuss the nature of social science research, how to conduct library research for a social science term paper, and the planning and writing of the term paper itself.

Textbooks:

There are three required textbooks for the course.

Hoover, Kenneth and Todd Donovan. 2004. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. Eighth Edition. Boston, MA: Bedford / St. Martin.

American Political Science Association. *Style Manual for Political Science*. Revised Edition. 2001.

Schattschneider, E. E. *The Semi-Sovereign People*.

There is also a packet of required reading available at Off-Campus Books. All of the readings in the course pack are also available on reserve at the library. The bookstore running out of books (which is very rare for this course – especially for the course packet) does not constitute an excuse for not having done the readings. Be diligent about getting your readings (either from the bookstore or the library).

I recommend the following textbook. It can help with the term paper writing process but is not required.

Scott, Gregory M. and Stephen M. Garrison. 2002. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*. Fourth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Examination Schedule:

Mid-term exam: 3/4

Final exam: 4/29

The term paper is due on: 4/22

Attendance:

Attendance is optional for the course. However, much of the material on the exams (and the method for writing the term paper) will be discussed in class. Missing class when a topic is discussed (be it citation style or a theory of the policy process) will likely cause you problems on the assignments. In the past grades have been CLOSELY correlated with attendance. Choose to skip class at your own peril.

I do not accept assignments turned in electronically or slid under my office door. Everything must be turned over to me in person or during class time. If you miss the class at which an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to locate me or to schedule an appointment to turn in the assignment.

Class Etiquette

It is essential that you respect the interests and needs of your fellow students. Do not do anything that may be disruptive or prevent other people from learning. Disruptively talking in class or having your cellular phone go off will result in you being asked to leave class for that lecture. PLEASE turn your cellular phones off before coming to class.

Grading:

Examination 1: 30%

Examination 2: 30%

Term Paper (iterative assignments): 20%

Term Paper (final draft): 20%

Final letter grades will be distributed based on the following system.

F: 0-59

D: 60-62

D: 63-66

D+: 67-69

C-: 70-72

C: 73-76

C+: 77-79

B-: 80-82

B: 83-86

B+: 87-89

A-: 90-92

A: 93-96

A+: 97-100

Term Paper Assignments:

This course satisfies the upper-division writing requirement. Everyone is required to write a term paper due at the end of the course. The term paper will require considerable research (beyond the textbooks) on a piece of legislation of your choosing. More information on the term paper will be given to you early in the semester.

The term paper will be an iterative process. The due dates for the iterative stages of the research are listed on the class schedule. You will have the opportunity to work with me or the TA on various steps in the writing process. Taking advantage of these opportunities is your responsibility.

Academic Dishonesty:

Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes scholastic dishonesty and its consequences (see <http://www.utdallas.edu/student/sliffe/chapter49.html>). If you have any doubts, contact me before you turn in your assignments.

Disability:

If you have a condition that requires accommodation in this course, please speak with me after class or in office hours during the first week of class. I will be happy to make appropriate accommodations provided timely notice is received and the arrangement is consistent with any recommendations from Disability Services, when applicable. Disability Services can be reached at 883-2098. The syllabus and other course materials can be made available in alternative formats.

Late Examinations and Papers:

If you must miss an examination, you must inform me IN WRITING (on paper, not via e-mail) more than a week in advance of the exam. Missing the examination without notification requires a university approved excuse (hospitalization, death in the family, etc.) Regrettably, I will need some documentation for any exam missed with less than one-week's notice. Examinations must be made up within one week of the original examination date. After one week, there will be NO make-up examinations. If you cannot take an exam within one week of the scheduled time, you should drop this course.

Turning in assignments late will result in a penalty assessed to the grade. If the paper is turned in after class on the day it is due, the grade will be reduced by 10 points. If the paper is turned in the day after the due date, it will be penalized 20 points. No papers will be accepted later than the day following the due date – the result will be a 0 on the assignment.

Late assignments must be turned over to me “in person”. Not being able to contact me is not an excuse to turn a paper in late (that is, it is YOUR responsibility to contact me to turn in a paper late.)

The term paper must be turned in with both a paper and an electronic version (on a floppy disk or CD). The paper is not considered completed until both formats are turned in to me – and thus may become late as per the above policy.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

The following schedule lists the topics and readings for each week. The syllabus includes required readings from the textbooks and the reading packet. I also include additional reading for people who want to explore a subject in more depth (possibly as part of their term paper). The exams will draw from all of the required readings as well as the materials discussed in class. Do not assume that because a point from a reading was not explored in class one may ignore that material when preparing for the exams. Any point from the class discussion OR the reading is fair material for the exam.

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus at any time (for example, by adding or removing reading material, changing the daily topics, or moving back the tests [but never forward]). I will announce any changes ahead of time in class.

1/13

Class Introduction

1/15

What is a Social Science?

Required Reading:

Hoover and Donovan Chapters 1 & 2: “Thinking Scientifically” and “The Elements of Science”

1/20

The Scientific Study of Public Policy: Three (+1) Theories of Policy Change

Recommended Reading:

Anderson, James. E. 1999. *Public Policymaking: An Introduction*. Fourth Edition. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Dye, Thomas R. 2002. *Understanding Public Policy*. Tenth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall

Lester, James P. and Joseph Stewart, Jr. 2000. *Public Policy: An Evolutionary Approach*. Second Edition.

Stamford, CT: Wadsworth / Thomson Learning.

Sabatier, Paul. Ed. 1999. *Theories of the Policy Process*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

1/22

Pluralist Theory

Required Reading:

Madison, James. “Federalist Paper #10” http://memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fed_10.html

Truman, David B. from *The Governmental Process* Chs. 3 & 14 COURSE PACKET

Recommended Reading:

- Bentley, Arthur B. 1949. *The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures*. Evanston, IL: Principia Press of Illinois.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Truman, David B. 1971. *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*. New York, NY: Knopf.

1/27

Logic and Argumentation

1/29

Elite Theory

Required Reading:

Schattschneider, E. E. from *The Semi-Sovereign People* Chs 1 & 2

Recommended Reading:

- Schattschneider, E. E. from *The Semi-Sovereign People* Ch 3
- Hunter, Floyd. 1953. *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mills, C. Wright. 1956. *The Power Elite*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

2/3

Generating Hypotheses and Variables

Required Reading:

Hoover and Donovan Chapters 3 & 4: “Strategies”, and “Refinements”

2/5

Institutional Theory

Recommended Reading:

- March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen. 1989. *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Scott, W. Richard. 1995. *Institutions and Organization*. Thousand Oaks, NJ: Sage Publishing.

2/10

Measurement and Testing

Required Reading:

Hoover and Donovan Chapter 5: “Measuring Variables and Relationships” (Pgs 92-110)

Recommended Reading:

Hoover and Donovan Chapter 5: “Measuring Variables and Relationships” (Pgs 111-136)

2/12

Pluralist Models of Agenda Setting

Required Reading:

Downs, Anthony. “Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue Attention Cycle” COURSE PACKET

Recommended Reading:

- Baumgartner, Frank R. and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kingdon, John. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy*. Second Edition. New York, NY: HarperCollins College Publishers.

2/17

Library Skills

2/19

Elite Models of Agenda Setting

Required Reading:

Schattschneider, E. E. from *The Semi-Sovereign People* Chs 4 & 5

Recommended Reading:

Schattschneider, E. E. from *The Semi-Sovereign People* Ch 6

Bachrach, Peter and Morton S. Baratz. 1970. *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

2/24

Citation and Plagiarism and Organizing a Term Paper

DUE: Policy Hypotheses and Public Law Number

Required Reading:

APSA. *Style Manual for Political Scientists*.

2/26

Institutional Theories of Agenda Setting

Required Reading:

Kingdon, John. From *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Ch. 5. COURSE PACKET

Stone, Deborah. "Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas" COURSE PACKET

Recommended Reading:

Kingdon, John. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policy*. Second Edition. New York, NY: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Stone, Deborah. 1997. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton Publishing Company.

3/2

Test Review

3/4

Mid-term Exam

3/16

Pluralist Theories of Policy Adoption

Required Reading:

Birkland, Thomas A. From *After Disaster*. Ch. 3. "Natural Disasters as Focusing Events" COURSE PACKET

Pressman and Wildavsky. From *Implementation*. Ch. 2. "Formulating Policy." COURSE PACKET

Recommended Reading:

Fenno, Richard. F. 1978. *Homestyle: House Members in Their Districts*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Fiorina, Morris. P. 1977. *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Fiorina, Morris P. 1987. *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

3/18

Free day for research and outlining

3/23

Elite Theories of Policy Adoption

Required Reading:

Kingdon, John. From *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Ch. 6 COURSE PACKET

Recommended Reading:

Domhoff, G. William. 1967. *Who Rules America?* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

3/25

Decision Theory

DUE: Paper Outline

Recommended Reading:

Luce, Duncan R., and Howard Raiffa. 1957. *Games and Decisions: Introduction and Critical Survey*. New York, NY: Wiley.

3/30

Institutional Models of Policy Adoption

Required Reading:

Lindblom, Charles. "The Science of 'Muddling Through'." COURSE PACKET

Recommended Reading:

Lindblom, Charles. 1965. *The Intelligence of Democracy: Decision Making through Mutual Adjustment*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Cohen, Michael D., James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen. 1972. "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17 (1).

4/1

Game Theory I

Recommended Reading:

Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Bonchek, Mark S. 1997. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

4/6

Pluralist Models of Implementation

Required Reading:

Hecl, Hugh. "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment." COURSE PACKET

Pressman and Wildavsky. From *Implementation*. Ch. 3. "Trials of Implementation." COURSE PACKET

4/8

Game Theory II: Models of Policy Adoption

Recommended Reading:

Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Bonchek, Mark S. 1997. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

4/13

Elite Models of Implementation

Required Reading:

McCool, Daniel. "Subgovernments as Determinants of Political Viability" COURSE PACKET

McCool, Daniel. "The Subsystem Family of Concepts" COURSE PACKET

4/15

Institutional Models of Implementation

Required Reading:

McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." COURSE PACKET

4/20

WORK DAY FOR TERM PAPERS (NO CLASS)

4/22

Conclusion and Test Review (TERM PAPER DUE)

4/29 ***2pm***

Final Exam