

POL 317H1: COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science
Summer 2015
Mondays and Wednesdays 4:00-6:00 pm, Sidney Smith Hall 2105

Instructors: Matthew Lesch and Heather Millar
Office: Sidney Smith 3118
Email: matt.lesch@mail.utoronto.ca; h.millar@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Monday 3:00-4:00 pm (Matt); Wednesday 3:00-4:00 pm (Heather)

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the comparative study of public policy. While many other disciplines, such as economics and sociology, are interested in public policy, this course investigates the role that *political* factors play in policy making. Accordingly, the distribution of power, the role of political strategy, and ideological conflict will be prominent themes throughout.

The course will approach the study of public policy from an explicitly comparative perspective. Comparing how different national and/or subnational governments respond to similar challenges will provide students with important clues as to what set of factors are most influential in the policy making process. In the case of climate change, for instance, some governments have chosen to do nothing, whereas others have implemented ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction plans. Given the trans-boundary nature of the problem of climate change, what can explain the variation in these policy responses? A central goal of the course will be to unravel these types of cross-jurisdictional puzzles.

The first part of this course will introduce students to various theories of politics and policy making. Specifically, the theories will focus on the role of public opinion, historical factors, material interests, political institutions, and policy makers and their ideas. The first half is designed to equip students with a set of analytical tools that will enable them to conduct comparative political inquiry. In the second half of the course, we will turn to several specific policy areas and draw on the theoretical tools developed in the first part of the course. Policy fields will include taxation policy, energy policy, social policy and morality policy.

Course Texts

All required and recommended readings will be available through Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation	15%
Research Proposal – May 27 th , 2015	15%
Midterm Test - June 3 rd , 2015	30%
Research Paper – June 17 th , 2015	40%

Participation

Participation will be evaluated based on a combination of attendance and active participation in class discussion. Active participation can include asking clarification questions; responding to a question asked by the instructors; offering your perspective on a specific reading; identifying how a particular theory relates to a current event; or discussing how something you have learned has changed your perspective. Factors to be taken into consideration in evaluating the quality of your participation include your level of preparation, including developing your own questions based on the readings, being attentive to your colleagues and building upon their insights, and maintaining a respectful tone during class discussions.

Research Proposal

You will produce a 1,000 word proposal for your critical research essay. The proposal should include a one-page summary and annotated bibliography (typed, double spaced, and using a standard 12-point font, such as Times New Roman). The one page summary will identify 1) the paper topic, including the specific policy area; 2) the cases you will compare (e.g. different provinces, countries, eras); 3) the main theoretical approach(es) you will use to analyze the cases; 4) your thesis statement.

The remainder of the proposal must also include an annotated bibliography of 5 (five) peer-reviewed, academic sources in political science that you will use to support your argument, drawn from outside of the course readings. An annotated bibliography includes 4-6 sentence summaries (no more than 150 words) of each source, identifying key arguments, evidence, and conclusions and how the source will help you write your essay. The proposal is due **in class on May 27th, 2015, at 4:10PM.**

Research Paper

You will write a 3,000 word research paper (10-12 page typed and double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font, such as Times New Roman). The paper will be an in-depth exploration of a policy field in comparative perspective, using either a cross-jurisdictional or temporal comparison of two or more cases. The paper will describe specific variation in a policy area and will attempt to explain this variation by applying one or more of the five theoretical approaches examined in the course. More information on the research essay, including a specific list of topics will be provided in class. The research paper is due **in class on June 17th, 2015, at 4:10PM.**

Midterm Test

The midterm test will feature a combination of short answer and essay questions. Students will be expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of the theoretical tools introduced in the first half of the course. The midterm test will be one-and-a-half hours long and administered in class on **June 3rd, at 4:00PM.** More information regarding the midterm test will be provided to you in class.

Policies on Missed Tests

Late Penalties for Written Work

Late essays will be penalized **5 per cent per day** (including weekends). You are strongly advised to keep electronic and hard copies of your essay. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned. You may use turnitin.com as the date-stamp for your essay, however we will not mark your essay unless we receive a hard copy in class, during office hours, or submitted directly to the Political Science department office, Sidney Smith Hall 3018.

Academic Integrity

Please be aware of the importance of academic integrity and the seriousness of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism. The more obvious instances of plagiarism include copying material from another source (book, journal, website, another student, and so on) without acknowledging the source, presenting an argument as your own – whether or not it is a direct quotation – rather than fully acknowledging the true originator of the idea, having another person help you to write your essay, and buying an essay. All of these are instances of academic dishonesty, which the university takes very seriously and they will result in academic penalty. Those penalties can range from failing the assignment, failing the course, having a notation on your academic transcript, and/or suspension from the university. For further information on the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, see:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>.

To avoid problems in your assignments, please consult “How Not to Plagiarize,” by Margaret Procter, Coordinator of Writing Support, U of T: www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize.

Statement on the Use of Turnitin:

This course uses Turnitin.com, a tool which facilitates an analysis of textual similarities between sources. “Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.”

Accessibility Services

Students with disabilities requiring assistance should inform the course instructors and should register with accessibility services as soon as possible <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/How-to-Register.htm>.

Writing Centre

We strongly encourage you to use the services available to you at the writing centres on campus <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. Be sure to schedule appointments well in advance of assignment due dates.

Email Policy

Please be sure to use your University of Toronto e-mail accounts for all course related correspondence. Please also note the course code (POL 317H1) in the subject line of your messages. We will do our best to respond to e-mail within 48 hours of receiving messages. E-

mail received during weekends and holidays may take longer to answer. Please do not submit course assignments via e-mail; all assignments must be submitted to us in class or during office hours. If you are unable to submit your assignments in class or during office hours, submit your essay directly to the Political Science department office, Sidney Smith Hall 3018 as well as uploading your assignment to turnitin.com.

Outline of Lecture Topics and Readings

1) Introduction to Public Policy– May 11th

Objectives: What is public policy? What are key aspects of the policy context? How do we measure variation in public policy across time, space, and policy areas?

Required Readings

John, Peter. 2012. "Chapter 1: The Study of Public Policy." In *Analyzing Public Policy 2nd Edition* 1-16. New York: Routledge. [available online through U of T Library]

Simeon, Richard. 1976. "Studying Public Policy." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 9(4): 548-580.

2) Elections and Public Opinion – May 13th

Objectives: To what extent does public opinion shape public policy? How do campaigns and elections influence the policy choices of elected officials?

Required Readings

Soroka, Stuart and Christopher Wlezien. 2010. *Degrees of democracy: politics, public opinion, and policy*. Cambridge University Press, New York, pages 1-21.

Weaver, R. Kent. 1986. "The Politics of Blame Avoidance." *Journal of Public Policy* 6(4): 371-398.

Recommended Readings

Burstein, Paul and April Linton. 2002. "The Impact of Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movements Organisations on Public Policy: Some Recent Evidence and Theoretical Concerns" *Social Forces* 81(2): 380-408.

Weaver, R. Kent, and Leslie A. Pal. 2003. eds. *The Government Taketh Away: The Politics of Pain in the United States and Canada*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, Chapter 1.

3) Victoria Day May 18th– NO CLASS

4) Organized Interests – May 20th

Objectives: How do organized groups influence the policy process? How do we analyze the influence of interest groups on policy makers? How has globalization affected the reach and influence of public interest groups?

Required Readings

Olson, Mancur. 1965. "Chapters 1 & 2." In *The Logic of Collective Action*. 1-65. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Lisa Young and Joanna Everitt. 2010. "Advocacy Groups," in *Auditing Canadian Democracy*, ed. William Cross, 168-196. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Recommended Readings

Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics: Introduction." In *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, 1-38. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Lindblom, Charles. 1977. "Part V" in *Politics and Markets: the world's political economic systems*, 237-312. New York: Basic Books.

Miriam Smith. 2004. "Interest Groups and Social Movements," in *Canadian Politics in the 21st Century, 6th ed.*, ed. Michael Whittington and Glen Williams, 213-230. Toronto: Thompson-Nelson.

5) Political Institutions – May 25th (Matt)

Objectives: What are political institutions and their relevance for the policy making process? How does the structure of a jurisdiction's political institutions influence the choices and behavior of policy actors?

Required Readings

Pierson, Paul. 1995. "Fragmented Welfare States: Federal Institutions and the Development of Social Policy." *Governance* 8: 449-78.

Weaver, R. Kent and Bert A. Rockman. 1993. "Assessing the Effects of Institutions." In *Do Institutions Matter?* Eds. R. Kent Weaver and Bert A. Rockman. Washington DC: Brookings Institute. 1-41.

Recommended Readings:

Hall, Peter H. and Rosemary C.R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44(5): 936-57.

Immergut, Ellen M. 1992. "The rules of the game: The logic of health policy-making in France, Switzerland, and Sweden." in *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*. Eds. Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen, and Frank Longstreth. New York: Cambridge University Press.

6) Politics of Ideas– May 27th

RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

Objectives: How do different types of ideas, such as frames, programmatic ideas, policy paradigms, and ideologies influence different aspects of the policy process?

Required Readings

Stone, Deborah A. 1989. "Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas." *Political Science Quarterly* 104 (2): 281–300.

Hall, Peter A. 1993. "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain." *Comparative Politics* 25 (3): 275–296.

Recommended Readings

Bradford, Neil. 2004. "Governing the Canadian Economy: Ideas and Politics." In *Canadian Politics in the 21st Century*, 6th ed., eds. Michael Whittington and Glen Williams, 231-254. Toronto: Thompson-Nelson

Mehta, Jay. 2011. "The Varied Roles of Ideas in Politics: From "Whether" to "How." In *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, eds. Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox, 25-36. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7) Policy Change - June 1st

Objectives: What sets of factors help explain policy change? How do institutional, ideational, and interest-based factors interact with one another in the policy making process?

Required Readings

Baumgartner, Frank. R. and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. University of Chicago: Chicago, pages 3–55

Birkland, Thomas A. 1998. "Focussing Events, Mobilization and Agenda Setting." *Journal of Public Policy* 18(1): 53-74

Recommended Readings

John, Peter. 2012. "A Synthesis," in *Analyzing Public Policy*, Second Edition, 154-177. New York: Routledge. [available online through U of T Library]

Patashnik, Erik. 2003. "After the Public Interest Prevails: The Political Sustainability of Policy Reform." *Governance* 16(2): 203–234.

8) Midterm Test – June 3rd

[No Readings]

9) Taxes, Elections, and Public Opinion – June 8th

Objectives: What sets of institutional and/or societal factors shape tax policy in a jurisdiction? How do political features of taxation interact with the economic and psychological dimensions of taxation?

Required Readings

Harrison, Kathryn. 2012. "A tale of two taxes: The fate of environmental tax reform in Canada." *Review of Policy Research* 29(3): 383-407.

Sven, Steinmo. 1989. "Political institutions and tax policy in the United States, Sweden, and Britain." *World Politics* 41(4): 500–535.

Recommended Readings

Rabe, Barry G. and Christopher Borick. 2012. "Carbon taxation and policy labeling: Experience from American states and Canadian provinces." *Review of Policy Research*, 29(3): 358-382.

Schaffner, Brian F. and Mary Layton Atkinson. 2010. "Taxing Death or Estates: When Frames Influence Citizens' Issue Beliefs." In *Winning with Words*. Eds. Brian F. Schaffner and Patrick J. Sellers. New York: Routledge, 121-135.

9) Environmental & Energy Policy, Interests, and Federalism– June 10th

Objectives: How do actors use different venues to achieve their preferred policy outcome?

Required Readings

Boothe, Katherine and Kathryn Harrison. 2009 "The Influence of Institutions on Issue Definition: Children's Environmental Health Policy in the United States and Canada" *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 11(3): 287-307.

Pralle, Sarah. 2003. "Venue Shopping, Political Strategy, and Policy Change: The

Internationalization of Forestry Advocacy.” *Journal of Public Policy* 23(3): 233-260.

Recommended Readings

Davis, Charles, and Katherine Hoffer. 2012. “Federalizing Energy? Agenda Change and the Politics of Fracking.” *Policy Sciences* 45 (3):221–41.

Warner, Barbara, and Jennifer Shapiro. 2013. “Fractured, Fragmented Federalism: A Study in Fracking Regulatory Policy.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 43 (3): 474–96

10) Social Policy, Political Institutions and Organized Interests– June 15th

Objectives: How do the previous policy choices of elected officials influence the trajectory of social policy making in advanced, post-industrialized democracies? How can new social policy ideas gain traction in policy subsystems characterized by powerful political coalitions and stable political institutions?

Required Readings

Béland, Daniel. 2007. “Ideas and Institutional Change in Social Security: Conversion, Layering, and Policy Drift.” *Social Science Quarterly*, 88: 20–38.

Hacker, Jacob. S. 1998. The historical logic of national health insurance: “Structure and sequence in the development of British, Canadian, and US medical policy”. *Studies in American Political Development*, 12(01): 57-130.

Recommended Readings

Esping-Andersen, G. 1990. *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pages 9–54.

Pierson, Paul. 1996. "The New Politics of the Welfare State." *World Politics* 48:143-79.

11) Morality Policy, Ideas, Diffusion– June 17th

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Objectives: What is the influence of international norms on policy making? When do policy ideas diffuse rapidly across jurisdictions?

Required Readings

Kollman, Kelly. 2007. “Same-Sex Unions: The Globalization of an Idea.” *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2): 329–357.

Baumgartner, Frank R, Suzanna L. De Boef, Amber E. Boydstun 2008. "Innocence and the Death Penalty Debate." In *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence*, 1-23. Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Readings

Boushey, Graeme. 2010. "Contagion in the Laboratories of Democracy." In *Policy diffusion dynamics in America*, 1-21. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Dobbin, Frank, Beth Simmons, and Geoffrey Garrett. 2007. "The Global Diffusion of Public Policies: Social Construction, Coercion, Competition, or Learning?" *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (1): 449–472.