

Vanderbilt University
Human and Organizational Development
Class Number 1800, Section 3
Fall 2005

Public Policy

William R. Doyle
Office: 207E Payne
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-4 p.m. or by appointment
w.doyle@vanderbilt.edu
Phone (615) 322-2904

Course Overview

This course deal with the topic of public policy in the United States. The course is organized as follows. The first half of the course defines the context for policymaking, lays out what policies are, how they are created, and how they are implemented and evaluated. The second half of the course takes what we have learned from the first half and applies it to four contemporary issues in public policymaking: homeland security, social security, education, and the environment. For each issue, we will discuss some specific policies in specific contexts and seek to better understand the process of policy creation, implementation and evaluation for that area.

We begin by reading the texts that lay the foundation for any public policy in the United States: the Constitution of the United States, along with several of the documents closely associated with its creation.

We next turn to the definition of public policies. In their broadest sense, policies can be thought of as a decision by a government to give some people something, to make sure people do something (or don't do something) or to take something from some people and give it to others. However, many different interpretations of what constitutes a policy have been offered—we will examine a few of these in our readings and in class.

After defining policy we will turn to theories of how policy is made. Policymaking can be thought of as reflecting the collective will of all citizens, a majority of citizens, or some group of citizens. Alternatively, policies may come about through more complex and contingent mechanisms.

Policies are not complete once they are written into law—rather, it is in the process of implementation that many policies are defined and their real effects felt.

We will next turn to the question of how policies are evaluated. Without knowing what policies may or may not do, it is difficult to know how to proceed with policymaking in the future.

The second half of the course will be concerned with applying these ideas to four policy areas, with specific applications in each.

- Homeland Security: Allocating Resources and Port Security
- Social Policy: Social Security Reform
- Education: No Child Left Behind
- Environment: Smart Growth and Sprawl

Evaluation

Students' performance will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Participation: 25 percent

Policy Proposal: 25 percent

Midterm: 25 percent

Final Exam: 25 percent

Honor Code

All assignments for this class, including online quizzes, policy proposal, midterm, and final are to be conducted under the obligations set out in Vanderbilt's Honor Code. Please click [here](#) to review the honor code.

Participation

Each students' active participation in reading and classroom discussions is vital. To ensure students stay current with the readings, online quizzes will be assigned for 10 of the classes. Each quiz will be graded on a 10 pt scale, with a total possible for the semester of 100 points. These quizzes are open book, open notes and are to be completed prior to the first class for that week. The quiz will cover *all* of the readings assigned for the week. Reminders will be sent out before each quiz. Performance on these quizzes will count for one half of the grade in participation.

The remainder of the grade in participation will be determined by the student's active participation in the class. There are many ways to participate, including active listening. Participation will be graded on a 100 point scale.

Policy Proposals

Students will be assigned to groups of no more than three to create a policy proposal. The proposal will take the form of a detailed presentation to be provided to a governor regarding an important policy topic. This assignment will be discussed further during class.

The majority (75%) of the grade for the policy proposal will be based on an evaluation of the written proposal. The write-up will be graded on a 100 pt scale. The proposal must be submitted to me via email in word or acrobat by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 5th. The remainder (25%) of the grade for this assignment will be based on students' presentation of their proposals to the rest of the class at the end of the semester. This will also be based on a 100 pt scale.

Midterm

A midterm based on the readings will be given in class on October 12th. The midterm will be closed book, closed notes. The midterm will be graded on a 100 pt scale.

Final

A take home final will be assigned on the last day of class (December 7th) and will be due on Friday, December 9th at 5 pm. The final must be submitted to me via email. It will consist of several essay questions. The test will be open book, open notes. The final will be graded on a 100 pt. scale.

Grading Scale

The following scale will be used for grading:

- A+: 98-100
- A: 93-97
- A-: 90-92
- B+: 87-89
- B: 83-86
- B-: 80-82
- C+: 77-79
- C: 73-76
- C-: 70-72
- D+: 67-69
- D: 63-66
- D-: 60-62
- F: 59 and below

Texts

The following two texts are available in the bookstore.

Anderson, J. E. (2003). *Public policymaking: an introduction*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 5th edition (Referred to as **Anderson**)

Koven, S. G., Shelley, M. C., and Swanson, B. E. (1998). *American public policy: the contemporary agenda*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston (Referred to as **Koven**)

Schedule

August 24

Introduction

August 29

Contexts of Policymaking: Foundational Readings

Declaration of Independence [Online](#)

Constitution of the United States [Online](#)

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, August 28th.

August 31

Contexts of Policymaking: Foundational Readings

Bill of Rights [Online](#)

Amendments to the Constitution [Online](#)

Read the Fourteenth Amendment closely

Federalist Papers # 10 [Online](#)

Federalist Papers # 51 [Online](#)

September 5th

Defining Public Policy

Anderson Chapter 1

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, September 4th.

September 7th

Defining Public Policy

Lowi, T. J. (1964). American business, public policy, case studies and political theory. *World Politics*, (16):677–715 [Online](#)

September 12th

Group Theories: Pluralism

Dahl, R. A. (1967). *Pluralist democracy in the United States: conflict and consent*. Rand McNally, Chicago, (Chapter 6) [OAK](#)

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, September 11.

September 14th

Group Theories: Rationality

Koven Chapter 2

Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. Harper, New York, (Introduction and Chapter 1) [OAK](#)

September 19th

Postmodern Theories: Group identification and symbolism

Schneider, A. and Ingram, H. (1993). Social construction of target populations- implications for politics and policy. *American Political Science Review*, 87(2):334–347 [Online](#)

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, September 18th.

September 21st

Postmodern Theories: Polis and Market

Stone, D. A. (2002). *Policy paradox: the art of political decision making*. Norton, New York (Introduction and Chapter 1) [OAK](#)

September 26th

Policy Formation: The Systems View

Anderson Chapter 3

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, September 25th.

September 28th

Policy Formation: Agenda Setting

Kingdon, J. W. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Little Brown, Boston (Chapter 1) [OAK](#)

October 3rd

Policy Implementation

Anderson Chapter 6

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, October 2nd.

October 5th

Policy Implementation, Impact and Evaluation

Majone, G. and Wildavsky, A. (1984). Implementation as evolution. In Pressman, J. L. and Wildavsky, A. B., editors, *Implementation: how great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland: or, Why it's amazing that Federal programs work at all, this being a saga of the Economic Development Administration as told by two sympathetic observers who seek to build morals on a foundation of ruined hopes*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 3d edition [OAK](#)

Anderson Chapter 7

October 10th

Review Session

Review and summary of first half of semester

October 12th

Midterm Examination: in class

October 17th

Topics in Public Policy: Homeland Security

Reese, S. (2005). State and local homeland security: Unresolved issues for the 109th congress. Technical Report RL32941, Congressional Research Service [Online](#)

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, October 16th.

October 19th

Topics in Public Policy: Homeland Security

Binnendijk, H., Caraher, L. C., Coffey, T., and Wynfield, H. S. (2002). The virtual border: Countering seaborne container terrorism. *Defense Horizons*, (16) [Online](#)

October 26th

Policy Proposal Research Session

October 31

Topics in Public Policy: Social Policy and Retirement

Nuschler, D. (2004). The financial outlook for Social Security and Medicare. Technical Report 95-543 EPW, Congressional Research Service [Online](#)

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, October 30th.

November 2

Topics in Public Policy: Social Policy and Retirement

Public Agenda Issue Guide: Social Security [Online](#)

Read the overview, fact file, and discussion guide

Assignments

Policy proposal group topics due by beginning of class

November 7th

Topics in Public Policy: Environmental Issues—Overview

Koven Chapter 4

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, November 6th.

November 9th

Topics in Public Policy: Environmental Issues—Smart Growth

National Resource Defense Council “Environmental Characteristics of Smart Growth Neighborhoods: Case Studies in Sacramento and Nashville”

[Online- Part 1](#)

and

[Online- Part 2](#)

Assignments

Policy proposal groups reference lists due by beginning of class

November 14

Topics in Public Policy: School Reform

Koven chapter 7

Assignments

Online quiz via [OAK](#), please complete by midnight, November 13th.

November 16th

Topics in Public Policy: Effects of No Child Left Behind

Riddle, W. (2003). K-12 education: Highlights of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Technical Report RL31284, Congressional Research Service [Online](#)

Pinkerton, E., Buell, B., Scott, C., and Kober, N. (2003). Case studies of local implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. Technical report, Center for Education Policy [Online](#)

Read the following case studies:

Alaska: Kodiak Borough

Illinois: Chicago Public Schools

Massachusetts: Avon School District

Ohio: Cleveland Municipal School District

Texas: Cuero Independent School District

Assignments

Policy proposal groups outline for proposal due by beginning of class

November 28th

Class Summary and Preparation for Policy Proposal Presentations

November 30th

Group Presentations

December 5th

Group Presentations

December 7th

Group Presentations