

# SYLLABUS FOR U221 – PUBLIC POLICY (C-255 and Pol Sci-221A, seminar A)

Department of Planning, Policy and Design,  
School of Social Ecology  
University of California at Irvine  
Winter 2011 - Section 54520

Professor: **David L. Feldman**  
Office: **202 Social Ecology I - Tel.: 824-4384**  
Hours: **11-noon, T, Th. and by appt.**

Class meeting: **Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-10:50**  
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## ***Introduction:***

Public policy investigates what government does or, in other words, the outcomes of decisions made at local, regional, national, and international levels of governance - as well as the consequences they bring about. We explore three central, interrelated questions regarding the nature of governmental decision-making processes having as their aim the enactment, implementation, and evaluation of public policy. These are: 1) what frameworks, explanatory theories, and ways of knowing illuminate how and why certain types of policies get made? 2) What is the role of the policy analyst - an academically trained professional - in describing, understanding, predicting, and *designing* policies? And, 3) what are the consequences of different policy designs on: public welfare and well-being, other areas of social discourse and interaction, and the concept of democracy itself?

While we focus upon public policy generally, and not on specific policy areas per se, attention will be devoted to *how* and *why* particular policies get made. We will also explore the implications of policy on various topics (e.g., health care, environment). My objectives are four-fold:

- **To help you understand the motives for, and causes of, various policies as manifested in the role of key actors in the policy process** including interest groups, institutions, and “policy entrepreneurs,” and their sources of power and influence.
- **To make you aware of the various tools, approaches and methods used to exert influence upon the policy process**, including (but not limited to) lobbying, public participation through advisory or other bodies, administrative rule making, and demands for information.
- **To illuminate how public decisions are put into practice or, in other words, how policies are implemented and revised.** We also explore the scope of public decisions – why does “thick” government characterize some policy areas while others are “thin?”
- **To introduce how policy processes and outcomes are evaluated** vis-a-vis contending philosophies regarding how we determine whether governmental outcomes are beneficial, and how policy success – variously defined – is maximized, while policy failure is minimized.

**Readings (for purchase):**

1. Levin, Martin and Martin Shapiro. 2004. *Transatlantic Policymaking in an Age of Austerity*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
2. Radin, Beryl. 2000. *Beyond Machiavelli - Policy Analysis Comes of Age*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
3. Stone, Deborah. 2001. *Policy Paradox - The Art of Political Decision-making*. New York: W.W. Norton.

**Reserved Readings (on EEE):**

1. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Root, Hilton S. 2002. *Governing for Prosperity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
2. Bovens, Mark, and Paul Thart. 1996. *Understanding Policy Fiascoes*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction publishers.
3. Ellis, Ralph D. 1998. *Just Results: Ethical Foundations for Policy Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
4. Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Harper Collins.
5. Pal, Leslie and R. Kent Weaver (eds.) 2003. *The Government Taketh Away: The Politics of Pain in the United States and Canada*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

**Requirements:**

To facilitate dialogue, and discussion, regular attendance is **expected**. Each class will be devoted to a focused and specific issue or topic and will feature a brief lecture followed by discussion. Readings, scheduled to coincide with a session's topic, should be read prior to class to ensure meaningful discussion. Furthermore, each student is responsible for the following products:

- Students will be divided into “subsets.” On alternate dates, as noted in the syllabus, each of you in that subset - is responsible for a brief, **electronically submitted** (2-3) page paper that, drawing upon the reading and discussion, answers a specific question found in the syllabus for that specific date. Each student is responsible for 2 papers, each worth 20% of the final grade, for a total of ..... 40%.
- Students will also be responsible for a final paper, 12-15 double-spaced pages in length that analyzes any policy area of your choosing based, again, on class readings (*you may, of course, bring in additional materials if you wish*). This paper will be due 3/15/11 – and will be submitted in lieu of a final exam. It should be transmitted electronically, as a Word document ..... 35%.

- Class participation: students are expected to actively participate in discussions, by asking questions as well as raising salient issues. For this reason participation is important and expected .....25%.

***Class Schedule***

Week #1: 1/4-6           **Introduction – the policy process and the social sciences**  
 Read: Stone, Part I; Levin and Shapiro, Introduction.

Week #2: 1/11-13       **Empirical and normative approaches to policy analysis**  
 Read: Stone, Part II; Ellis, Introduction and Chapter 1. **(NO CLASS 1/13)**

Writing assignment: Group A: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, why should we study public policy, what values should we seek to address and what audiences should we aim policy analyses toward (2-3 pages)? **(DUE - January 13<sup>th</sup>)**

Week #3: 1/18-20       **Public policy and democracy**  
 Read: Bueno de Mesquita and root, Chapters 7-8; Pal and Weaver, chapter 1.

Writing assignment: Group B: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what is democracy, how does public policy influence its goals and objectives, and what specific changes to governance (e.g., participation, decentralization, development) facilitate democracy? **(DUE - January 20<sup>th</sup>)**

Week #4: 1/25-27       **Interest articulation and agendas in policy-making**  
 Read: Stone, Part III; Kingdon, Chapters 5-7.

Writing assignment: Group C: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, how does an issue become a concern appropriate for consideration by policy makers, what political factors enhance an issue’s salience, visibility, and importance, and what is the role played by the issue itself (2-3 pages)? **(DUE - January 27<sup>th</sup>)**

Week #5: 2/1-3           **Information and expertise as driver of policy**  
 Read: Radin, Chapters 1-4.   **(NO CLASS THIS WEEK!)**

***This week is a hiatus from writing assignments - you are urged to commence work on your final papers and to consult with the instructor - as appropriate and needed - on your topics and ideas.***

Week #6: 2/8-10       **Policy processes as distributional**  
 Read: Levin and Shapiro, Chapters 1-4.

Writing assignment: Group A: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what is democracy, how does public policy influence its goals and objectives, and what specific changes to governance (e.g., participation, decentralization, development) facilitate democracy? **(DUE - February 10<sup>th</sup>)**

Week #7: 2/15-17       **Policy processes as re-distributional and regulatory**  
 Read: Levin and Shapiro, Chapters 5-9.

Writing assignment: Group B: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, distinguish between regulatory, distributive and re-distributive policies according to their goals and objectives - what do they seek to achieve and how do they differ in their structure and operation? Can a policy be all three (2-3 pages)? **(DUE - February 17<sup>th</sup>)**

Week #8: 2/22-24      **Policy design - implementation and pluralism**  
Read: Radin, Chapters 5-8; Stone, Part IV.

Writing assignment: Group C: Drawing on the reading and class discussion, what are the most important factors to be considered in implementing policies, what are the barriers to implementation, and what criteria should be employed in making implementation decisions (2-3 pages)? **(DUE - February 24<sup>th</sup>)**

Week #9: 3/1-3      **Evaluating policy outcomes and evaluators**  
Read: Ellis, Chapters 5-6; Bovens and Thart, chapter 2.

Week #10: 3/8-10      **Conclusions - future challenges facing the study of public policy**  
Read: Levin and Shapiro, Conclusions; Ellis, Chapter 7.

**March 15<sup>th</sup>: final 12-15 page paper due - electronically.**

***Course Policies:***

**DROPS:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 2.

**ADDS:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 3 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 3.

**CHANGE:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. From week 3 through 6, you must use the Student Access system to submit a request for a grade option change. No exceptions will be considered after week 6.

***Students with Disabilities:***

If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please discuss this with me during the first week of class AND please register with the Disability Services Center (<http://www.disability.uci.edu/>). In order for you to receive any type of academic accommodation, I will need formal notification from the Disability Services Center during the first two weeks of the quarter of the type of academic accommodations to which your disability entitles you.