

PUBLIC DECISION MAKING AND POLICY ANALYSIS

Spring 2004 834: 602.
Thursday 2:15-4:50

Professor Frank Fischer; 719 Hill Hall
Office Hours: Thursdays 3:00-5:00; Tuesdays 4:50-5:30
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This course examines the basic political dynamics of the public policymaking process, emphasizing the role of usable knowledge for policy decision-making. In addition to examining the politics of each phase of the policy cycle--agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation, and evaluation--the seminar investigates the kind of knowledge and inquiry appropriate to each phase. Along the way, the contemporary debates between positivist and postpositivist approaches to policy inquiry are explored.

BOOKS

Required:

Peter deLeon, *Advice and Consent: The Development of the Policy Sciences*
Frank Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy: Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices*
Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Subsystems*
Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram, *Policy Design for Democracy*
John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*
Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation*
Charles Lindblom, *Inquiry and Change*

Recommended:

Frank Fischer, *Evaluating Public Policy*
Frank Fischer, *Citizens, Experts and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge*
Frank Fischer and John Forester, eds. *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*.
Davis Bobrow and John Dryzek, *Policy Analysis by Design*
Wayne Parsons, *Public Policy: The Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*
M. E. Hawkesworth, *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis*
Edward Zigler and Susan Munchen, *Head Start: The Inside Story of America's Most Successful Educational Experiment*

RESERVE READINGS (Available in the Political Science Department Office +)

Frank Fischer and John Forester, eds. *Confronting Values in Public Policy Analysis: The Politics of Criteria*+
Arthur Okun, *Equity Versus Efficiency: The Big Trade-Off*+
Randall Ripley, *Policy Analysis as Political Science* (Chs 2-3)+
Pauline Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences*
Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln, *Fourth-Generation Evaluation*
Ronald Sylvia, et. al, *Program Planning and Evaluation for Public Managers*

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Introduction (1/22)

Readings: deLeon, Ch 1, 2 *
Fischer, Preface and Ch 1*
Howlett and Ramesh, Ch 1

Week 2. Theoretical Approaches to Public Policy (1/29)

Readings: Howlett and Ramesh, Ch 2.*
Ripley, Chs. 2 –3 (On Reserve) *
Lindblom, Part I
deLeon, Chs 3-4
Fischer, Ch 2*

Week 3. Efficiency versus Equity in the Policy Process (2/5)

Readings: Okun (On Reserve)*
Howlett and Ramesh, Ch. 3*
deLeon, Remaining chapters
Kingdon, Chs 1-3

Week 4. Policy Agenda-Setting: The "Garbage Can" Model (2/12)

Readings: Kingdon, Ch 4-9*
Howlett and Ramesh, Ch 5*.
Fischer, Think Tanks (in Argumentative Turn)
Lindblom, Part III

Week 5. Policy Formulation and Policy Communities (2/19)

Readings: Schneider and Ingram, Chs 3-5.*
Howlett and Ramesh, Chs. 4 and 6.
Parsons, Part 3
Fischer, 94-100

Week 6. Policy Decision-Making: Rationalism, Incrementalism, and Irrationalism (2/26)

Readings: Etzioni (On Reserve)*
Howlett and Ramesh, Chs. 7*.
Lindblom, Part II
Lindblom and Cohen, Chs 1-4 (On Reserve).

Week 7. The Politics of Policy Decision Methodologies: The Case of Cost-Benefit Analysis (3/4)

Readings: Noble (in Fischer and Forester, *Confronting Values...*)*
Dryzek and Bobrow, Ch 2
Sylvia, Ch1-3, 7 **
Parsons, Part 3 (On Reserve)**

Week 8. Policy Implementation and Process Evaluation (3/11)

Readings: Pressman and Wildavsky, Entire book.*
Howlett and Ramesh, Ch. 8.
Parsons, Part 4
Sylvia, Ch 6**

Week 9. Policy Evaluation: Evaluation Research and Experimental Designs (3/25)

Readings: Fischer, Ch 2-3 (On Reserve) *
Howlett and Ramesh, Ch 9*.
Sylvia, Ch 4-5 **
Report: Ziegler and Munchen**
Film: "Inquiry: The Berger Commission"

Week 10. In Search of Usable Policy Knowledge: Integrating Empirical and Normative Inquiry (4/1)

Readings: Lindblom, Parts I-II*
Fischer, Ch 6*

Week 11. Postpositivist and Postmodern Perspectives: Policy Discourse as Narrative Story-Telling (4/8)

Readings: Kaplan (In The Argumentative Turn)*
Fischer, Ch 7-8*
Rosenau, Chs 1, 7-8

Week 12. Policy Evaluation: Program Objectives and Situational Context (4/15)

Readings: Fischer, Ch 3, 9*
Guba and Lincoln**

Week 13. Policy Evaluation: Societal Goals and Political Ideology (4/22)

Readings: Fischer, Evaluating Public Policy , Chs 8-9*
Lindblom, Parts III-IV
Davis and Bobrow, Ch 4, 6**.

Week 14. Policy Analysis and Democratic Decision-Making:
Conclusion and Review (4/29)

Readings: Fischer, Ch. 10-11 *
Howlett and Ramesh, Ch. 10

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Three Essay Papers: 70% Topics relate to class readings and discussion and will be supplied by the instructor. Two papers are to be 5-8 pages in length. The third involves a more systematic examination of one of the topics. It should be 15-22 twenty pages in length, to be approved by the instructor.

Class Participation: 30% (Book presentation
and class discussion 15%; Attendance 15%)

No work for the course will be accepted one year after the end of the semester.

* Underlined readings are the primary readings for class discussion of a particular topic. Other reading listed are required by supplemental to the discussion.

** Additional suggested Readings

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Ph.D. Sample Questions

Examine the debate between "muddling through" and comprehensive or "synoptic" analysis in terms of the diverging goals of decision makers and policy analysts. Discuss both the cognitive and normative dimensions of the tensions between these two actors. How might the tasks of the two groups be more effectively coordinated?

Explain the "politics of policy expertise." How does it enter the various phases of the policy cycle? What are its implications for the theory and practice of policy analysis?

Examine the ways in which "useable knowledge" might get redefined as on moved through the policy cycle. Discuss the implications of the various forms of knowledge in terms of

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ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Examine the relationship between science and politics. What are the advantages and disadvantages of employing applied social science as a guide to public decision making? Illustrate your answer with concrete examples.
2. Discuss the development of public policy analysis, emphasizing the decisive events in its development. In your view, what do these events suggest about the future of this applied field?
3. What is "usable knowledge" in public management? Discuss the problems that stand in the path of obtaining it.

Examine the implications of the fact@value separation for the development©©past and future©©of policy analysis. Wherever possible, illustrate your answer with specific illustrations.

