Public Administration 436, Policy-Making Process

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Course Description

This course examines the ways in which policies are formulated and implemented in public and private sector bureaucracies. The course will examine various components of the policy making process, and it will focus on the diverse roles of interest groups, media and constituencies, who seek to set the policy making agenda of public and private organizations. The role of policy experts and administrative actors in policy making and policy implementation will also be examined.

Course Objectives:

This course has three main purposes:

1. To introduce key concepts and models of public policy making as they relate to the theory and practice of public administration and organizational management
2. To strengthen academic and interpretive skills needed by individuals to function as effective participants in the policy making process
3. To develop appropriate thinking skills needed to critically assess and evaluate institutional performance in the larger political, cultural and socioeconomic environments of public and private sector organizations as they seek to implement public policies

Expected Course Outcomes

It is expected that at the end of this course the student will be able to:

1. Understand the various models and theories of policy making that are used by public and private sector organizations to formulate decisions and implement those decisions within their domains
2. Function more effectively as participants in policy and decision making processes within public and private organizations.
3. Critically assess the way policies are made in the organizations in which they work and identify alternative policy making models that will change or improve organizational decision making.
4. Participate more fully as citizens rather than mere residents in the public and private decision making processes.
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Changes:

Please note that modifications of this syllabus may be made at any time at the professor's discretion.

Course Text and Materials

Required:


Suggested Readings:

Please see the bibliographies listed at the end of the various chapters in Dye, Understanding Public Policy. Also, please see the following:


Course Requirements

1. Read all assigned materials for each class session.
2. Fully participate in Threaded Discussion Forums.
3. Open the Folder for each week under Assignments and follow the directions contained therein.
Discussion Forum 35%

On selected weeks during the term, you will be asked to enter the Discussion Board and respond to the question(s) raised and participate in the Discussion Forums. Please note that you have a week, from Monday – Sunday. For example, for Week 1, you will have from 6/4-6/10 to complete and participate in the Forum. Every Monday, grades will be assigned for the previous week’s entries. No grades will be given for responses/participation after midnight on Sunday of the respective weeks. A complete entry consists of your own written response to the question raised, as well as a fully engaged response to the comments of other students. Please respond to the question, and pay attention to announcements for direction and/or instructions on this method of interaction.

Individual Assignments

There are a total of 4 individual assignments. The lengths of various papers are specified. Some of these assignments will involve personal reflection and observation of local policy making processes.

- **Assignment 1** (40% of Assignments Grade) – During the next 10 weeks, make at least 2 visits to a city council or a county commissioner/freeholder meeting in the jurisdiction in which you reside. Based on what you observe and experience, write a 4-5 page answer to the following question: In terms of policy making and policy influence, what is the difference between acting as a ‘citizen’ and acting as a ‘resident’? (This assignment is due, Friday, August 3, 2007.)

- **Assignment 2** (20% of Assignments Grade) – In no less than 1 and no more than 2 pages, describe a decision that you had to make for yourself or for your work. What was the model of decision making that most closely resembled how you made your decision? Due: Friday, June 22

- **Assignment 3** (20% of Assignments Grade) – To what organization(s) do you belong that seek to influence public policy in the federal, state, or local policy arenas? How do they seek to influence policy making and for what ends or goals? (No less than 1, no more than 2 pages) Due: Friday, July 6.

- **Assignment 4** (20% of Assignments Grade) - In the next few weeks, we will be looking at various policy issues/problems covered in the Dye text. Choose one of these issues/problems and identify 2 web sites that deal with the issue/problem in that chapter. Critique the sites by answering the
following questions for each site: 1.) What is the stated mission or objective of the site? 2.) To whom is the site addressed (which groups or policy makers)? 3.) What policy position does the site seek to advocate or address? 4.) What underlying political or organizational bias does the site reflect, if any? (2-3 pages) This assignment is due Monday, August 6.

Mid-Term Examination 15%

There will be a mid-term examination in the 6th week, due no later than Sunday, July 14, 2005. This is an open book examination that includes short-answer definitions and essay type responses to questions covering assigned readings up to the end of week 5.

Final Manifestation 15%

Two weeks before the end of the quarter, students will receive questions to be answered in a “Final Manifestation” paper, Due Friday, August 10. This will be a series of 5 or 6 questions, for which you will be required to answer one of the questions, and you will be given a choice of 2 other questions. This might feel like a ‘final exam’ but it is intended as an opportunity for you to integrate the class materials, the forum discussions, the assignments, and your experiences in the course.

Participation — Virtual Chat Room 5% (Extra Credit)

Please note that student will be required to sign into the chat room and participate in at least 2 real-time discussions. When we get together to chat, it is important to remember that we are involved in a collaborative effort to discuss the progress of the course, potential course-related issues or problems that students are dealing with, and suggestions for improving the delivery of the course. During the first two weeks of the term, a regular, weekly time period will be established which is most convenient for students and the instructor. It is expected that the length of the weekly chats will be at least 30-45 minutes per session.
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Grading Scale

Grades for coursework, as well as the final grade, will be based upon the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>Has unusually sharp insights into material; initiates thoughtful questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-95</td>
<td>Sees many sides of an issue. Articulates well; writes clearly and logically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Grasps subject matter at a level considered “good to very good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>Is an active listener and participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>Accomplishes more than the minimum requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Demonstrates a satisfactory comprehension of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td>Accomplishes the minimum requirements. Communicates orally and in writing at an acceptable level for college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>Has a good understanding of all materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Quality and quantity of work in and out of class is below average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
<td>Quality and quantity of work in and out of class is barely acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 63</td>
<td>Quality and quantity of work in and out of the class is unacceptable.</td>
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Late Submissions:

Only in the most extreme emergencies will students be allowed to miss an examination or delay the submission of an assignment. Where possible, the instructor should be informed beforehand. For all other cases, the student will receive a one-letter downgrade for the assignment.

Academic Honesty:

Each student is responsible for upholding accepted standards of honesty ethical academic performance. Unless otherwise indicated by an instructor, students are expected to maintain the following standards of integrity: All examinations, term papers, oral and written assignment and recitations are to be the work of the student presenting the material. The use of wording, ideas or findings of other persons, writers, or researchers requires explicit citation in the course; the use of the exact wording requires a “quotation” format. (University of La Verne Catalog, 2002-03, 68-73) Remember that the system of referencing and citation represents an acknowledgment that the pursuit of knowledge involves a communal, dialogical conversation among scholars.
Submitting Assignments

When asked to submit an assignment, please send me your papers by e-mail or submit them via your Weekly Folder in Blackboard. Please remember to print a backup copy of your assignments in case you need them. The submission of your assignment is your responsibility so be sure you send it properly. Evaluative marks on Individual assignments will be reduced by one letter grade for late submissions.

Discussion Board

During selected weeks, you will be required to click on the Discussion Board and enter a Discussion Forum. Familiarize yourself with this feature. Learn how to read a contribution from a classmate or me and on how to add your own "thread". When you are asked to respond to a person's ideas, please do so in a constructive and substantive way. Please apply the theories, concepts and terms of the course so far to your critique of the ideas presented. Just agreeing or disagreeing is not enough nor is telling your own story of an experience that relates to the topic. Please note that a critique and/or analysis should address both strengths and weaknesses. Suggestion: You might want to read the comment(s) first, then, review your material and click back into the Forum to make clear, instructive and constructive responses.

Mid-Term Examination

The Mid-term Examination must be completed within a week of its posting on Blackboard. Late submissions will not be accepted. How to Prepare: Read each chapter carefully learning the terms, concepts and theories.

Feedback:

Every attempt will be made to offer feedback on individual assignments in a timely manner. If students have questions or need additional feedback, they are encouraged to notify the instructor. Feedback consists in advice on preparing for the exams or folder assignments and how to improve their course performance. Students are encouraged to provide a brief, critical analysis that not only provides descriptive facts, gleaned from readings and discussions, but which also reflects the 'individual voice' of the student. It is important that each student provides a definite, recognizable point of view toward the comment or question to which they are responding.
Schedule of Readings, Forums & Individual Assignments

Week 1 (June 4)

1. **Readings:**
   3. Discussion Forum 1 – Please introduce yourself, saying: 1.) your Full Name, 2.) where you grew up, and 3.) what do you want to learn about policy making in this course.

2. **Assignment 1** – During the next 10 weeks, make at least 2 visits to a city council or a county commissioner/freeholder meeting in the jurisdiction in which you reside. Based on what you observe and experience, write a 4-5 page answer to the following question: In terms of policy making and policy influence, what is the difference between acting as a ‘citizen’ and acting as a ‘resident’? (This assignment is due no later than Friday, August 4.)

Week 2 (June 11)

1. **Readings:**
   3. Discussion Forum 2 – Compare and contrast the rational decision making and the incrementalist models of policy making. In terms of how policy making is carried out in public sector and private/non-profit sector organizations, do you think it makes a difference which model is used?

2. **Assignment 2** – In no less than 1 and no more than 2 pages, describe a decision that you had to make for yourself or for your work. What was the model of decision making that most closely resembled how you made your decision? (Due: Friday, June 23)

Week 3 (June 18)

1. **Readings:**
   4. Discussion Forum 3 – How is bureaucracy involved in policy implementation? Why is the bureaucracy involved in policy implementation?

2. **Assignment 2 Due:** Friday, June 23. (See week 2)
Week 4 (June 25)

1. Readings:

2. Discussion Forum 4 – Does how a problem is defined affect what policies are formulated and developed to solve that problem?

3. Assignment 3 – To what organization(s) do you belong that seek to influence public policy in the federal, state, or local policy arenas. (No less than 1, no more than 2 pages) Due: Friday, July 9.

Week 5 (July 2)

1. Readings:
   2. Klingdon, Chapter 9, Wrapping Things Up, pp. 196-209.

2. Due – Assignment #3, Friday, July 7. (See Week 4)

Week 6 (July 9)

Open Book Mid-Term Exam

Week 7 (July 16)

1. Readings:
   1. Dye, Chapter 4, Criminal Justice: Rationality and Irrationality, pp. 60-92.

2. Discussion Forum 5 – Choose one of the policy areas assigned in the readings for this week, and write a critique of the Dye's treatment of that area. Why did you choose to critique this area as opposed to the other two?

3. Assignment 4: In the next few weeks, we will be looking at various policy issues/problems covered in the Dye text. Choose one of these issues/problems and identify a web site that deals with the issue/problem in that chapter. Critique the site: 1.) What is the stated mission or objective of the site? 2.) To whom is the site addressed (which groups or policy makers)? 3.) What policy position does the site seek to advocate or address? 4.) What underlying political or
organizational bias does the site reflect, if any? (2-3 pages) This assignment is due Monday, August 9.

**Week 8 (July 23)**

1. **Readings:**
   2. Dye, Chapter 8, Tax Policy: Battling the Special Interests, pp. 177-196.

   2. **Discussion Forum 6** – In this era of globalization and international terrorism, domestic and international issues are intertwined. How relevant are Dye’s discussions of these 3 chapters in light of the global economy and international terrorism?

**Week 9 (July 30)**

1. **Readings:**

   2. **Discussion Forum 7** – How have environmental and civil rights issues changed or not changed the shape of traditional American federalism?

   3. **Due – Assignment #1**, August 3. (See week 1)

   **Due – Assignment # 4**, August 6. (See week 7)

**Week 10 (August 6)**

Final Manifestation: Putting it all together. (To be handed out 2 weeks before the end of the quarter. Due Friday, August 10) This will be a series of 5 or 6 questions, for which you will be required to answer one of the questions, and you will choose the other 2. This might be seen as a ‘Final Exam’ but it is intended as an opportunity for you to integrate the materials and your experiences in the course.