

# POL 2353: Public Policy

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Lecture (FMWA): M/W, 2:30-3:45 pm, 17 Lex 1520  
Office Hours: M/W, 1:30-2:30 pm or by appointment, NVC 5-271

Spring 2019

## Course Description

This course will introduce you to the process and politics of public policymaking in the United States. We begin by delineating the mechanics of the policymaking process. Next, we will unpack the limits of apolitical approaches and the need for moral choices. Finally, we will use social science to understand why policies develop the way they do, sometimes seeming irrational. The course builds to an op-ed assignment on a policy of your choice, which you will submit to a media outlet of your choosing.

## Learning Goals

By the end of this course, a successful student will be able to:

1. Understand the mechanics of how public policies are made in the United States.
2. Identify the role of morals and value judgments in the policymaking process.
3. Apply concepts of political and social science to current public policy debates.
4. Convey their ideas through persuasive, written argument in the form of an op-ed.

## Readings

The required textbook for this course is:

Stone, Deborah A. 2012. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. 3rd Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

All other readings to be posted on Blackboard.

## Course Assignments and Grading

Grades will be composed of the following:

- 10% Attendance and participation
- 15% Quizzes
- 20% Midterm Exam
- 10% Peer Review of Op-Ed Draft
- 20% Final Op-Ed
- 25% Final Exam

## Quizzes

Short quizzes will be used at the start of randomly selected classes to incentivize active reading. The quizzes consist of multiple choice, content-based questions. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Absence on the day of the quiz will count as a zero, unless it is excused.

## Assignments

### Peer Review Op-Ed

You will provide written comments on a draft of a randomly selected classmate's op-ed.

### Op-Ed

You will write an op-ed on a policy chosen from a defined list. For full credit, you must submit your op-ed to a media outlet, turning in an email of the submission and the response from the media outlet.

## Attendance and Participation Policy

A focus of this class will be learning from your peers through discussion. As a result, attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class. You may miss up to 3 classes. Beyond those 3 classes, every unexcused absence deducts 2 points from your final grade.

You are also required to come to class on time. If you cannot arrive on time owing to extenuating circumstances, you must let me know in advance. If you are not present at the beginning of class (within the first 5 minutes), you will be marked absent. Late arrival after the first 5 minutes is considered an absence.

You are expected to actively contribute to the discussion, both in small groups and as a whole. A component of participation is respect for your peers. Laptops are permitted for note taking. However, checking email, text messages, social media, or unrelated websites in class is unprofessional, will count against your participation grade, and may result in you being asked to leave lecture.

## Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam. The midterm will be held on March 25th and the final will be held on May 22nd. Exams are closed book and closed notes. Makeup exams will not be given, unless approved *before* the exam.

## Disabilities Accommodation

It is college policy to provide accommodations and academic adjustments for students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class is requested to speak directly to Student Disability Services located in Newman Vertical Campus, Room 2-271 as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

## Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to work together to understand and synthesize the readings and materials. However, Baruch College's policy on academic honesty will be enforced. Any plagiarizing or cheating will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

## Important Dates

- Monday, January 28th - First POL 2353 class
- Thursday, January 31st - Last day to add a course

- Monday, February 18th - Presidents' Day, no class
- Monday, March 13th - Midterm exam
- Monday, April 1st - Last day to withdraw with a 'W'
- Monday April 15th - Submit op-ed draft for peer review
- Monday, April 22nd - Spring Recess, no class
- Wednesday, April 24th - Spring Recess, no class
- Wednesday, May 1st - Submit comments on peer's op-ed
- Wednesday, May 15th - Last POL 2353 class, op-ed due
- Wednesday, May 22nd - Final exam

## Course Calendar

Dates and readings are subject to change with at least one week's notice. Readings for Mondays will average 50 pages. Readings for Wednesdays will average 35 pages.

### Module 1. The Mechanics of Policy

- Monday, January 28th - Introduction
  - No required readings
- Wednesday, January 30th - Government Institutions and Policy Actors
  - Kraft, M.E. and Furlong, S.R., 2012. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. CQ Press., Chapter 2, pp. 30-61.
- Monday, February 4th - Market and the Polis
  - Stone, Chapter 1, pp. 19-36.
  - Friedman, M., 1982. *Capitalism and Freedom*. University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-36.

### Module 2. Goals to Pursue

- Wednesday, February 6th - *Canceled*
- Monday, February 11th - Equity
  - Stone, Chapter 2, pp. 39-62.
- Wednesday, February 13th - Efficiency
  - Stone, Chapter 3, pp. 63-84.
- Wednesday, February 20th - Welfare
  - Stone Chapter 4, pp. 85-106.
  - Gladwell, M., 2005. The Moral-Hazard Myth. *The New Yorker*, 29, pp. 44-49.
- Monday, February 25th - Liberty and Security
  - Stone, Chapter 5 and 6, pp. 107-153.

### Module 3. Problem Definition

- Wednesday, February 27th - Symbols
  - Stone, Chapter 7, pp. 157-182.
- Monday, March 4th - *Canceled, Snow Day*
- Wednesday, March 6th - Numbers
  - Stone, Chapter 8, pp. 183-205.
- Monday, March 11th - How to Write An Op-Ed
  - Stephens, Bret, 2017. “Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers”. *The New York Times*.
- Wednesday, March 13th - Midterm
- Monday, March 18th - Causes
  - Stone, Chapter 9, pp. 206-228.
- Wednesday, March 20th - Interests
  - Stone, Chapter 10, pp. 229-247.
  - Madison, James, 1787. *Federalist No. 10*.
  - Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. pp. 5-22, 33-52.
- Monday, March 25th - Decisions
  - Stone, Chapter 11, pp. 248-268.

#### Module 4. Solutions

- Wednesday, March 27th - Incentives
  - Stone, Chapter 12, pp. 271-288.
- Monday, April 1st - Rules
  - Stone, Chapter 13, pp. 289-310.
- Wednesday, April 3rd - Facts I
  - Stone, Chapter 14, pp. 311-330.
- Monday, April 8th - Facts 2
  - Bartels, Larry M, 2005. “Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind” *Perspectives on Politics*. pp. 15-31.
- Wednesday, April 10th - Rights & The Courts
  - Stone, Chapter 15, pp. 331-353.
  - Talbot, M., 2010. A Risky Proposal: Is it Too Soon to Petition the Supreme Court on Gay Marriage?. *The New Yorker*, 18(1), p.2010
- Monday, April 15th - Powers and Federalism
  - Stone, Chapter 16, pp. 354-378.
  - Peterson, Paul E, 1981. “The Interests of the Limited City”. pp. 1-10.

#### Module 5. The Politics of Policy

- Wednesday, April 17th - Agenda Setting
  - Kingdon, John, Chapter 4-5, pp. 71-115.
- Monday, April 29th - Agenda Setting II
  - Kingdon, Chapter 6-7, pp. 116-164.
  - Bachrach, Peter and Morton S. Baratz, 1962. Two Faces of Power. *American Political Science Review* 56(3), pp. 947-952.
- Wednesday, May 1st - Policy Windows and Punctuated Equilibria
  - Kingdon, Chapter 8-9, Epilogue, pp. 165-208, 231-248.
- Monday, May 6th - Policy Sustainability, Path Dependence, and Policy Feedback
  - Galvin, Daniel J. and Thurston, Chloe N. Forthcoming, 2019. “The Limits of Policy Feedback as a Party-Building Tool,” with Chloe N. Thurston. In *Unsettled Time: American Political Development and the Trump Presidency*. Philip Rocco and Zachary Callen, eds. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Wednesday, May 8th - Big Challenges of Public Policy - Climate Change and Collective Action
  - Binder, S.A., 2006. Can Congress Legislate for the Future. In John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress, New York University, Research Brief (No. 3).
  - Hardin, G., 1968. The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162(3859), pp. 1243-1248.
- Monday, May 13th - Conclusion: Policy Analysis & Policy Argument
  - Stone, Conclusion, pp. 379-385.
  - *Op-Ed Due, Wednesday, May 15th, 11:59 pm*
- Wednesday, May 22nd - Final Exam, 3:30-5:30 pm