

**Professor Keiser****Winter 2001**

**Political Science 201**  
**Introduction to the Analysis of Public Policy**

**Course Goals:** Why are certain policy ideas that seem to have broad support not passed into law? If such policy ideas finally do become law, what explains the timing? What is the role of rational planning and technical knowledge in policy making? What can we systematically posit about the role of political culture, or political institutions, in policy making? Do corporate interests make a mockery of democratic policy processes? Why are certain policies magnets for contention and political struggle and others draw little attention? This course presents theoretical explanations for public policy outcomes in the United States that will enable students to offer systematic answers to these questions. As well, this course also will focus on the politics and policy making of the Clinton Health Care Plan that was not passed into law. Some of the questions students will be able to answer include the following:

- Why did President Clinton promote managed competition, an idea that was on the periphery of health care discussions prior to 1992?
- Why did health care become such a prominent issue in the early 1990s and why has it disappeared? What does its sudden prominence reveal about the public policy agenda and the logic of congressional action?
- Why do we not have universal health care in the US when so many other highly industrialized nations do? What makes doctors and other opponents of a comprehensive health care system so powerful in this country?

The listed prerequisite for this course is completion of Political Science 122 or sophomore standing. Sophomores who have not completed the introductory level American politics course are urged to speak with the instructor early in the term for advice on background materials necessary for this course.

**Course Materials:** The four books for the course are available at the bookstore and on closed reserve at Gould Library. All other readings are in a course reader at the reserve desk of Gould Library.

**Student Evaluation:** There are three mandatory written homework assignments and a few optional homework assignments (20%). Class participation (and thus attendance) is also an important component of student evaluation, particularly in the final two weeks (20%). There will be two take home examinations during the course (30% each). Due to the large enrollment in this class, there will be no required research paper. Students with specific paper topic ideas that will enable application and/or evaluation of the policy process models in this course should submit a one page prospectus of the topic and one page bibliography by midterm for consideration by the instructor. If approved, that student will be exempted from the health care policy segment of the course and will write a research paper of no less than 15 pages. The decision of the instructor on the suitability of a topic and the preparedness of the student will be final.

Grade standards:

A= excellent quality work, showing unusual insight into the topic through thinking that goes beyond the material as presented.

B= good quality work, showing complete comprehension of all materials and ideas presented, not merely in their constituent parts but in a holistic manner. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are flawless.

C= fair quality work, an ability to regurgitate some important aspects of some materials covered in the course but unfamiliarity with other equally important parts.

D= poor quality work, little demonstration of understanding of the material as evidenced by inaccurate and confused discussions of the subject and an incomplete approach.

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## Collective Action Theory

1/3: "Vote for Me," Ventnor Pool

1/5: Wright, *Interest Groups and Congress*, ch. 2; T. M. Moe, *The Organization of Interests*, ch. 2.

1/8: Ripley and G. Franklin, *Congress, the Bureaucracy and Public Policy*, chs. 1 and 6; J. Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, ch. 16.

**Questions for Discussion (Optional Written Assignment):** Explain the linkage between the first and second sets of readings. [1 page]

1/10: Barlett and J. Steele, "Corporate Welfare," *Time*, 11/9/98.

**Assignment Due 10 am:** What explanation would Ripley and Franklin and Wilson each offer? [1 page]

### Interest Group Theory/Business Bias

1/12: No Reading (Wow!). "Vote for Me," Texas Legislature/Brad

1/15: Wright, *Interest Groups and Congress*, ch. 6.

You should be familiar with iron triangles and subgovernments from your introductory class; if necessary, please look back at your course textbooks or refresh your memory by looking at a current textbook.

**Questions for Discussion (Optional Written Assignment):** Wright dismisses the analytical utility of iron triangles far too quickly. Read this chapter and reflect on the earlier theoretical typologies of public policy. 1. What *kinds of policy* and *political circumstances* create fertile ground for iron triangles to emerge? 2. Some scholars have used the label "capture theory" as a synonym for iron triangle policy making. Who is capturing whom? 3. What is the relationship between iron triangle policy making and regulatory policy (described by Ripley and Franklin)?

1/17: Lindblom, *Politics and Markets*, chs. 13-17.

**Assignment Due 10 am:** What explanations would be offered by Lindblom and Wright (discuss separately) for corporate welfare policy? [1-2 pages]

1/19: Pentagon Policy Making; No Reading (Again, wow!)

### New Institutional Theory

1/22: Immergut, "Institutions, Veto Points, and Policy Results."

Steinmo, "It's the Institutions, Stupid! Why the United States Can't Pass Comprehensive Health Care Reform."

Immergut's independent variable is institutions, specifically the different institutional arrangements (which create differing availability of veto points, and thus different policy results) of states.

**Questions for Discussion (Optional Written Assignment):** 1. Think of a synonymous word or phrase for institutional arrangements so that you can answer the question, "What does that mean?" 2. What is the independent variable of the theoretical perspective that she is arguing against? And, process trace (i.e., tell the causal story) how this alternative independent variable would/might affect health policy outcomes in the US.

1/24: We will have class but no reading (work on exam!). { Road Hogs }

**First Exam Due 1/26 at start of class**

1/26: No Reading: Eileen Claussen Convocation, 2/12/99.

### **Agenda Setting and the Garbage Can Theory**

1/29: Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, 2nd ed., chs. 1-3.

1/31: Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, chs. 4-5.

2/2: Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, chs. 6-10.

2/7: Evaluation of Kingdon's model, perhaps via thoughtful quiz.

2/9: Page and R. Shapiro, "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy," *APSR* (March 1983); R. Caves, *Land Use Planning: The Ballot Box Revolution*, ch. 7.

**Assignment Due 10 am:** Find another instance of the use of the initiative/referendum process as a policy making tool (not in Caves' book) and explain which interests are in conflict and what the outcome was? [1-2 pages]

2/12: Lipsky, "Protest as a Political Resource," *APSR* 62 (1968); H. Haines, *Black Radicals and the Civil Rights Mainstream*, Intro, ch. 1, 4.

**Questions for Discussion (Optional Written Assignment):** Why might referenda losses and protest demonstrations be relevant theoretically for solving collective action problems?

### **Policy as Art, not Science/Policies of Values, not Rationality**

2/14: Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, chs. 1-5.

2/16: Stone, *Policy Paradox*, chs. 6-10.

2/19: Stone, *Policy Paradox*, chs. 11-Conclusion.

2/21: TBA (Myron?)

<b>Second Exam Due 2/23 at start of class</b>
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2/23: TBA

### **Thick Description: Health Care Policy in the Clinton Administration**

**Questions for Discussion (Optional Written Assignment):** For each class session on this topic we will proceed at two levels. We will discuss the substance of the story and process trace the policy making process **and** we will try to *apply and evaluate* the theories presented in the course on this empirical case study. Class participation grade will be weighted heavily toward your ability to demonstrate oral or written proficiency at this second level.

2/26: Hacker, *The Road To Nowhere: The Genesis of President Clinton's Plan for Health Security*, chs. Intro.-3.

2/28: Hacker, *The Road To Nowhere*, chs. 4-Conclusion.

3/2: Skocpol, *Boomerang: Health Care Reform and the Turn Against Government*, Preface, Intro., chs. 1-2.

3/5: Skocpol, *Boomerang*, chs. 3-4.

3/7: Skocpol, *Boomerang*, chs. 5-End.

3/9: Review