Grinnell College　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Bill Ferguson
PST/ECN/POL 220　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　HSSC S 3364
Fall 2020　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　X3132
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Office Hours: MW 10-11; Tu Th 2-3 and by appointment

Syllabus: Foundations of Policy Analysis

A good part of social organization—of what we call society—consists of institutional arrangements to overcome these divergences between perceived individual interest and some larger collective bargain.—Thomas Schelling (2005 Nobel Prize in Economics)

What is missing from the policy analyst's tool kit – and from the set of accepted, well-developed theories of human organization – is an adequately specified theory of collective action whereby a group of principals can organize themselves voluntarily to retain the residuals of their own effort.—Elinor Ostrom (2009 Nobel Prize in Economics)

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens.—Adam Smith

Humans are social creatures—paraphrase of Aristotle

The most intensive dissemination of symbols commonly attends the enactment of legislation which is most meaningless in its effects on resource allocation.—Murray Edelman

Broadly speaking, a policy is the outcome of a decision-making process of some agency, public or private (government, corporation, club, etc.). Policies exist as plans and courses of action, or sometimes deliberate inaction. Policies are intended to influence future decisions and activity of individuals, groups, and organizations. Public policy, the main focus of this course, concerns decisions made by governments and related agencies. A need for policy at any level arises when individuals or groups, pursuing their own interests or inclinations, are *expected to* led to an outcome that is thought to be harmful to some (often larger) group or entity. Equivalently, a need for policy arises whenever a divergence between individual and collective interests arises, where the definitions of "interests" and "collective" depend on the context. In this course, we will call such a divergences *collective-action problems*. A mere "need" for policy arising from some perceived collective-action problem does not, however, guarantee any particular policy outcome or any particular degree of success or failure. To understand the impacts of policy, we must examine the policy process—how policy decisions come about—and we must also conduct policy analysis. We must analyze possible outcomes, underlying tradeoffs, and reasons for the success or failure of previous policies.

This course will open by discussing the meaning of policy and its relationship to politics and governance. We will then address the core rationale for policy based on the concepts of market or group failure and more generally on problems of collective action. We will use simple game theory (a way of conceptualizing strategic interactions) to analyze key relationships and tradeoffs. We will proceed to examine the policy-making process, with some background on power and institutions. Next, we will discuss how power, position, interests, coalitions, information, and language, can influence policymaking. We will then turn to policy analysis. We

will consider policy design, policy instruments (or inducements), policy implementation, and policy feedback (or assessment). We will then address formal policy analysis in the sense of comparing tradeoffs among feasible policy alternatives as remedies for specific problems. During the last section of the course, students will write and present policy projects on a policy area of their choosing.

READINGS

To Purchase (required; ordered at bookstore and available from Amazon and other online sources**):**
- Cairney, Paul, *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues*, 2nd Edition, New York: Macmillan, Red Globe Press, 2020 (**must be the 2nd edition!!!)**
- Bardach, Eugene, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*, Fourth Edition, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2012.

On E-Reserve (ER); some adjustments will be made as the semester progresses.
- Baumgartner, Frank and Jones, Bryan. Agendas and Instability in American Politics, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, Chapter 4, "The Construction and Collapse of a Policy Monopoly, and Chapter 5, "Two Models of Issue Expansion."
- Boorstin, Daniel, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo Events in America*, 1961, selected pages.
- Lindblom, Charles, "Strategy in Problem Solving, in *The Intelligence of Democracy,* 1965.
- Mansfield, Edwin and Gary Yohe, *Intermediate Microeconomics*, chapters on game theory.
- Mankiw, Gregory N., *Introduction to Economics*, chapters 10 and 11.

On P-Web, under Documents (PW); some adjustments will be made as the semester progresses.

- Dery, David, "Agenda Setting and Problem Definition," *Journal of Policy Studies*, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/014428700114008
- Edelman, Murray, "Symbols and Political Quiescence." *The American Political Science Review*, 1963, 54 (3), 695-704.
  https://www.jstor.org/stable/1953947?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Ferguson, William D., *Collective Action and Exchange: A Game-Theoretic Approach to Contemporary Political Economy*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013, Chapter 12, "Policy and Political Economy," and selected pages.
  https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/grinnell-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1210892
- Lipsky, Michael, (1980) *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*, selected pages. https://muse.jhu.edu/book/15025/
- Matland, Richard E. "Synthesizing the Implementation Literature: The Ambiguity-Conflict Model of Policy Implementation," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol 5 (1995), No. 2, 145-174. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1181674?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Orwell, George, "Politics and the English Language," 1946.
  Weible, Christopher, "Expert-Based Information and Policy Subsystems: A Review and Synthesis, *Policy Studies Journal*, 36 (4) 2008.
  https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2008.00287.x

COURSE POLICIES

Class Meetings:

This class will be mostly synchronous. We have scheduled time M-F 8 to 9:50, but I plan to conduct class in four 85-minute segments Monday through Thursday. Class will start at 8:20 a.m. and go to 9:45. All classes will be recorded for those who, due to timing differences, cannot make it. We can discuss this individually.

Inclusivity and Accommodations:
At Grinnell, we strive to create fully inclusive classes. The college offers reasonable accommodations for students who observe religious holy days. Please contact me in advance to discuss a specific instances that apply to you. I welcome individual students to contact me about distinctive learning needs. Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. I encourage students with documented disabilities (including chronic illness, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities) to discuss appropriate accommodations with me **early** in the term. I recommend seeing me during my online office hours or by appointment. You may also have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Disability Resources (x3089).

Grading:

There will be two take-home mid-terms, a policy paper, and a take-home final. The mid-terms and the paper will each count as 2/3 of the final, which will count the same as the paper. All of these jointly will constitute about 70% of the grade. In addition, students will give periodic oral presentations, individually or in groups. There will be four problem sets, all early in the term. Oral presentations, class participation, *including attendance*, and problem sets will jointly count for approximately 30% of the grade.

Late work: Work turned in late usually receives some grade deduction.

Attendance: I am hoping to achieve maximum online attendance, but I realize that timing and/or internet issues may interfere for some students. Those who miss class will need to watch the recording, preferably on the same day and answer and email some discussion questions for that day (in lieu of class participation). We may also need to have a few private or small group meetings.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted for a grade must be your own unless otherwise stated (group work for group projects is fine; proper citation is fine). Feel free to ask me questions. Suspected acts of dishonesty will be brought before the Committee on Academic Standing. If an act is reported to CAS, the instructor has no participation from that point onward and is prohibited from discussing the case with anyone.

COURSE OUTLINE (may be subject to modification)

I.   Policy and Governance

1. The Concept of Policy; Aug. 31
    - Cairney, Chapter 1 (read 1-11, 18-21; skim 11bottom-18top)
    - Handout 1: Definitions of Policy (PW)
    - Cairney, Chapter 2, pp. 22-28

2. Policy cycles and What government does; official and unofficial actors Sept. 1-2
    - Cairney, Chapter 2, pp. 32-40
    - Kettl, D. "What government does—and how it does it" (ER)
    - Birkland, Chapter 4 (pp. 92-97, 106-111, 121-123) ER
    - Cairney, pp. 70-73
    - Edmund Burke, "Speech to the Electors of Bristol," (1774) PW
    - Woodrow Wilson, "Congressional Government" (1885) PW
    - Ian Rowlands, "Interests and ozone layer depletion" ER

II. Market Failure, Collective Action, and the Rationale for Policy (Sept. 3 - Sept 10)

1. Externalities, Public Goods, and Common Resources
    - Mankiw, chapters 10 and 11 ER
    - Ferguson pp. 23-31 ER
    - Problem Set 1 due Friday, Sept. 4

2. Elementary Game Theory and Modeling Collective Action Problems
    - Cairney, pp. 132-136
    - Mansfield and Yohe pp. 441-455; 473-477 ER
    - Handout 2: Problems of Collective Action PW
    - Problem set 2 due Tuesday, Sept. 8

3. Other Types of Market Failure; Other Collective-Action Problems
    - Handouts 3 and 4: PW
    ** Problem Set 3 due Sept. 11
    ** Problem set 4 due Sept. 14

III. Power, Institutions, and Policy (Sept. 14-16)

1. Power:
    - Cairney, Ch 3
    - Ferguson, pp. 69-73

2. Institutions:
    - Cairney, Ch 5
    - Handout 6

3. Bounded Rationality
    - Cairney, Chapter 4, 55-61
    - Handout 7 on substantive and bounded rationality

****FIRST TAKE-HOME EXAM, DUE FRIDAY, Sept. 18****

 Rationality, Incrementalism, Agents, Structures, and Policy Change (Sept. 21-22)

1. Rationality and Incrementalism,
    - Cairney, Chapter 4 , 61 - 74
    - Charles Lindblom "Strategy in Problem Solving," ER

2. Structures and Agents,
    - Cairney, Chapter 6

IV. Coalitions and Dynamic Policy Processes (Sept. 23-28)

1. The Policy Process, Coalitions, and Advocacy:
    - Cairney, Chapter 10

2. The Punctuated Equilibrium Approach
    - Cairney, Chapter 9
    - Baumgartner and Jones ER
    - Ferguson, Chapter 12, selected pages ER

**** Second Take-home Exam due Tuesday, Sept. 29***

V. Background for Policy Analysis: Language, Policy Design, Implementation, Feedback (Sept. 30- Oct 5)

1. Language, Symbols, and Public Relations:
    - Orwell, "Politics and the English Language"
    - Boorstin, "Images and Pseudo Events"
    - Edelman, "Symbols and Political Quiescence"
    - Stone, selected pages

2. Policy Design and Enactment
    - Birkland, chapter 8

3. Influence, Implementation, and Feedback
    - Michael Lipsky, "Street-Level Bureaucracy" ER
    - Mattland, "Synthesizing the Implementation Literature" PW
    - Stone, selected pages

VI. Policy Analysis ()ct 5-7)
    - Bardach, Part I
    - Bardach, pp. 79-89

VII.   Student Projects (Oct. 8-15)
Use Bardach as a reference.
Policy Paper due Thursday, Oct. 15
***** TAKEHOME FINAL Exam due Tuesday, Oct. 20 *****