

**POLS BC 3327y Content of American Politics**  
**Colloquium on American Public Policymaking, Institutions, Processes & Actors**  
**Tues. 9-10:50 AM, 421 Lehman Hall**  
**Spring 2004**

**Judith Russell**  
**(212) 854-4518**  
**email:[jr323@columbia.edu](mailto:jr323@columbia.edu)**

**Office Hours:**  
**Tues 11-12(403 Lehman**  
**Wed 11-12 (729 IAB)**

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This colloquium is designed to give students an organized opportunity to examine the institutions, processes and actors that produce American domestic public policy. The emphasis is on how public policies are formulated and implemented by elected officials, bureaucrats, and interest groups. We look at how these actors shape government policies generally, given available tactics and goals, and in designated policy areas. As they affect public policy, we study the political institutions of the executive and legislative branches, bureaucratic imperatives, budgeting, political decision-making, theories and models of rationality and choice, agenda setting, political innovation, interest group activity and the role of judicial decisions. Case studies will investigate key policy areas in the United States—economic and employment policy, the environment, energy—and a controversial one—eugenics.

Our goal is to finish the semester with a respectable understanding of some theoretical frameworks for understanding public policy as well as the historical, political, economic, and real world context in which policy decisions are made. While our focus is on government policy making, policy cannot be understood without serious analysis of the economic assumptions that underpin American government and the way we do business, of the changes in the private sector that have had direct impact on governments and economies, and of the global political, economic and business environments which confront American government today.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Informed attendance at all sessions. Each week assigned readings must be read before our class meeting. Do not come to class unprepared. Class starts at 9:00 AM, not 9:10. Do not arrive late. This lively and productive colloquium requires a high level of commitment by its participants. Attendance is calculated as part of your grade. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet that circulates and arriving on time to sign it. More than three absences may cost you the right to complete the course.

Informed participation is expected. Classes will be organized by and around each week's readings and student presentations related to them. This will entail two 15/20-minute presentations by each student during the semester. **In addition, students who are not presenting are to submit hand written or typed reading notes on each week's assigned reading.** These may be informal or schematic impressions of the assigned material. The function of this exercise is not to determine the quality of your interpretation, but to assure that materials have been read before class.

Written work will take the form of a **20-25 page analytical research paper.** The paper may be a critical analysis of some aspect of public policy or related issues we are studying. It may be a case study highlighting a policy area from the governmental perspective or that of the private sector; it may be concerned with how specific policy issues affect ordinary citizens or communities; it may be a policy proposal; it may take another form we agree on together. **A two page, typed, proposal of the research paper, with bibliography, must be submitted to me by February 10,** although you may hand your proposal in before this date. Each student is responsible for scheduling at least one consultation with me before submitting a paper proposal and I am available for many more. The paper is due in class on **April 27**, unless you would like to hand it in early, no exceptions! Be aware that any assigned work is due no later than the dates designated. If you hand in any assigned work late, you will receive a **two point grade penalty** for that assignment for each day it is late.

## READINGS

All readings are on reserve at the Barnard Reserve Room. Those readings indicated (\*) are available for purchase at the Columbia University Bookstore.

## BOOKS FOR PURCHASE

\*Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999)

\*Timothy Conlan, From New Federalism to Devolution: Twenty-Five Years of Intergovernmental Reform (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1998)

\*Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (New York: Beacon Press; Reprint edition, 1992)

\*John W. Kingdon, Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1995)

\*Michael E. Kraft, Environmental Policy and Politics, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: Longman, 2004)

Nelson Polsby, Political Innovation in America: The Politics of Policy Initiation, New Haven: Yale University Press, Reserve Only—out of print, but may be available

\*Judith Russell, Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty. ( New York: Columbia University Press, 2003)

\*Harold Seidman, Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998),

\*Allen Schick, with the assistance of Felix LoStracco, The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process, revised ed., (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2000)

\*George E. Shambaugh IV and Paul J. Weinstein Jr., The Art of Policy Making: Tools Techniques and Processes in the Modern Executive Branch, (New York: Longman, 2003)

\*Deborah Stone, Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making, revised ed., (New York: Norton, 2002)

\*Ron Suskind, The Price of Loyalty. George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004)

\*Aaron Wildavsky and Naomi Caiden, The New Politics of the Budgetary Process, Fifth Edition, (New York: Pearson Longman, 2003)

## ARTICLES ON RESERVE

James Q. Wilson, "New Politics, New Elites, Old Publics," in The New Politics of Public Policy, ed. Marc K. Landy and Martin A. Levin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), ch. 10.

Hugh Heclo, "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment," in The New American Political System, ed. Anthony King (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), ch. 3.

Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," Public Administration Review, Vol. 19 (1959), 79-88.

Charles Lindblom, "Still Muddling, Not Yet Through," Public Administration Review, Vol. 39, (1979), 517-526.

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," Chapter VIII in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press)

## TOPICS AND READINGS

January 20  **Policymaking in the United States.**

Introduction: Description of the course and objectives.

January 27  **What is the Policy Process in the US?**

How do we approach public policy? How the policy field has developed? What is its inherent relationship to politics? What are prominent theories of the policy processes? Particularly important is the United States is the business relationship to government.

Charles Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," Public Administration Review, Vol. 19 (1959), 79-88.

Charles Lindblom, "Still Muddling, Not Yet Through," Public Administration Review, Vol. 39, (1979), 517-526.

George E. Shambaugh IV and Paul J. Weinstein Jr., The Art of Policy Making: Tools Techniques and Processes in the Modern Executive Branch, New York: Longman, 2003

Deborah Stone, Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making, revised ed., New York: Norton, 2002. Chapters 1-5.

February 3 **The Role of Public Servants and Policy Advisors**

Problems of Governability. Theories of Bureaucracy and modes of governance. Modes of managing capitalism and its input into governance. Administrative reform and accountability. Minorities in bureaucracy. Corruption, impropriety and wrongdoing (public sector ethics. Administrative trade offs (efficiency and equity. )

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," Chapter VIII in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press)

Harold Seidman, Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

February 10 **How the Budget Process Functions**  
**Research proposals due today**

Allen Schick, with the assistance of Felix LoStracco, The Federal Budget: Politics, Policy, Process, revised ed., Washington, DC: Brookings, 2000.

Aaron Wildavsky and Naomi Caiden, The New Politics of the Budgetary Process, Fifth Edition, New York: Pearson Longman. 2003.

February 17 **How do Issues and Problems Become Public Policy?**

Public problems and public agendas. Problem formation and definition. Issue attention, public attention and policy demands. Policy research and history and policy demands. Accidents. Non decision making.

John W. Kingdon, Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

Nelson Polsby, Political Innovation in America: The Politics of Policy Initiation, New Haven: Yale University Press, Reserve Only—out of print, but may be available

February 24 **Decision-making**

Rationality and bounded rationality (garbage cans). Public choice. Incremental, institutional approaches, advocacy coalitions.

Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999.

Deborah Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making, revised ed., new York: Norton, 2002. Chs 7. 10,11-14.

Hugh Heclo, "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment," in The New American Political System, ed. Anthony King (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), ch. 3.

March 2 **Governmental Responsibility for Public Policy**

Timothy Conlan, From New Federalism to Devolution: Twenty-Five Years of Intergovernmental Reform (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1998), chs. 1,7,8,11,12,14.

March 9, 23 **Economic Policymaking in Theory and Practice**

Ron Suskind, The Price of Loyalty. George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.

“It’s (Not) the Economy, Stupid” by Charles R. Morris, *The Atlantic online*, July, 1993

“He Was Slick Thank God,” by James Fallows, *The Atlantic online*, February , 2001.

“The Education of David Stockman,” by William Greider, *The Atlantic online*, February, 1981

Judith Russell. Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003) Chapter 2.

March 16 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

March 30 **Employment Policy**

Judith Russell. Economics, Bureaucracy and Race: How Keynesians Misguided the War on Poverty. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Chs.1, 3-6)

April 6 **The Politics of Energy**

TBA

Congressional documents, hearings and debate on current energy legislation on Bush administration energy agenda

April 13 **Environmental Policy: The Battle for Control of the Environment**

Michael E. Kraft, Environmental Policy and Politics, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: Longman, 2004)

April 27 Eugenics

Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (New York: Beacon Press; Reprint edition, 1992)

Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life (New York, The Free Press, 1994)

<http://www.genesage.com/professinals/geneletter/archives/briefhistory.html> and other GeneLetter sites.

TBA

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

