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PSC 468.01: Public Policy Cycle

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Political Science 468
The Public Policy Cycle
Summer 2006

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Course Description

Using forest management policy as the focus of analysis, this course provides an opportunity for students to explore the entire public policy cycle. This cycle includes how a problem reaches the public agenda, how alternative solutions are developed, how one or more of these alternatives is enacted into law, how the law is implemented by a specific executive agency, and how the policy is subsequently evaluated for possible modifications.

By focusing narrowly on forest management policy, this course allows students to witness the twists and turns of politics as policy is formulated by the legislative branch, implemented by the executive branch, and reviewed by the judicial branch.

Students needing a General Education writing course may register for PSC 300, a one-credit co-requisite. Political Science majors needing to satisfy the upper division writing expectation of their major may register for PSC 400, also a one credit co-requisite.

Course Objectives

1. To develop a broad understanding of the cyclical process by which policy is made, implemented, and changed.
2. To develop a basic understanding of one key area of public policy, i.e., forest management policy.
3. To improve our writing, analytical, and conceptual skills.

Required Texts

None. We will use a packet of readings.

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete all reading assignments, be prepared to discuss them in class (20 points), complete four writing assignments (20 points each), and resubmit the writing assignments as a polished term paper (100 points).

A = 186 – 200
B- = 160-165

A- = 180-185
C+ = 154-159

B+ = 174-179
C = 146-153

B = 166-173
C- = 140-145

Graduate students are required to write a 10-12 page analysis on one of the topics identified in the hand-out entitled "Controversies Relating to Forest Management." Review the issues at the heart of the controversy and offer your own perspective.

Reading and Writing Assignments

Tues.-Wed., June 27-28 Conceptual Analysis, Public Policy and the Policy Cycle

- 1) Lester and Stewart, "The Nature of Public Policy," Public Policy, pp. 2-9.
- 2) Section 6, National Forest Management Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-588), U.S. Statutes at Large, v. 90, 1976.
- 3) Key Provisions of the NFMA.
- 4) Timeline of Events Relating to the NFMA.

Consider: 1) What do we mean by policy? 2) What basic types of policy are there? 3) Which type of policy does forest management policy represent? 4) What are the basic stages in the policy cycle? 5) In what sense is it really a cycle? 6) What are the key provisions of the NFMA of 1976?

****Introduction to term paper due on Monday****

Thursday, June 29 Policy Background: The Tragedy of the Commons

1. Tompkins, Historical Overview of Forest Management.
2. Barnard DeVoto, "The Sturdy Corporate Homesteader," excerpt from Harper's, May 1953.
3. Samuel Trask Dana, "Oregon Land Frauds," excerpt from Forest and Range Policy, 1956.
4. Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," excerpt reprinted in Hardin and Baden, Managing the Commons, Freeman, 1977.
5. "Thieves Stealing Millions of Dollars in Trees," Missoulian, May 8, 2003
6. Competing Values Handout

Consider: 1) What key themes emerge from the Historical Overview? 2) What is the significance of the repeated references to fraud? 3) What does Hardin mean by "commons"? 4) What is the "tragedy of the commons"? 5) What does this tell us about the role of government in a democracy? 6) Can government resolve social values? If so, how?

Monday, July 3 The Agenda-Setting Stage **Introduction due today**

1. John Kingdon, "How Does an Idea's Time Come?" Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies (Little, Brown, 1984), 1-19.
2. Lester and Stewart, "Agenda Setting," Public Policy (Wadsworth, 2000), 66-76.

Consider: 1) Conceptually speaking, what is an agenda and what types of agendas are there? 2) What specific factors or conditions determine whether an issue reaches one or more of these agendas? 3) Which problems/issues should government address, and which not?

Tuesday, July 4 **Holiday**

Wednesday, July 5

Agenda Setting and the NFMA

1. Charles Wilkinson, "The National Forest Management Act: The Twenty Years Behind, the Twenty Years Ahead," University of Colorado Law Review 68 (1997): 659-669.
2. Select Committee of the University of Montana, Report on the Bitterroot National Forest, 1970, pp. 1-30. (The Bolle Report).
3. Testimony by Congressman Roy Taylor of North Carolina before the House Subcommittee on Forests, March 22, 1976, pp. 62-65.

Consider: 1) What specific factors or conditions explain how the issue of forest management reached the systemic and institutional agendas in the mid-1970s? 2) What do we learn from Congressman Taylor about the impacts of the Monongahela decisions? 3) What primary conclusions did the members of the Bolle Committee reach?

Thursday, July 6

The Monongahela Decisions

1. West Virginia Div. of Izaak Walton League, Inc. v. Butz (367 F. Supp. 422, 1973).
2. West Virginia Div. of Izaak Walton L. of Am., Inc. v. Butz (522 F.2d 945, 1975).

Consider: 1) How is the authority of an agency established? 2) Why did the Izaak Walton League pursue a judicial remedy rather than some other course of action to stop clear-cutting? 3) What were the specific legal arguments advanced by the plaintiffs and defendants in these cases?

****Section 1 of paper due Monday****

Monday, July 10

The Policy Formulation Stage

1. Lester and Stewart, "Policy Formulation," Public Policy, 87-96.
2. S. 2926 (The Randolph bill)
3. S. 3091 (The Humphrey bill)
4. Testimony of James Moorman, Counsel, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, on the Randolph bill.

Consider: 1) Where do policy ideas/alternatives originate? 2) Does the comprehensive-rational model or the incremental model best describe how policy is formulated? 3) What factors explain which alternative, if any, is adopted? 4) What do we learn from James Moorman about the origins of the Randolph bill? 5) In what respects did these two bills differ?

Tues.-Wed., July 11-12

Content Analysis of Congressional Testimony

1. Various testimony presented during joint hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on Environment, Soil Conservation and Forestry (Committee on Agriculture and Forestry) and the Senate Subcommittee on the Environment and Land Resources (Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs), March 15, 16, and 22, 1976.

Consider: 1) What basic arguments were made for or against passage of each of these bills? 2) Which groups seemed to be making which arguments? 3) What can the testimony tell us about why the Humphrey bill was preferred over the Randolph bill?

****Section #2 of Paper Due Monday****

Thursday, July 13

The Policy Implementation Stage

1. U.S. Government Manual 2002/2003, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.
2. USDA Forest Service Website: Meet the Forest Service.
3. Administrative Procedures Act, United States Code (USC) Title 5, Chapter 5 (5USC 533).

Consider: 1) Where do we find the Forest Service in the executive bureaucracy? How is the Forest Service organized? Is it centralized or decentralized? 2) How did the Forest Service originate, and what is its source of authority? 3) What is the purpose and/or significance of the U. S. Administrative Procedure Act of 1946?

Monday, July 17

Administrative Rules Governing Forest Planning

1. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 36, Chapter II, Part 219 (36 CFR Ch. II). (Just skim these paragraphs).
2. Section 6 of NFMA (reread from Lesson 1)
3. Major Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Consider: 1) Which passages in the law correspond with which passages in the rules? 2. What are the primary steps or requirements in the planning process? 3) How do laws such as NEPA constrain policy implementation?

Tuesday, July 18

Administrative Rules Governing Public Participation

1. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Chapter II, Part 215 (36 CFR Ch. II). (Just skim these paragraphs).

Consider: 1) How can interested parties challenge forest management decisions? 2) What does this tell us about why planning is so slow and policy implementation so difficult?

Wednesday, July 19

****No Class** (Finish tomorrow's reading assignments)**

Thursday, July 20

The Process Predicament

1. USDA Forest Service, "The Process Predicament: How Statutory, Regulatory, and Administrative Factors Affect National Forest Management," June 2002.
2. Administrative Procedures Act, Chapter 7 – Judicial Review.
3. Case Study on Lolo Forest Post-Burn Project

Consider: What are the main reasons that the planning process is so slow and policy implementation so difficult?

**** Section #3 of term paper due Monday****

Monday, July 24

The Policy Evaluation and Change Stage

Elise S. Jones and Will Callaway, "Neutral Bystander, Intrusive Micromanager, or Useful Catalyst?: The Role of Congress in Effecting Change Within the Forest Service," Policy Studies Journal, (no. 4, 1995): 337-350.

Consider: What does this article reveal about the causes or sources of policy change?

Tuesday, July 25

The Policy Evaluation and Change Stage

Elise S. Jones and Cameron P. Taylor, "Litigating Agency Change: The Impact of the Courts and Administrative Appeals Process on the Forest Service," Policy Studies Journal 23 (no. 2, 1995): 310-336.

Consider: What does this article reveal about the causes or sources of policy change?

Wednesday, July 26

****Pick up Section #3, Submit Section #4****

Thursday, July 27

**** Pick up Section #4, Submit Final Paper by Noon Monday****

Guidelines for Writing the Term Paper

Title: The Public Policy Cycle and the National Forest Management Act of 1976

Paper Outline:

Introduction
Agenda Setting
Policy Formulation
Policy Implementation
Policy Evaluation and Change
Conclusion

The Body: Each section should 1) provide a conceptual definition of the stage under analysis; 2) introduce the key analytical question that "begs" to be addressed at this stage; and 3) provide the necessary analysis to address that question.

Key Analytical Questions:

Agenda Setting: What factors **explain** why and how forest management policy reached the systemic and institutional agendas in the 1970s?

Policy Formulation: What factors **explain** why the Humphrey bill was preferred over the Randolph bill?

Policy Implementation: How was the general intent of the NFMA translated into specific rules for purposes of implementation, and what factors **explain** the difficulties faced by the Forest Service in implementing the law?

Policy Evaluation and Change: What factors **explain** how and why policy continues to change?