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PSC 495.01: Public Policy Cycle - Politics of Forest Management

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Political Science 495
The Public Policy Cycle: Politics of Forest Management
Winter Session 2004

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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 becomes defined as a political issue and is placed on the public agenda, translated into specific policy proposals, enacted into law, implemented by an executive agency, and 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 improve research and writing skills as they relate to political analysis.
2. To develop a comprehensive understanding of one key area of national policy.
3. To develop a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of policy agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy change.

Required Texts

Packet of readings available in the UC Bookstore.

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 in the form of a term paper (100).

Reading and Writing Assignments

Tuesday, January 6

Overview of the Policy Cycle and Forest Management Policy

- 1) Lester and Stewart, "The Nature of Public Policy," Public Policy, pp. 2-9.
- 2) Section 6, The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-588), U.S. Statutes At-Large, v. 90, 1976.
- 3) Historical Overview of Forest Management
- 4) Barnard DeVoto, "The Sturdy Corporate Homesteader," excerpt from Harpers, May 1953.
- 5) Samuel Trask Dana, "Oregon Land Frauds," excerpt from Forest and Range Policy, 1956.
- 6) Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," excerpt reprinted in Hardin and Baden, Managing the Commons, Freeman, 1977.

Consider: 1) What do we mean by policy? 2) What basic kinds 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 actually a cycle? 6) What are the key provisions of the NFMA? 7) What key themes emerge from the Historical Overview? 8) What is the significance of the repeated references to fraud? 9) What does Hardin mean by "commons"? 10) What is the "tragedy of the commons"? 11) What does this tell us about the role of government in society?

****The Introduction to Your Term Paper is Due Tomorrow****

Wednesday, January 7

The Agenda-Setting Stage

- 1) John Kingdon, "How Does an Idea's Time Come?" Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies, pp. 1-19.
- 2) Lester and Stewart, "Agenda Setting," Public Policy, pp. 66-79.

Consider: 1) What types of agendas are there? 2) What specific factors or conditions determine whether an issue reaches one or more of these agendas? (Bring a list of these to class)

Thursday, January 8

Agenda-Setting and the NFMA

- 1) Charles F. 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. 1-32. (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: What specific factors or conditions explain how the issue of forest management reached the public and governmental agendas in the mid-1970s? (Bring a list of these to class).

Friday, January 9

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 to act established? 2) Why did the Izaak Walton League pursue a judicial remedy rather than some other course of action? What was its political agenda and strategy? 3) What were the specific legal arguments advanced by the plaintiffs and defendants in these cases? (Bring a list of these to class).

****The first section of your paper, entitled "Agenda Setting", is due Monday****

Monday, January 12

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) Who actually drafted the Randolph bill and how? 5) In what fundamental ways do these two bills differ?

Tuesday, January 13

Content Analysis of Congressional Testimony

- 1) Testimony by Congressman Symms of Idaho before the Subcommittee on Forests of the House Committee on Agriculture, March 22, 1976.
- 2) Various testimony given 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).

What were the key argument-themes raised during testimony? (Bring these to class)

Wednesday, January 14

Content Analysis of Congressional Testimony

Analyze the congressional testimony in terms of who supported which bill and which argument-themes were made by each testifier.

Thursday, January 15 Policy Implementation

- 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 (5 USC 553).
- 4) Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 36, Chapter II, Part 219 (36 CFR Ch. II). (Skim)

Consider: 1) How is the Department of Agriculture and Forest Service organized? Is the Forest Service mainly centralized or decentralized? 2) How did the Forest Service originate and what is its source of authority to act? 3) What is the purpose and/or significance of the U.S. Administrative Procedures Act? 4) What are your thoughts on the administrative rules promulgated by the Forest Service to guide implementation of the National Forest Management Act of 1976? 5) Are the linkages between the law and the rules clearly apparent?

Friday, January 16 Forest Management Planning

- 1) Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 36, Chapter II, Part 215.
- 2) Excerpt from Cubbage et. al., Forest Resource Policy, pp. 336-340.
- 3) USDA Forest Service, "The Process Predicament: How Statutory, Regulatory, and Administrative Factors Affect National Forest Management," June 2002.

Consider: 1) What does forest management planning entail? 2) How can interested parties appeal forest management decisions? 3) What are the causes of the process predicament?

****The Second and Third Sections of your Paper are Due Tuesday****

Monday, January 19 **Martin Luther King Holiday**

Tuesday, January 20 Policy Evaluation and Change

- 1) 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 23 (no. 4, 1995): 337-350.

Consider: How does Congress continue to shape policy long after a law has been passed?

- 2) 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: How do various interest groups use the courts to shape policy long after a law has been passed? How do they use the courts to direct and control what agencies do?

Wednesday, January 21 Contemporary Issues in Forest Management Policy

Thursday, January 22 ??

Friday, January 23 Discussion of Final Draft of Paper

****Term papers due Monday morning, January 26****

The Term Paper

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

Paper Outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. Agenda Setting
- III. Policy Formulation
- IV. Policy Implementation
- V. Policy Evaluation and Change
- VI. Conclusion

The Body: Each section of the body of the paper should 1) provide a conceptual understanding of what occurs at this stage of the policy cycle; 2) introduce the key analytical question that “begs” to be addressed at this stage; and 3) provide the necessary analysis.

Key Analytical Questions:

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

Policy Formulation: What policy alternatives were proposed and what factors explain why the Humphrey bill was preferred over the Randolph bill?

Policy Implementation: How is the general intent of Congress 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?