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PSC 395.01: The Public Policy Cycle

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Political Science 395
The Public Policy Cycle
Wintersession 2003

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Hours: Just before or after class.

Course Description

Using forest management policy as the focus of analysis, this course provides an opportunity for students to explore the entire 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, 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

None. We will rely primarily on class hand-outs.

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete all reading assignments, be prepared to discuss them in class, and submit the assigned term paper. Twenty percent of the student's grade is based on class participation, and eighty percent on the term paper.

Reading and Writing Assignments

Tuesday, Jan. 7 An Overview of the Policy Cycle

- 1) Lester and Stewart, "The Nature of Public Policy," Public Policy, pp. 2-9.
- 2) Ripley and Franklin, "The Nature of Policy and Policy Making in the United States," Congress, the Bureaucracy, and Public Policy, 1-22.
- 3) The National Forest Management Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-588), U.S. Statutes At-Large, v. 90, 1976.

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?

Wednesday, Jan. 8 Stage 1: Agenda-Setting

- 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) Who sets the agenda? 3) What specific factors or conditions determine whether an issue reaches one or more of these agendas?

Thursday, Jan. 9 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: 1) What specific factors or conditions explain how the issue of forest management reached the public and governmental agendas in the mid-1970s?

Friday, Jan. 10 Agenda-Setting and The NFMA, continued

- 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?

****Writing Assignment due Monday: The Introduction and Agenda-Setting sections****

Monday, Jan. 13**Stage 2: Policy Formulation**

- 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) Does the comprehensive-rational model or the incremental model best describe how policy is formulated? 2) Who actually drafted the Randolph bill and how? 3) In what fundamental ways do these two bills differ?

Tuesday, Jan. 14**Congressional Testimony : Competing Values, Interests, and Agendas**

- 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).

Consider: 1) What were the key issues, values, interests, and/or agendas separating those who supported the Randolph bill and those who supported the Humphrey bill?

Wednesday, Jan. 15**Stage 3: 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, Section 200 (36 CFR Ch. II).

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?

Thursday, Jan. 16**Forest Management Planning**

- 1) USDA Forest Service, "The Process Predicament: How Statutory, Regulatory, and Administrative Factors Affect National Forest Management," June 2002.

Consider: 1) What is involved in forest management planning and why is the process so slow and difficult?

Friday, Jan. 17

Legislative and Judicial Oversight

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.

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: 1) How does Congress continue to shape policy long after a law has been passed? How does it seek to direct and control what agencies do? 2) 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?

****Writing assignment due Tuesday: Submit Stage 2 and Stage 3 sections of paper****

Tuesday, Jan. 21

Stage 4: Policy Evaluation and Change

Readings and assignments to be announced in class.

Wednesday, Jan. 22

Current Issues and Stakeholders

Reading and assignments to be announced in class.

Thursday, Jan. 23

Discussion of Final Draft of Paper

Friday, Jan. 24

Review of Key Themes

****Term papers due Monday morning, January 27****