The American Policy System
The History And Development Of Public Policy In The United States
PPOL 4100
Fall Quarter, 2011

Tuesday, 5:00-7:50 p.m.
Sturm Hall – Room 480

Graduate Program In Public Policy
Institute For Public Policy Studies
The University Of Denver

INSTRUCTOR

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Email is the most reliable way to contact me.

Office Hours - Mary Reed Building, Suite 107

Monday 8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.
Tuesday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday 8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.
Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Other times freely available by appointment. Appointment requests by email are strongly encouraged and will usually be responded to promptly. I am generally available for appointments during business hours except Friday mornings.

Course Background

"A denial of the past, superficially progressive and optimistic, proves on closer analysis to embody the despair of a society that cannot face the future."1

We are in the midst of an historic economic collapse. Staggering issues of enormous and long term significance face policy decision makers – a looming budget crisis possibly requiring a

1 Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism, 1979, xvii.
major restructuring of spending and taxes, the structure of the financial system, health care, the scope of and organization of economic regulation, individual liberties, the response to national security threats, and the role of the courts in determining policy issues are all hotly debated. At the same time we are facing these dramatic problems many argue that historical consensus policy solutions have proved inadequate, and need to be changed drastically. Many argue that a major political realignment may be occurring.

This course will frame the American Policy System through the lens of history with a view toward dissecting how current policy debates have been influenced by history. We will try to better understand the American Policy System as it exists today based on where it has been in the past. Even more important as you advance your career, we will try to understand what current events mean for the future. Events will be analyzed and placed in a broader context so that we all can better explain how we got where we are – and understand where the decisions we make today will take us in the future. Our focus will be on how this history has influenced today's policy debates. This course will be an exploration of the interplay between politics, history, demographics, technology, law, culture, and policy.

We will be covering the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, the Cold War, the Great Society, civil rights, Vietnam, Watergate, deregulation, "culture wars", and the role of courts in policy and their influence on politics. We will frame these events with a view toward analyzing their effect on major political coalitions and realignments and policy choices. One question we will explore is the extent to which short term political expediency interferes with policy responses to problems.

This course is not designed for students only to learn where and when events occurred. The intention is to understand the policies that precipitated these events, or the policies that were put in place to respond to some problem. We will define problems that certain policies were designed to solve and analyze whether or not the policy had the intended result. We will also attempt to go beyond the typical partisan debate surrounding public policy. The role of ideology in policy responses and whether it can help or hinder effective solutions will be the subject of attention. Students are expected to participate to a large degree in class.

We might also spend a few minutes in some class sessions discussing current issues through the historical lens we will be using. Students are expected to read major publications (for example, The Economist, Financial Times, Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, New York Times) on a regular basis and to be prepared to discuss these current topics in relation to history.

Grading And Attendance

This course will be graded on three written papers and class attendance/discussion. See pp. 9-10 for details concerning the written papers.

Papers will be graded on: 1) problem identification and articulation of solution; 2) organization, 3) quality of argument and reasoning, 4) effective analysis of counter-arguments, 5) quality and use of sources, and 6) writing, spelling, and grammar.

Weighting is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay 1</th>
<th>25% (due October 4, 2011)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>25% (due October 25, 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>40% (due November 18, 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class discussion/attendance</td>
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Absences

Students are expected to attend all classes and should notify the instructor promptly by email if they are unable to attend.

Reading Materials

Note: materials cited here which are designated with an * can be downloaded from blackboard

Required


* Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 200 (1927)

Recommended Optional Additional Reading


Stanley Kubrick dir., *Dr. Strangelove*, 1964


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**COURSE CALENDAR**

1. **INTRODUCTION (SEPTEMBER 13, 2011)**

   **Topics**

   - Introduction
   - Course Overview and Objectives
   - How to find and read court cases
   - Writing and persuasion
   - The relevance of history, culture, demographics, technology, and change
   - Never assume a steady state or progress
   - The rise of personal rights
   - Whither federalism?
   - The role of courts
   - Changing political coalitions and the forces that create and sunder them - their impact on policy and their role in shaping policy

   **Reading:**

   None

2. **SETTING THE STAGE - THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (SEPTEMBER 20, 2011)**

   **Topics**

   - The civil war and the growth of business
   - World War I
   - The cultural background
   - Technological change
   - Demographic change
   - Culture and political change
   - Immigration and nativism
• The rise of radical alternatives
• Volstead and Scopes
• The political landscape and existing coalitions

Reading

Kennedy (Freedom From Fear)
Prologue
Chapter 1, The American People on the Eve of the Great Depression,
Chapter 2, Panic

* Lochner v. New York, 198 U.S. 45 (1905)
* Buck v. Bell, 274 U.S. 200 (1927)

3. DEPRESSION AND NEW DEAL (SEPTEMBER 27, 2011)

Topics

• The Great Depression
• The New Deal and the rise of the modern regulatory state
• The New Deal and the rise of the federal government
• The radical challenge – Huey Long, Coughlin, the popular front and the left
• Why did the hard right and hard left fail in the U.S.?
• The role of labor unions
• Is the New Deal a valid current model?

Reading

Kennedy (Freedom From Fear)
Chapter 3, The Ordeal of Herbert Hoover
Chapter 4, Interregnum
Chapter 5, The Hundred Days
Chapter 6, The Ordeal of the American People
Chapter 7, Chasing the Phantom of Recovery
Chapter 8, The Rumble of Discontent
Chapter 9, A Season for Reform
Chapter 10, Strike
Chapter 11, The Ordeal of Franklin Roosevelt
Chapter 12, What the New Deal Did

4. PRE-WWII FOREIGN POLICY (OCTOBER 4, 2011) *** NOTE: 1ST ESSAY DUE ***

Topics

• The rise of fascism and totalitarianism
• Is liberal democracy viable?
• Appeasement
• Munich
• Isolationism
• Is anti-appeasement still valid in today's world?

Reading

Kennedy (Freedom From Fear)
Chapter 13, The Gathering Storm
Chapter 14, The Agony of Neutrality
Chapter 15, To the Brink

5. **WORLD WAR II AND AFTERMATH (OCTOBER 11, 2011)**

Topics

• World War II
• The end of colonialism
• Executive power
• National security
• The atomic bomb
• The Marshall Plan
• Prelude to the Cold War

Reading

Kennedy (Freedom From Fear)
Chapter 16, War in the Pacific
Chapter 17, Unready Ally, Uneasy Alliance
Chapter 18, The War of Machines
Chapter 19, The Struggle for a Second Front
Chapter 20, The Battle for Northwest Europe
Chapter 21, The Cauldron of the Home Front
Chapter 22, Endgame
Epilogue, The World the War Made


Topics

• The Long March
• The Korean War
• The Cold War and McCarthyism
• The National Security State
• The 1950’s and Suburbanization
• Civil rights - the end of Jim Crow
• The Rise of Pop Culture
Reading

Rodgers, Chapter 1, Losing the Words of the Cold War, pp. 15-40

Patterson (Grand Expectations)
Prologue, p. 3
Chapter 1, Veterans, Ethnics, Blacks, Women
Chapter 2, Unions, Liberals and the State: Stalemate
Chapter 3, Booms
Chapter 4, Grand Expectations About the World
Chapter 5, Hardening of the Cold War, 1945-1948
Chapter 6, Domestic Politics: Truman's First Term
Chapter 7, Red Scares Abroad and at Home
Chapter 8, Korea
Chapter 9, Ike
Chapter 10, World Affairs
Chapter 11, The Biggest Boom Yet
Chapter 12, Mass Consumer Culture
Chapter 13, Race
Chapter 14, A Center Holds, More or Less

7. THE 60'S (OCTOBER 25, 2011) *** NOTE: 2ND ESSAY DUE ***

Topics

• Camelot
• The Rise of the "New Keynesians"
• The best and brightest/the rise of the technocracy
• The Great Society
• Vietnam
• The Counterculture ("Something is happening but you don't know what it is Mr. Jones")
• Radical revival - SDS, Black Panthers, John Birch Society
• Did the Sixties End?
• The Supreme Court Steps In - does it ignite the culture wars?

Reading

Rodgers, Chapter 2, The Rediscovery of the Market, pp. 41-76
Rodgers, Chapter 3, The Search for Power, pp. 77-110

Patterson (Grand Expectations)
Chapter 15, The Polarized Sixties: An Overview
Chapter 16, The New Frontier at Home
Chapter 17, JFK and the World
Chapter 18, Lyndon Johnson and American Liberalism
Chapter 19, A Great Society and the Rise of Right-Consciousness
Chapter 20, Escalation in Vietnam
Chapter 21, Rights, Polarization, and Backlash, 1966-1967
Chapter 22, The Most Turbulent Year: 1968

**Topics**

- The southern strategy and the silent majority
- The cities on fire
- The end of the democratic coalition
- Thurmond, Nixon and Wallace
- Keynesianism nirvana replaced by Monetarist/deregulatory nirvana
- Watergate
- Women’s rights
- Whither civil rights?
- The Fall of Saigon/Cambodia
- The Reagan revolution
- The collapse of Communism

**Reading**

Rodgers, Chapter 4, Race and Social Memory  
Rodgers, Chapter 5, Gender and Certainty

Patterson, (Grand Expectations)  
Chapter 23, Rancor and Richard Nixon  
Chapter 25, End of an Era? Expectations Amid Watergate and Recession

Patterson (Restless Giant)  
Prologue, p. 1  
Chapter 1, the Troubled 1970s  
Chapter 2, Sex, Families, Stagflation  
Chapter 3, the Political World of the Mid-1970s  
Chapter 4, Carter, Reagan, and the Rise of the Right  
Chapter 5, Morning Again in America  
Chapter 6, America and World in the 1980s

9. **THE CULTURE WARS AND THEIR MEANING (NOVEMBER 8, 2011)**

**Topics**

- The politics of the culture wars
- Values voters
- Macomb County and Reagan Democrats - the rise of a new coalition
- Cultural self-selection – the growth of enclaves
- Post-Cold War Euphoria – the end of history?
- Triangulation – the beginning of a new coalition or a consolidation?
• Deregulation and Efficient Market Euphoria

**Reading**

Rodgers, Chapter 6, The Little Platoons of Society, pp. 180-220  
Rodgers, Chapter 7, Wrinkles in Time, pp. 221-255

Patterson (Restless Giant)  
Chapter 7, Bush 41  
Chapter 8, “Culture Wars” and “Decline” in the 1990s  
Chapter 9, Immigration, Multiculturalism, Race  
Chapter 10, Political Wars of the Early Clinton Years


**Topics**

• Demographic and technological change  
• "Compassionate Conservatism"  
• The War on terror  
• Executive power and civil liberties  
• Deregulation and efficient market theory collapse—now what?  
• "Change"  
• Is there a political realignment occurring?  
• How will the current political coalitions change and what will be the causes?  
• Are there intractable problems?  
• Are there solutions?  
• Is this true? — "We have a political system that most observers can confidently predict will be completely unable to avert the fiscal or the climate crisis. That's like a police force that can't respond to emergency calls, or a fire department unable to put out fires," - Ezra Klein.  
• If so — what do we do now?

**Reading**

Rodgers, Epilogue, pp. 256-271

Patterson (Restless Giant)  
Chapter 11, Prosperity, Partnership, Terrorism  
Chapter 12, Impeachment and Electoral Crisis, 1998-2000

**Essays/Critiques**

Essays are due on October 4, 2011, October 25, 2011, and November 18, 2011.

Papers should be double spaced pages (12 point type with one inch margins) and cite appropriate sources. Use page numbers.
Papers must include a cover sheet with only a title, date, your name and word count (so I have room to write comments). In addition to a cover page you should include a table of contents and a separate list of sources relied on. Any consistent citation method is acceptable.

The first two papers are due no later than 5 p.m. on the date indicated and should be sent by email to the instructor at the email address listed on the first page and a hard copy delivered to the instructor in class. The third paper is due on Friday, November 18, 2011 and should be delivered by email to the instructor no later than 5 p.m. on that date with a hard copy delivered to the staff at Mary Reed Building, Suite 107. Late papers will not be accepted for credit except under extreme circumstances and with the specific prior approval of the instructor.

Note On Topics 1 & 2

These are research based essays in which the research supports the positions you take. They should not be thought of as editorials in which you merely declaim about your personal opinions or beliefs. Your paper should:

• precisely define the problem you are addressing and its causes
• make a specific policy proposal
• effectively use relevant evidence and documentation
• discuss alternative solutions
• discuss costs, benefits and tradeoffs
• project outcomes
• deal with social and political factors

Topic 1 – Due October 4, 2011

Identify the most important legacy from the New Deal (domestic or foreign policy) that policy decision makers today must cope with. Explain how that New Deal policy legacy has affected a current important policy dispute and the positions and solutions being offered to deal with the issue today. Make sure you describe a specific solution to the policy issue you identify.

Limit – 1,500 words ± 10%

Topic 2 – Due October 25, 2011

Identify what is the most important historical policy legacy from the period after World War II that current policy makers today must cope with. Explain how that policy has affected a current important policy dispute and the positions and solutions being offered to deal with the policy today. Make sure you describe a specific solution to the policy issue you identify.

Limit – 1,500 words ± 10%

Topic 3 – Due November 18, 2011

Write a critique of one of the chapters of Rodgers, Age of Fracture. Your critique should either agree with or disagree with one of the main positions taken by the author and discuss the importance or significance of that position from a current policy perspective, i.e., what can we learn about a current policy issue from this chapter. You should cite some authority to support your critique. Think of this as a book review in The New York Review of Books, The Atlantic, or
similar publications, that argues that the author is either right or wrong in which you rely on some evidence as well as logic and analysis to make your point. It is critical that your critique the policy implications of the work as it relates to a specific current policy issue.

Your critique should address each of the following:

• Describe and summarize one of the author's primary points and your own conclusion about whether the author is correct or not;

• Analyze the logic and consistency of the author's argument(s) - did the author prove his case with sound logic and facts? Are there major flaws?

• Discuss evidence from your own research that supports or refutes the evidence, arguments, and conclusions of the author and bolsters your own conclusion.

• What are the broader policy implications of the chapter - how does the author's point relate to current policy issues.

• Draw a firm conclusion about the whether the authors' position is correct or not. Do you agree or disagree? Explain why using logic, argument, and evidence from your research.

• Warning: this is NOT an opinion piece. You should conduct research that supports the conclusions and arguments you reach. Make a solid coherent argument based on research that supports your agreement or disagreement with the author's conclusion or methods.

Limit – 3,500 words ± 10%