

Theories of Public Policy

Political Science 330

Winter 2008 (2nd Block)
346 MARB, 3:00-5:50, TuTh

Instructor: Sven E. Wilson

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Hours: Tu: 12:00-1:00, W: 3-4:00, and by appointment (please email)

Bonus Feature: See me on FaceBook (*warning*: really boring)

Course Objectives:

The four central aims for this course are to improve students'...

1. *understanding of normative theory*: How are different alternative ethical frameworks used to rationalize public policies?
2. *understanding of positive theory*: How do political forces (interests and institutions) determine the types of public policies that actually occur?
3. *knowledge of substantive policy issues*: What are the central philosophical and political conflicts relating to major policy issues in the world.
4. *ability to engage in civic discourse*: Can students participate intelligently in three vital areas?: a) critical reading; b) persuasive writing; c) public speaking

Readings:

I have tried to select texts that 1) are very high quality and 2) won't break your budget. Copies of the text have been placed on course reserve in the HBLL and all can be purchased on-line at discounted prices. I have also tried to make sure that we read enough of each text to justify its purchase.

Required Texts

1. William T. Bluhm and Robert A. Heineman. 2007. *Ethics and Public Policy: Method and Cases* (Pearson Prentice Hall) ISBN: 0-13-18943-2
2. Gilbert H. Muller and Harvey S. Wiener. 2005. *To the Point: Reading and Writing Short Arguments* (Pearson Longman) ISBN: 0-321-20786-6
3. Michael Sandel. 2007. *Justice: A Reader* (Oxford University Press) ISBN: 978-0-533512-5
4. Jay M. Shafritz, et al. 2005. *Classics of Public Policy* (Pearson Longman): ISBN: 0-321-08989-8

Additional Required Readings

Throughout the Course there will be other required readings. These will all be available on Blackboard. There will also be some optional readings available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements:

Reading Responses (20%):

There is a reading assignment for every session of the course, and for each session you must complete a written “Reader Response” (because this class is being taught on the Block, *there will be two sessions per day*). For each session, you will respond to a few questions based on your readings. The following policies apply to the Reader Response assignments:

- All assignments must be **submitted on Blackboard**.
- Assignments are **due at 3 pm** on the day the assigned reading is due.
- **No late assignments** will be accepted.
- To get full credit, the reader response must be at least **250 words**.
- Reader responses are not intended to be well-crafted essays, but they should be thoughtful and reasonably well-written (spelling and grammar must exceed “text-message quality”). The following grades will be given:
 - 2: Good Enough (or better!)
 - 1: Not So Good
 - 0: Lousy
- You may **drop your three lowest scores**.
- I will provide written individual feedback on only a few of your Reader Response’s. After each session, I will post a few of the best quality responses on Blackboard for the class to read.

Essays (20%)

During the term we will write *4 short papers*. As opposed to Reader Response assignments, these are expected to be well-crafted short essays. The following policies apply:

- Each essay must be **submitted on Blackboard**
- Each essay must be **between 1,000 and 1,500 words**.
- Late papers will be assigned a penalty of 5% each calendar day they are late up to a total of a 30% reduction. After that, no additional penalties will be assessed.
- **No late papers will be accepted after midnight on the last day of class**, except with prior approval for reasons such as serious illness.
- Papers will be graded on both content and style
- One of the papers can be re-written for a higher grade

Specific assignments for essays will be provided. The due dates are:

- Essay 1: **March 13, 3pm**
- Essay 2: **March 20, 3pm**
- Essay 3: **April 3, 3pm**
- Essay 4: **April 10, 3pm**
- Re-write: **April 15, 3pm**

Standards for written work: A document describing the standards for student papers is available on Blackboard.

Civic Discourse

As noted above, improving our civic discourse is a major aim of the course. We practice this in

the classroom. Class time will be devoted to discussion, group activities and presentations and writing exercises. Grades in civic discourse will consist of the following four areas:

1) *Class Discussion (5%)*: This happens two ways. First, you are expected to participate thoughtfully in **class discussions**. Second, you are expected to participate in **on-line discussion forums** that will be available on Blackboard.

iClicker: All students will be required to have an iClicker that we will use for a variety of purposes in class. You can obtain an iClicker from the Bookstore for \$35 (new) or \$25 (used), and they can be sold back to the bookstore (approx. \$15) at the end of the semester. You can also share iClickers with other students (though not another student in this class). Remember to bring your iClicker to class each day.

2) *Group Assignments (5%)*: Some of our class discussion time will consist of making presentations as groups and engaging in debates on issues. It is important that each group member contributes to the preparations of the group and participates in the group presentations. More detail on expectations for these assignments will be available under Group Assignments in Blackboard.

3) *Peer Review (5%)*. You will have several opportunities to read and provide feedback to your classmates on their papers and paper ideas. This includes both brainstorming sessions with your working group and reading drafts of papers.

3) *In-Class Assignments and Quizzes (5%)*: On some days we will do in-class written assignments based on the topics we have been reading about and discussing in class. On other days we will have short quizzes (you will need your iClicker to take the quiz). The grading scale will be the same one applied to Reader Response assignments. **No scores will be dropped.**

Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam:

- Midterm Exam (15%): **March 27-29, Testing Center**
- Final Exam (25%): **Wednesday, April 23. 11am – 2pm.**

You are responsible for knowing the hours and policies of the Testing Center. Also, per university policy, NO EARLY FINAL EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.

Grades

I will assign grades according to the standard scale (A:95%+; A-: 90-94%; B+: 87-89%, B: 83-86%, etc.) based on the course requirements listed above. I anticipate that grades will be approximately normally distributed. It is very likely that I will “curve up” the grades (meaning you will get a better grade than your raw percentage entitles you too). I will not “curve down” the grades.

Managing the Workload

Time Management

I value your time. There is a lot of work in this class, but hopefully no busywork. I always appreciate student input on how class-time and out-of-class-time can be used more effectively.

The *BYU Undergraduate Catalogue* says, “The expectation for undergraduate courses is three hours of work per week per credit hour for the average student who is appropriately prepared; much more time may be required to achieve excellence.” The Catalogue also states that “excellence” is required to achieve an *A* grade in the course. Given that this is a 3-credit course taken on the block, **you should be prepared to spend 15-20 hours per week outside of class.** Because there is tremendous variation in the intellectual preparation and background of students, some students may do well with less effort, while some will required significantly more.

My estimation of how you will need to allocate this outside class time is as follows (for an average week):

- Reading: 8 hours (2 hours per session)
- Reader Responses: 2 hours (1/2 hour per session)
- Writing Papers: 5 hours per week
- Group Assignments/On-line forums: 2 hours per week
- Studying Material: 3 hours per week

Strategies for success:

- *Always read before class.* The productivity of class discussion—both for you and for other students—is greatly reduced if you are not prepared.
- *Review readings immediately following class.* Class discussion will help you see what you read in a different light.
- *Take notes in class.* The act of writing something down makes it more likely you will remember it. Some class notes will be made available to you, but these shouldn’t be a substitute for taking your own notes.
- *Start papers early.* Writing is better if you have time to think in between your writing sessions. All-nighters rarely produce good papers.
- *Get feedback on your writing.* Read each others papers. Visit the FHSS Writing Center for help. Talk with your instructor.
- *Review your class notes regularly.* Regular study is far more effective and efficient than cramming—and you might actually remember something after you take the exam.
- *Utilize office hours.* I’m here to help. Please come see me.
- *Study with classmates.* As long as you don’t spend too much time flirting or watching You-Tube together, study groups can be very effective means of helping one another master the material.

University Policies

Sexual Harassment: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your

professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 378-2847.

* *Students with disabilities*: Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (378-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB

Reading Schedule:

(Incomplete) - *Last updated: March 3, 2008*

The concepts you are expected to master in this course will be covered in readings and lectures. Be advised, however, that some important ideas will be covered **only in the readings**. Similarly, we will discuss some ideas in class that are **not covered explicitly in the readings**. I know that some people prefer to learn by reading, others by listening. However, part of being an educated person is developing **both** skills.

In your readings, try to pay attention to the central purpose and arguments that the author is trying to make. Ask yourself questions such as: “What is the author trying to convince me of?” “What are the author’s main points?” and “What kind of evidence does the author provide to support his claims?” In general, I want to know if you have gotten a good sense of what the reading is about, not whether you can remember minute details.

[Note 1: Many of the readings for the first two parts of the course are highly philosophical in nature. But this is NOT a philosophy class, so don’t be worried if your philosophical skills are weak—as mine are! Our class discussion and writing assignments will be oriented towards practical policy applications.]

The following acronyms indicate where the reading can be found:

- CLASSICS: *Classics of Public Policy*
- ETHICS: *Ethics and Public Policy: Method and Cases*
- JUSTICE: *Justice: A Reader*
- OTHER: Other readings (Blackboard)
- POINT: *To the Point: Reading and Writing Short Arguments*

[Note 2: The *To the Point* text is actually a book on composition, but it contains dozens of very short essays that have interesting policy implications. We will be reading these essays and writing about them throughout the course. The large variety of essays in this text will give us lots to talk about as we proceed through the course. The topics in this text, however, are not

organized in the same order as the topics for the course.]

Part 1: Public Values

Abstract: In this first part of the course we will focus on four values that are frequently held in society—freedom, utility, equality, and community. The problem for society to solve is that making policy always requires trade-offs and policymakers must find ways to balance these values. These values form the core of important ethical traditions that will be more fully developed in the next part of the course.

Session 1 (Thurs., March 6): Course Introduction

ETHICS (pp. 6-38): Chapters 2 & 3

POINT (pp. 3-19): Chapter 1

Session page count: 48

Session 2 (Thurs., March 6): Liberty (1)

OTHER: Ian Carter, “Positive and Negative Liberty (Sections 1-3), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (7 pages)

JUSTICE (pp.84-87, 90-96): John Locke, Chapters 1, 2, & 5, *Second Treatise on Government*.

CLASSICS (pp.170-179): Friedrich Hayek, “Planning and Democracy” from *The Road to Serfdom*.

CLASSICS (pp.185-188): Milton Friedman, “Introduction” from *Capitalism and Freedom*.

POINT (pp.19-44): Chapter 1 (first part).

Session page count: 55

Session 3: (Tues., March 11) : Liberty (2)

OTHER (pp. 13-34): Amartya Sen, “The Perspective of Freedom,” from *Development as Freedom*.

OTHER (pp. 387-397): Charles Taylor, “What’s Wrong with Negative Freedom in *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 2nd Edition, ed. Robert Goodin and Philip Pettit. (Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

POINT (pp. 46-59): Chapter 2 (first part.)

Session page count: 44

Session 4 (Tuesday, March 11): Utility

JUSTICE (pp.9-14): Bentham, “Morals and Legislation.”

JUSTICE (pp. 14-31): Mill, Chapters 1-3 in “Utilitarianism”

POINT (pp.59-86): Chapter 2 (cont.)

Session page count: 65

Session 5: (Thursday, March 13): Equality

OTHER (pp. 473-482): Amartya Sen, “Equality of What,” in *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 2nd Edition, ed. Robert Goodin and Philip Pettit. Blackwell Publishing, 2006

JUSTICE (pp.49-60) : Milton and Rose Friedman: “Created Equal” from *Free to Choose*

JUSTICE (pp. 73-82): Friedrich A. Hayek: "Equality, Value and Merit" from *The Constitution of Liberty*

CLASSICS: John Kenneth Galbraith, Selections from *The Affluent Society* (pp. 180-184)

POINT (pp.90-101): Chapter 3 (part 1)

Page count: 40

Section 6: (Thursday, March 13): Community

OTHER: Charles Taylor, "Atomism" from *Philosophical Papers: Volume 2, Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge University Press, 1985. (pp. 187-210)

POINT (pp.102-112): Chapter 3 (part 2)

Part 2: Public Ethics

Abstract: Public ethics concerns not only what is right and wrong, but also what constitutes the central aims of society. The ethical focus of this course is justice, and we will talk about how the core public values in Part 1 are used to create different theories of justice. Two aspects of justice particularly related to public policy are: 1) distributive justice, meaning how the resources of society should be allocated among people and 2) rights (which often involve a claim on others founded in a notion of distributive justice).

Session 7 (Tues., Mar. 18): Alternative Liberal Views on Justice

JUSTICE (pp. 203-221): John Rawls, Selections from *A Theory of Justice*.

JUSTICE (pp. 223-226): John Rawls, "Legitimate Expectations and Moral Desert." From *A Theory of Justice*

JUSTICE (pp. 60-73): Robert Nozick, "Distributive Justice," from *Anarchy, State and Utopia*
Session Page Count: 35

[Suggested: JUSTICE (pp.226-235) Additional selections from *Anarchy State and Utopia*.]

Session 8 (Tues., Mar. 18): Utilitarianism and Justice

JUSTICE (pp. 35-47): John Stuart Mill "Chapter V.: On the Connection between Justice and Utility." from *Utilitarianism*

OTHER (pp. 54-86): Amartya Sen, "Freedom and the Foundation of Justice" from *Development as Freedom*.

Session Page Count: 45

[Suggested: JUSTICE (pp. 158-198) Immanuel Kant, "Selections from the Metaphysics of Morals."

Session 9 (Thurs., Mar. 20): Justice and Virtue:

JUSTICE (pp. 264-266; 287-295): Aristotle, Book I, Chapters 1-2 & Book III, Chapters 9-13 from *The Politics*

JUSTICE (pp.295-299): Aristotle, Book II, "Moral Virtue" from *Nicomachean Ethics*

POINT (113-141): Chapter 3 (part 3).

Session Page Count: 52

[Suggested: JUSTICE p. 315-327): Alasdair MacIntyre, Selections from *After Virtue*]

Session 10 (Thurs., Mar. 20) Justice and Community

JUSTICE (pp. 335-342): Michael Walzer, Selections from *Spheres of Justice*:
JUSTICE (pp. 328-334): Michael Sandel, Selections from *Democracy's Discontent*
POINT (pp. 158-172): Chapter 5
Session Page Count: 40

[Suggested: JUSTICE (pp. 359-369): Michael Sandel, Selections from Political Liberalism]

Session 11 (Tues. Mar. 25): Pluralism, Pragmatism, and Democratic Deliberation

ETHICS (pp. 39-70): Chapters 4 & 5
JUSTICE (pp. 369-377): Michael Sandel, Selections from *Political Liberalism*.
POINT (pp. 159-162, 165-169, 186-189, 192-194, 221-225, 228-234): Chapters 5,7,9
Session Page Count: 61

Session 12 (Tues, Mar. 25): Affirmative Action (A Case Study in Justice)

JUSTICE (pp. 237-262) Chapter IX
POINT (pp1. 199-205, 208-216) Chapter 8
Session page count: 39

Part 3: Public Decisions

Abstract: Parts 1 and 2 concentrated on *normative* questions—what *ought* to be? While we are not finished with the our normative questioning, we will pay increasing attention *positive* theories regarding how the world actually works. Policy decisions are made in a world with strongly competing private interests and ideas about what the proper role of the state should be. Furthermore, the institutions (laws, rules, procedures) that we have inherited shape the types of policies we will have. In this section we will focus on how economic and institutional realities influence the policy outcomes and the policymaking process.

Session 13 (Thurs., Mar. 27): Economic Rationales for State Action (1)

OTHER (pp.54-87): Michael Munger, “A Benchmark for Performance.” In *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices*. (Norton, 2000).
CLASSICS (pp.396-408): Garret Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons.”
Session Page Count: 45

Session 14 (Thurs., Mar. 27) Economic Rationales for State Action (2)

OTHER (pp.200-230): Michael Munger, “The Welfare Economics Paradigm.” In *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practices*. (Norton, 2000).
Session Page Count: 31

Session 15 (Tues. April 1): Interests and Elites

CLASSICS (pp. 77-82): James Madison, “Federalist 10.”
CLASSICS (pp. 83-87): David Truman, “The Governmental Process.”

CLASSICS (pp.100-106): Robert Dahl, "Who Governs."
CLASSICS (pp.88-99): C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite."
CLASSICS (pp.107-124): Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies and Political Theory."
Session Page Count: 45

Session 16 (Tues, April 1): Government Failure

OTHER (pp. 156-191): David Weimer and Aidan Vining, "Limits to Public Intervention: Government Failures." In *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, 4th Edition*.
Session Page Count: 35

Session 17 (Thurs., April 3): Agenda Setting

CLASSICS (pp. 51-61): Michael Lipsky, "Street-Level Bureaucrats as Policy Makers."
CLASSICS (pp.137-147): Anthony Downs, "Up and Down with Ecology: The Issue-Attention Cycle."
CLASSICS (pp.148-159): John W. Kingdon, "Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies."
Session Page Count: 32

Session 18 (Thurs., April 3): Basics of Policy Analysis

CLASSICS (pp. 409-414): Arnold Meltsner, "The Seven Deadly Sins of Policy Analysis."
CLASSICS (pp. 415-419): Aaron Wilavsky, "The Art of Policy Analysis."
Incomplete

Session 19 (Tues., April 8): Pragmatism in Policy Analysis:

CLASSICS (pp. 26-40): Charles Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through.'"
CLASSICS (pp. 62-71): Deborah Stone, "Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making"
Session Page Count: 24

Session 20 (Tues, April 8): Risk

OTHER (pp. 28-52): Cass Sunstein, "Thinking about Risks." In *Risk and Reason: Safety, Law, and the Environment*. (Cambridge University Press, 2002).
Session Page Count: 24

Part 4: Public Conflicts

Abstract: We conclude the course with a discussion of policy issues in four key areas. Many of these areas will have been touched upon in previous readings and discussions. We will apply the ideas that we have developed in the first three parts of the course as we try to understand important policy debates in these areas.

Session 21 (Thurs, April 10): Health Policy

ETHICS (74-103): Chapter 6
POINT (448-485): Part 5: Essays by Brownlee, Zinckenko, Cohen, Ruach, Chast, Ingrassia, Walljasper, Goodman, and MacKeen.
Session Page Count: 55

Session 22 (Thurs, April 10): Social Welfare

ETHICS (130-149): Chapter 8

POINT (263-266, 269-271, 274-276, 280-286): Chapter 11: Essays by Smiley, Brooks, Gans, Rifkin;

POINT (426-433): Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal."

POINT (325-333): Alfie Kohn, "The Dangerous Myth of Grade Inflation"

Session Page Count: 40

Session 23 (Tues., April 15): Environmental Policy

ETHICS (173-193): Chapter 10

POINT (343-345, 348-349, 353-356, 360-367): Chapter 14, Essays by Herbert, Klinkenborg, Lopez and Berry.

POINT (439-441). Rachel Carson, "The Obligation to Endure" from *Silent Spring*.

OTHER (pp.3-33). Bjorn Lomborg, Chapter 1 from *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Session Page Count: 65

Session 24 (Tues., April 15) Civil Rights

ETHICS (164-171): Chapter 9 (part)

JUSTICE (301-313): Chapter 11

POINT (315-317): Ellen Goodman, "Religion in the Textbooks."

Session Page Count: 11