

U.S. Policymaking Processes
Spring 2019
University of Rochester: PSC237
Tuesday and Thursday: 9:40am-10:55am
Morey 501

Professor Kroeger

Email: mkroege2@ur.rochester.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00am-12:30pm and by appointment

Office: 307 Harkness Hall

Course Description

The course combines social science theory, systematic empirical evidence, case studies of recent policymaking, role-playing simulations, and skill-building exercises. We will learn how policy is made by examining the relevant actors and techniques of policy analysis. The first part of the course focuses on institutions that shape policymaking: Congress, the president, the bureaucracy, and courts. In the second half of the semester, we will turn to the study of policies. The main assignment in the course involves a through policy analysis on a policy of your choosing. At the end of the course, each student will present the findings.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend class every Tuesday and Thursday and keep up with the readings. Active, respectful, and thoughtful participation in class meetings is expected. The course relies on engaged interest and participation.

Grading

Midterm exam: 30%

Memos and Activities: 10%

Final paper: 30%

Final paper components: 10%

Final presentation: 5%

Participation: 15%

Grading Scale and Late Assignments

100 ≥ A ≥ 93 > A- ≥ 90 > B+ ≥ 87 > B ≥ 83 > B- ≥ 80 > C+ ≥ 77 > C ≥ 73 > C- ≥ 70 > D+ ≥ 67 > D ≥ 63 > D- ≥ 60 > E

If you do not have an extension, and you turn in a paper late, you will be docked one third of one letter grade for every 24 hours that the paper is late, with late penalties accruing from the time the paper is due. For example, if your paper earned a B+, but you turned it in a few hours past the time it was due, you will receive a B; if you turned it in 30 hours past the time it was due, you will receive a B-.

Participation

The participation grade is comprised of attendance and active participation in lecture. We will be doing activities and discussing readings, and it is essential that all students contribute. One important component of participation includes bringing discussion questions to class. Students should plan to have at least one discussion question prepared per class meeting. Participation points will automatically be deducted for absences. As an additional part of participation, students should plan on attending office hours at least once during the semester to discuss their final paper.

Academic Honesty

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. More information is available at: <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index.html>

Disabilities and Accommodations

This classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and I encourage you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Students requiring accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Resources:

1-154 Dewey Hall
disability@rochester.edu
(585) 275-9049

Required Books

You will need to purchase the books listed below. We will read substantial portions, so I cannot post these selections on Blackboard. The rest of the readings will be available on Blackboard. Throughout the semester, I will send newspaper articles and other short pieces that deal with topical issues. These are considered required reading and we will discuss them in class.

- David Kessler. 2002. *A Question of Intent: A Great American Battle with a Deadly Industry*.
- Robert Kaiser. 2014. *Act of Congress: How America's Essential Institution Works, and How It Doesn't*.
- James Forman Jr. 2017. *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*.

Course Outline

The course outline appears below. You should complete the reading listed for the class meeting *before* the class meets. We will discuss the readings in class, so it's important to complete the readings in order to secure your participation points.

| Date | Topic | Readings |
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| Thursday, 1/17 | CLASS CANCELED | Prof. Kroeger attending a conference. |
| Tuesday, 1/22 | Course Introduction and big picture | None |
| Thursday, 1/24 | The 4 I's of Policymaking | Read: https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/ccameron/files/the_4_is.pdf How to write a policy memo: https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/lb_how_to_write_pol_mem_9_08_17.pdf |
| Tuesday, 1/29 | The Interest Group Matrix | Read: https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/ccameron/files/the_ig_matrix.pdf Kennedy School Case C14-00-1541.0. "No Prison in East L.A.! Birth of a Grassroots Movement." |
| Thursday, 1/31 | Application: Immigration Policy | Watch: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/immigration-battle/ Kennedy School Case C14-00-1541.0. "No Prison in East L.A.! Birth of a Grassroots Movement." |
| Tuesday, 2/05 | The Logic of Congressional Action | R. Douglas Arnold, <i>The Logic of Congressional Action</i> , Chapter 5 (pg. 88-118 and pg. 119-132). Robert Kaiser. 2014. <i>Act of Congress: How America's Essential Institution Works, and How It Doesn't</i> . |
| Thursday, 2/07 | Application: Financial Regulation | Robert Kaiser. 2014. <i>Act of Congress: How America's Essential Institution Works, and How It Doesn't</i> . |
| Tuesday, 2/12 | CLASS CANCELED | Prof. Kroeger attending a conference. |
| Thursday, 2/14 | Understanding the Money: Federal Budget & Appropriations | https://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-introduction-to-the-federal-budget-process?fa=view&id=155 https://www.usa.gov/budget https://www.thebalance.com/federal-budget-process-3305781 http://www.governing.com/columns/mgmt-insights/state-federal-budget-process-reforms.html |
| Tuesday, 2/19 | Application: Guest speaker (Ben Hammond) and Budget Challenge | In class: Federal Budget Challenge |

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| Thursday, 2/21 | The Administrative State | David Kessler. 2002. <i>A Question of Intent: A Great American Battle with a Deadly Industry</i> . |
| Tuesday, 2/26 | Application: FDA and Tobacco Regulation | David Kessler. 2002. <i>A Question of Intent: A Great American Battle with a Deadly Industry</i> . |
| Thursday, 2/28 | Regulatory Capture | “Uber: 21st Century Technology Confronts 20th Century Regulation,” Stanford Graduate School of Business Case. |
| Tuesday, 3/05 | Presidential Direct Action & Personnel Politics | David Lewis, <i>The Politics of Presidential Appointments</i> , Chapter 6, “Politicization and Performance: The case of the federal emergency management agency”, pg. 141-171. Personnel Politics and the Failure of the Obamacare Rollout Memo from David Cutler to Larry Summers: “Urgent need for changes in health reform implementation”, May 11, 2010. https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/files/2013/11/Cutler-implementation-memo-1.pdf |
| Thursday, 3/07 | Presidential Direct Action | None |
| Tuesday, 3/12 | SPRING BREAK | None |
| Thursday, 3/14 | SPRING BREAK | None |
| Tuesday, 3/19 | Courts and Policy | Richard Fallon, <i>The Dynamic Constitution</i> , pg. 157-72, 225-236. Caper, Jonathan D. 1976. “The Supreme Court and national policy making.” <i>The American Political Science Review</i> . Optional: http://www.greenbag.org/v11n1/v11n1_kerr.pdf |
| Thursday, 3/21 | Application: The Affordable Care Act in Court | Read: <i>National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius</i> , pg. 1-8, https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/pdf/11-393.pdf |
| Tuesday, 3/26 | Communicating Policy Application: Press Conference | John Zaller, <i>A Theory of Media Politics: How the Interests of Politicians, Journalists, and Citizens Shape the News</i> . Pg. 11-29. |

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| | | Martin Gilens, <i>Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy</i> . Chapter 5. |
| Thursday, 3/28 | Evidence-Based Policy-Making | <p>Look around here: https://cep.gov/</p> <p>Read: Pew, Evidence-Based Policymaking: A guide for effective government. Report.</p> <p>Read: https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/30/worthy-of-government-funding-prove-it/</p> <p>Read: https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2015/jul/23/rise-nudge-unit-politicians-human-behaviour</p> <p>Read: http://voxeu.org/article/evidence-based-policy-through-mechanism-experiments</p> |
| Tuesday, 4/02 | Policy Feedback Cycle: How Policy Makes Politics | <p>Paul Pierson, 1993, “When effect becomes cause: Policy feedback and political change,” <i>World Politics</i>. *Pay special attention to figure 1</p> <p>Josh Clinton and Michael Sances, 2017, “The politics of policy: The initial mass political effects of Medicaid expansion in the states,” <i>American Political Science Review</i>.</p> |
| Thursday, 4/04 | Cost-Benefit Analysis | <p>Charles Wheelan, <i>Introduction to Public Policy</i>, Chap. 12 “Cost-benefit analysis,” pg. 405-436</p> <p>Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo, <i>Poor Economics</i>, pg. 32-33 (cost of iron supplements compared with labor productivity gains); pg. 41-50 (cost of medical interventions compared with health improvements)</p> <p>https://harvardsciencereview.com/2016/12/20/the-ethics-of-self-driving-cars/</p> <p>For fun: http://moralmachine.mit.edu/</p> |
| Tuesday, 4/9 | Application of Cost-Benefit Analysis: Data and Policy | <i>Please bring your laptop to class.</i> |
| Thursday, 4/11 | Peer practice presentations | <i>In preparation for this class, please prepare the first draft of your presentation.</i> |

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| Tuesday, 4/16 | Presentations | <i>Type three questions from the presentations.</i> |
| Thursday, 4/18 | Presentations | <i>Type three questions from the presentations.</i> |
| Tuesday, 4/23 | Presentations | <i>Type three questions from the presentations.</i> |
| Thursday, 4/25 | Presentations | <i>Type three questions from the presentations.</i> |
| Tuesday, 5/01 | Wrap-up, catch-up, and conclusions | Final paper due |