Public Policy 202  
American Political Institutions and Processes  
Department of Public Policy  
UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs  

Winter 2015  
Monday and Wednesday 9:00 a.m-10:20 a.m.  
Public Affairs Building Room 2355  
Discussion Sections:  
Monday 1:00 p.m. – 1:50 p.m., Room 4371  
Monday 2:00 p.m. – 2:50 p.m., Room 4371  
Monday 4:00 p.m. – 4:50 p.m., Room 4371  

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Office Hours: Tuesday 4:00-5:00 p.m. and Wednesday 1:00-2:00 p.m.  

Course Description  
A rigorous graduate education in public policy requires fulfilling three intellectual tasks: developing the analytical skills needed to make optimal choices given stated policy objectives, available information, and resource constraints, which can be applied in numerous policy domains and institutional settings; acquiring additional substantive expertise in those topical areas where one is likely to be working after graduation; and nurturing a strategic understanding of how to work effectively and assume managerial or leadership roles in the social, political, and institutional context of public action (or private action taken with claims made to the public interest). Naturally, much of your training in the Master of Public Policy program—including the first quarter with its devotion to microeconomic and statistics—focuses on the first two activities, emphasizing in particular the development of your technical proficiency in performing advanced policy analysis.

If all institutional arrangements created equivalent opportunities for or posed similar constraints on analysis; if there were rarely a distinction between what is analytically desirable and what is actually doable in the political world; if achieving desired outcomes did not require successful social engagement and collective action; if we could ignore all of the ambiguities and tensions created by the democratic process and competing, even deeply antagonistic, social values; and if all problems in the public and nonprofit sectors lent themselves indisputably to purely technical solutions; then perhaps to be successful in your careers—to have real impact in the ways in which you wish to improve the world—you would not need more than the analytical skills and substantive expertise that you are acquiring while in the MPP program. It takes little imagination, however, to notice that the political, institutional, and social context of public policy making can have tremendous influence on what one can accomplish in the public and nonprofit sectors, and on the types of entrepreneurial strategies that will be most effective for providing leadership and reaching your goals and those of the organizations in which you will work and lead. Even the best policy analysis rarely produces options that translate directly into actual public policy. To fulfill your goals—to become a leader of social and policy change—you have to become an intuitive and patient strategic player as well as a capable policy analyst.

This course on American Political Institutions and Processes, as well as Public Policy 206, The Political Economy of Policy Design and Implementation, and Public Policy 211, Normative Issues in Policy Analysis, are devoted to these strategic contextual issues. Public Policy 209, Management in the 21st Century, lies at the intersection of developing functional managerial skills and knowing how to use them in the highly political environment—internally and externally—of public and private agencies.

Required of all students pursuing an MPP, the objective of Public Policy 202 is to expose students to
a variety of constitutionally conceived policy-making settings in which policy options are framed, debated, and evaluated, and public decisions are made, from legislatures to the courts to the ballot box. We also consider in broad terms the opportunities for influencing policy outcomes, including “inside” lobbying and “outside” mobilization of the public. Here, taking a relatively systemic (one might say “macro”) approach, we exploit a broad swath of the mainstream political science literature and specific empirical cases to investigate the look and meaning of political institutions, and in turn examine how they and relationships among them shape policy adoption (including rejection). Public Policy 206, with a specific focus on more individual-level micro-economic models of incentives, choices, and strategic action by various participants embedded in the institutions, examines policy implementation, as well as the design and performance of agencies and oversight of them by executives, legislatures, and courts. Because policy enactment and implementation are inseparable, and related political dynamics shape both, these courses at times draw attention to the same institutions and imperatives, but from different perspectives and levels of analysis. Together they provide you with the kind of historically and institutionally grounded “macro” and incentive-based “micro” perspectives on politics and policy making that give you the necessary tools for maneuvering more effectively in careers that, in one way or another, engage, wrestle with, and furnish leadership in the complex institutional fabric of the public sector.

Public Policy 209 takes you into the bowels of bureaucratic organization, a particularly important institution for MPP students. It expands upon the conceptual foundations of Public Policy 202 and 206, brings to life the practical issues you are likely to encounter in the organizations in which you will serve, and begins developing the skills—such as negotiation—necessary for you to work effectively in any organizational setting. Public Policy 211, when offered, broadens the context of analysis, delving into the fundamental normative orientations that often divide society, animate ideological differences, and drive much of the policy debate played out both inside and outside of government.

In American Political Institutions we begin by reviewing the assumptions and principles that motivated the formation of the American republic and the crafting of its Constitution, and their implications. We then turn to the general political setting of policy making. Starting with Deborah Stone’s influential work, we take up the differences between the attributes of the “polity” in which policy is actually made and the “economic model” of rational individual decision making that orients much formal policy analysis, assessing the ramifications for the impact of policy analysis and its utility. An original and inclusive analysis of the policy-making system follows using John Kingdon’s acclaimed book on agendas, alternatives, and public policies. We also look at how federalism influences the approaches to policy making pursued by legislators and governors in the states, which are nestled between national and local-level government and often in competition with one another.

Next we turn to a close and specific examination of conventional instruments of policy making, focusing on both legislating and executive-led policy making. Alternative forms of policy making are equally important, however, and the course considers two particularly significant variants: policy-relevant decision making by the courts and direct policy making by the public through ballot initiatives.

We conclude the course with some attention to the mechanisms for influencing policy debate and adoption, with particular attention to the contexts for lobbying and mobilizing of the public.

Our rapid and intensive trip through political institutions and the complexity of policy making is intended to furnish you with a sophisticated and even unconventional understanding of the policy-making process as a whole—one that underlines both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for you. The setting is the U.S. political system, but the concepts have applicability in many other political and institutional contexts.

Throughout the quarter, the motivating question is a most practical one: what are the implications for how policy is made, policy analysis is used, management is performed, and effective leaders behave? Put more personally, what are the implications for how you will be able to execute your duties in a governmental agency or a nonprofit organization, direct a successful community action movement, work effectively in a commercial firm whose business is directly influenced by these issues, and, overall, lead? Each week, with each reading, I want you to think of yourself explicitly in one of those roles and keep asking yourself the essential question: what am I learning about the circumstances and conditions that shape how I can perform in my position, promote evidence-based policy, serve my political values, and fulfill my policy objectives?
Assignments

Grades for the course will be based on the following activities, with details provided in subsequent hand-outs:

♦ Class Participation (15%): Given the importance of full and effective oral communication in a graduate course—and even more so in the world of policy making—part of the course grade will be based on each student’s individual participation in both the lecture sessions and discussion sections. Attendance, of course, is a predicate for participation. “Participation” includes such things as demonstrating preparation and familiarity with the course readings, offering valuable insights, speaking clearly about complex subjects, synthesizing relevant information, answering questions effectively, posing pertinent questions, as well as listening to other members of the class and building effectively upon their contributions. Students must be prepared at all times to be called upon during class and to participate actively in sections.

♦ Political Strategy Memorandum (10%): Due Monday, January 12th: A 900-word strategy memo to a policy maker that uses three core issues from the Deborah Stone’s book about goals, problems, and solutions, identifying their implications for politically supporting a policy position and providing responses to the anticipated opposing positions of other policy makers. A separate handout will provide more detailed instructions.

♦ Take-Home Midterm Project (30%) – Due Wednesday, February 18th: A take-home, open-book midterm examination in response to a set of questions, with choice. The questions and more specific instructions will be distributed a week or two prior to the due date.

♦ Final Paper Project (45%) – Due to Daniel Oyenoki, Public Policy Reception Desk, 3:00 p.m., Friday, March 20th. The project will be described in a separate handout distributed later in the quarter.

Grading Guidelines

Grading for the course follows the general parameters guiding any top-flight graduate program. An "A" grade will really mean superior attainment in the context of graduate education at one of the nation’s top programs: Reading and written assignments are thoroughly fulfilled; the course materials are comprehended conceptually and used accurately, synthetically, and in appropriate and insightful ways; written and oral presentations are well organized, clear, cogent, articulate, and sophisticated, well-embedded in the course materials, thoroughly referenced where appropriate, and with due attention to format, style, grammar, and spelling. Although I do not grade on a curve, and all students could theoretically (and to my delight!) receive an "A" (or any other grade) if they performed at that level, past experience suggests that relatively few students are likely to fulfill the criteria for an "A" grade. Students who perform "adequately" at the graduate level along these dimensions will receive a "B" for their work (even “adequate” work will make extensive and appropriately comprehensive and accurate use of the course materials). Increasingly better than adequate work produces grades of "B+" and "A-". Generally I anticipate that the admissions process has yielded students capable of receiving at least a "B" grade, but experience has also taught me that for a variety of reasons some students may perform below that level in any given course. I grade according to what is justified by the quality of work that I can actually read, see, and judge, and that includes reporting grades in the “C” range, if warranted.

Academic Integrity

In a statement to students on academic integrity, the UCLA Office of the Dean of Students explains that “UCLA is a community of scholars…[F]aculty, staff, and students alike are responsible for maintaining standards of academic honesty.” The Dean of Students makes clear that plagiarism, multiple submissions unauthorized by the respective professors, and all other all other forms of cheating and academic dishonesty result in formal disciplinary proceedings usually involving suspension or dismissal from the program. The Department of Public Policy has a “zero-tolerance” policy and is required by the University to report to the Office of the Dean of Students suspected violations of academic integrity. MPP students have been caught, investigated, and severely punished by the Office of the Dean of Students. Future careers are put at risk. Be absolutely certain that you understand what constitutes violations of academic integrity. Ignorance is neither an excuse nor an effective defense. **Plagiarism**, for example, is described by the Office of the Dean of Students as “Presenting
another’s words or ideas as if they were one’s own,” including “submitting as your own…part of or an entire work produced verbatim by someone else” and “paraphrasing ideas, data or writing without properly acknowledging the source.” All assignments in PP 202 require you to use the assigned readings and cases, as well as lectures—any specific terms, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or sections used verbatim from these sources must be formally quoted and cited, including page numbers/dates. Any ideas or concepts derived from these sources must be formally cited. These rules hold true for any work produced by someone else that you use in a course assignment. But also know that we on the faculty are always available to help you avoid mistakes. Please do not hesitate at any time to ask questions. Bottom line: ASK, ASK, ASK!

More information can be found at: [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/studentconduct.htm](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/studentconduct.htm)

Graduate Writing Center

Clear and precise writing is an essential skill for effective professional work in any setting, including in the realm of policy making and public service. The UCLA Graduate Writing Center is a valuable resource for students wishing to improve their writing and ensure that it is clear, well organized, and grammatically correct. Please go to [http://gsrc.ucla.edu/gwc/](http://gsrc.ucla.edu/gwc/) to obtain detailed information about the Center and what it offers.

Books for Purchase

The books listed below are required reading and are available for purchase at the LuValle Bookstore.

- Jeb Barnes, *Overruled? Legislative Overrides, Pluralism, and Contemporary Court-Congress Relations*. Stanford University Press, 2004. *(Note: because this book is only in hardcover and is very expensive, instead of having you buy it I have included it in the course reader).*

Harvard Kennedy School Cases

We are using three formal cases from the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) case program. Because the HKS case program is largely transitioning the purchase of case access to the Harvard Business Publishing website, and that transition is incomplete, I have one of the cases and another sequel free on our course web page (marked below). Two of the cases are to be purchased for $3.95 each from the Harvard Business Publishing website at: [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504) (indicated below), where you will first have to register.

  Kennedy School Case C16-90-990.0  [Purchase at Harvard Business Publishing link](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504)
  and Sequel C16-90-990.1  [Free on course web page](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504)

- “‘No Prison in East L.A.!’ Birth of a Grassroots Movement.”
  Kennedy School Case C14-00-1541.0 and Sequel 1541.1  [Free on course web page](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504)

- “Against All Odds: The Campaign in Congress for Japanese American Redress.”
  Kennedy School Case C16-90-1006.0  [Purchase at Harvard Business Publishing link](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504)
Custom Course Reader

Additional required readings for the course, including some of the cases, are in a customized course reader available at Copymat, 10919 Weyburn Avenue (between Westwood Blvd and Broxton Ave; open 9-5 Monday-Friday; phone: 310-824-5276). These items are identified with a “©” on the schedule of reading assignments.

Readings Also on Reserve or Alternatively Available

To the best of my ability and the availability of library resources, the reading assignments for the course from books are also available at the graduate reserve desk in the C. E. Young Research Library (excluding the Kennedy School Cases). The CQ Almanacs and CQ Weekly Reports, newspaper stories, and journal articles can be freely accessed by computer on campus (or off campus with a VPN) through the UCLA Library. The CQ materials are easily found under “Reference Sources” tab of the library’s Public Policy research guide (http://guides.library.ucla.edu/public-policy). Newspaper stories can be found using links under the “News Sources” tab. Although it would be far less convenient, it is thus possible to complete just about all of the reading assignments without purchasing the books or the course reader.

Format of Class Sessions

Class sessions will typically have approximately the following format:

Monday Sessions:
9:00 Introductory business, and opportunity for students to ask clarification questions about the week’s readings
9:15 Group discussion of week’s topic and assigned readings
10:20 End

Wednesday Sessions:
9:00 Group discussion of the week’s case
9:45 “Set-Up” Lecture introducing the next week’s topic
10:20 End

Discussion Sections (To be determined)

Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments

Part I: Founding Assumptions and Principles

Monday, January 5th: Introduction

Wednesday, January 7th: A Republic Established

Readings:
© Declaration of Independence
© The Constitution of the United States (including the Bill of Rights and Amendments)
Nos. 10, 14, 37, 47, 49, 51, and 70
Part I, Chapter 3, Social State of the Anglo-Americans, pp. 45-53
Part I, Chapter 4, On the Principle of the Sovereignty of the People in America, pp. 53-55
Part I, Chapter 5, Section – General Ideas about Administration, pp. 75-79; and Section – On the Political Effects of Administrative Decentralization, pp. 82-93
Part I, Chapter 6, On the Judicial Power in the United States, pp. 93-99
Part II, Chapter 5, On the Use that the Americans Make of Association in Civil Life, pp. 489-492

Basic Review: American Government (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 1, The Constitution; and Chapter 12, Civil Liberties
Part II: The Setting of Politics and Policy Making

Monday, January 12th: Policy in a Political World – I

⇒ Due: Political Strategy Memorandum – at the beginning of class.

Readings:

Wednesday, January 14th: Policy in a Political World – II

Case:

Monday, January 19th: NO CLASS: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Wednesday, January 21st: Windows for Policy Making – I and II

Reading:
Basic Review: *American Government* (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 14, Public Policy

Case:

Monday, January 26th: Federalism – I

Readings:
Chapters 1-5, and 8, and select one of the two “case application” chapters to read – Chapter 6 (Education) or Chapter 7 (Health Care).

Basic Review: *American Government* (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 2, Federalism

Wednesday, January 28th: Federalism – II

Case:
© No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 and Local/State Responses:
Part III: Conventional Policy Making

Monday, February 2\textsuperscript{nd}: Legislative Policy Making – I

Readings:

Basic Review: *American Government* (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 3, Congress

Wednesday, February 4\textsuperscript{th}: Legislative Policy Making – II

Case:

Monday, February 9\textsuperscript{th}: Executive-Led Policy Making – I

Readings:
Chapters 1 to 8, pp. 1-164.

Basic Review: *American Government* (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 4, The President

Wednesday, February 11\textsuperscript{th}: Executive-Led Policy Making – II

Case:
© *President Obama and Comprehensive Immigration Reform:* All articles are from publications by Congressional Quarterly, Inc., Washington, D.C.
Initial Background:

Immigration Reform:
“GOP Wave Yields Control of House, Greater Number in the Senate,” *2010 CQ Almanac*, pp. 11-3 to 11-5.


**Part IV: Alternative Forms of Policy Making**

**Monday, February 16th:** NO CLASS: Presidents’ Day

**Wednesday, February 18th:** Courts as Policy Makers – I and II

➤ **Due: Take-Home Midterm Project – due at the beginning of class.**

**Readings:**


**Basic Review:** *American Government* (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 5, The Judiciary

**Case:**


**Monday, February 23rd:** Ballot Initiatives – I

**Readings:**

Wednesday, February 25th: Ballot Initiatives – II

Case: (Purchase from Harvard Business Publishing at: https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504):

Kennedy School Case C16-90-990.0 (the Sequel, C16-90-990.1, is on the course webpage)

Part V: Influencing Policy Making

Monday, March 2nd: Taking Collective Action – I

Readings:
Basic Review: American Government (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 11, Interest Groups

Wednesday, March 4th: Taking Collective Action – II

Case (This case and its sequel are available on the course webpage):
Kennedy School Case C14-00-1541.0 and Sequel 1541.1.

Monday, March 9th: Lobbying and Mobilizing – I

Readings:
Basic Review: American Government (CliffsQuickReview) – Chapter 7, Public Opinion; Chapter 8, The Mass Media

Wednesday, March 11th: Lobbying and Mobilizing – II

Case (Purchase from Harvard Business Publishing at: https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/31957504):
“Against All Odds: The Campaign in Congress for Japanese American Redress.”
Kennedy School Case C16-90-1006.0

Friday, March 20th: Final Paper Project Due – By 3:00 p.m. to Daniel Oyenoki, Public Policy Reception Desk