

Political Science Y565 & SPEA V690: Seminar in the Policy Process

Thursday, 3:30-5:30, 513 N. Park (Ostrom Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis)

Professor Mike McGinnis (mcginnis@indiana.edu)

Section numbers: 17763 for Y565; 16626 for V690
Fall 2014

Course Description

In this seminar a dozen faculty members from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs and the Department of Political Science will lead discussions on a wide range of research topics related to the study of public policy, public administration, and/or political science. Their common goal is to select readings that help students understand what counts as a good research question in the many different subareas of the policy field, and to show by illustration what types of research methodologies can be used to answer these questions. Our primary concern will be on understanding the policy process in the United States, especially the goals and capabilities of major policy actors and the contexts which shape their patterns of interaction.

The selection of topics was guided by the organization of the most recent version of this course taught by Professor Evan Ringquist, who passed away earlier this year. Prof. Ringquist was widely versed in the study of environmental policy, policy analysis, and the design of policy instruments, and his loss has been deeply felt by all of this colleagues.

Prof. McGinnis, who teaches a different version of this core seminar every other fall semester, is coordinating this new version. Students will be asked to read widely on a range of topics, and their mastery of this subject will be evaluated through two take-home exams, a presentation on a specific assigned reading during one class session, and the quality of their participation in class discussion throughout the semester. There are no formal prerequisites, but students who have not taken previous coursework in public policy are encouraged to read an undergraduate textbook for background. Please contact the instructor if need any more information.

This cross-listed seminar is the required core seminar for students enrolled in the Joint (POLS-SPEA) Ph.D. program in Public Policy, but each semester's version has also included several students from other schools and departments. We encourage as wide a range of student participation as possible. After all, critical issues of policy design and implementation abound in all areas of academic study and practice.

Course Requirements and Grading

As the instructor of record, Prof. McGinnis will handle all of the logistics of this course, including grading. Students will be asked to complete two take-home essay assignments, or quasi-exams, based on questions to be submitted by each week's discussion leader. These questions are meant to be wide-ranging and will ask students to demonstrate their ability to draw appropriate connections between topics considered during the semester. Dates for these take-home exams will be announced later, but one will be in or near finals week and the other sometime around weeks 8 or 9. Students will also be

graded on their participation during class discussions. Each student will be asked to prepare one or two short 10-12 minute presentations on a specific assigned reading, intended to be sufficiently accurate that other students shouldn't need to read that particular reading for that session's discussion. Schedules for these presentations will take account of student preferences and will be determined later.

One textbook has been ordered for purchase, Kevin B. Smith and Christopher W. Larimer, *The Public Policy Theory Primer*, 2nd edition, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2013, ISBN 978-0-8133-4749-3. Students are encouraged to read this book early in the semester, even though we are unlikely to focus discussion on this book until the very end of the semester.

All other readings should be available in electronic format, and posted on the OnCourse website. Guest instructors have been asked to select the reading assignments at least two weeks before their scheduled session, so the list of readings is very unlikely to be completed until the end of the semester. Students likely to take a comprehensive examination in policy are encouraged to also read materials included on Prof. Ringquist's syllabus, which will be posted on OnCourse.

Dates, Topics, and Discussion Leaders

<i>week</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>Topics and Discussion Leaders</i>
1	28-Aug	Definitions and Typologies – Mike McGinnis NO assigned readings, but students are encouraged to have at least skimmed an introductory text on U.S. public policy. A few examples are available in the Reserve Room at the Wells Library.
2	4-Sep	Federalism and Public Policy – Sean Nicholson-Crotty
3	11-Sep	Public Opinion and Public Policy – Jerry Wright
4	18-Sep	Interest Groups, Parties, Media and Public Policy – Margie Hershey
5	25-Sep	Democratic Influence in Policy Making Via Civil Society – Matt Baggetta
6	2-Oct	Global Capitalism's Influence on U.S. Policy Making – William Winecoff
7	9-Oct	Non-Profit Organization and Governance – Beth Gazley
8	16-Oct	Framing and Social Construction -- Eileen Braman
9	23-Oct	Bureaucracy as Policy Maker: Background – Thomas Rabovsky
10	30-Oct	Bureaucracy as Policy Maker: Mechanisms and Evidence – Sean Nicholson-Crotty
11	6-Nov	The Role of Legislatures in Policy Making – Bill Bianco
12	13-Nov	Non-Profits as Policy Actors – Jill Nicholson-Crotty
13	20-Nov	The Federal Judiciary as Policy Maker – Eileen Braman
		THANKSGIVING BREAK
14	4-Dec	Collaboration in the Policy Process – Michael McGuire
15	11-Dec	Wrap-Up and Course Evaluation – Mike McGinnis Read or re-read Kevin B. Smith and Christopher W. Larimer, <i>The Public Policy Theory Primer</i> , 2 nd edition, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2013.