

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Woodrow Wilson School

WWS 521
Domestic Politics

Fall 2009
R. Douglas Arnold

This seminar introduces students to the political analysis of policy making in the American setting. The focus is on developing tools for the analysis of politics in any setting – national, state, or local. The first week examines policy making with a minimum of theory. The next five weeks examine the environment within which policy makers operate, with special attention to public opinion and the mass media. The next six weeks focus on political institutions and the making of policy decisions. The entire course explores how citizens and politicians influence each other, and together how they shape public policy.

* * * * * **Please Note: Seminar participants are** * * * * *
* * * * * **required to read one short book before** * * * * *
* * * * * **the first seminar on September 22.** * * * * *

A. Weekly Schedule

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|---|--------------|
| 1. Politics and Policy Making | September 22 |
| 2. Origins of Public Opinion | September 29 |
| 3. Dynamics of Public Opinion | October 6 |
| 4. Macro Opinion | October 13 |
| 5. Inequality and American Politics | October 20 |
| 6. Mass Media | October 27 |
| FALL BREAK | |
| 7. Agenda Setting | November 10 |
| 8. Explaining the Shape of Public Policy | November 17 |
| 9. Explaining the Durability of Public Policy | November 24 |
| 10. Dynamics of Policy Change | December 1 |
| 11. The Courts and Policy Change | December 8 |
| 12. Finale | December 15 |

B. Course Requirements

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The amount of reading averages 163 pages per week. Each student is expected to do the assigned reading *before* each seminar and come to class prepared for discussion.

2. **Discussion.** The main event each week is a structured discussion of the week's reading. I provide the structure; you provide the discussion. Our aim is to come to terms with the scholarship on a subject *and* to see what lessons it offers for those involved in making and administering public policy. Each student is expected to participate actively in each week's discussion.
3. **Three Short Papers.** Each student writes three short papers during the course of the semester. These are opportunities for you to discuss the week's readings, unprompted by the instructor or your fellow students. The purpose of these papers is to develop your skills at political analysis and to gain feedback from the instructor prior to writing the final paper.

The key to a good paper is to pose an interesting question and answer it. You might focus on the value of an author's theory, examining its logical rigor, the plausibility of the arguments, or its relation to other theories. You might focus on the adequacy of the empirical evidence, asking whether the author used appropriate methods, whether the evidence really supports the hypotheses, or whether other evidence contradicts it. Alternatively, you might address the question of how well a piece of scholarship illuminates other happenings in the real world. Does a book help to explain why government makes the decisions it does? Under what conditions does it appear useful? These papers are *not* an opportunity to summarize the week's readings. You should assume that anyone who reads your paper has also done the week's reading.

These papers should be well organized and well written. A paper that fails to develop an argument until the last paragraph is called a first draft. A paper that fails to anticipate potential counter arguments, is written in the passive voice, or is filled with grammatical, spelling, or typing errors, is called a second draft. A paper that you would be proud to read to the class is called a final draft. I like final drafts.

The class will be divided in thirds, with one group writing in weeks 2, 5, and 9, a second group writing in weeks 3, 7, and 10, and the third group writing in weeks 4, 8, and 11. There will be no short papers for the introductory, midterm (#6), or concluding weeks.

Your papers should be typed, double-spaced, and a *maximum of five pages*. References to books or articles used in the course should be cited in the text (Zaller 1992, 79). *Please attach an extra page to the back of your paper (with your name and date in the upper right corner) for my comments.*

Papers are due at the *start* of the seminar in which their subjects are scheduled for discussion. I will return each of the short papers with comments a week after they are due.

4. **Final Paper.** The final paper requires that you apply the lessons of the seminar to explaining why some governmental institution enacted, or failed to enact, a significant policy change. The aim is to explain how and why political forces combined to

produce or thwart change. You may choose any level of government – national, state, or local – and you may choose any significant policy change, whether adopted or rejected.

Although these papers require some outside research, the emphasis should be on original political analysis, not exhaustive research in primary source materials or extensive interviews with participants. Some description will undoubtedly be necessary, but your paper should primarily be a piece of analysis. You should attempt to *explain* why an institution adopted or rejected a proposed policy change.

You are free to choose a policy area in which you already have some expertise. You are free to choose a subject that journalists or other observers have already covered extensively. You are free to select a topic for which the gathering of research materials is relatively easy. I am more interested in observing your analytic skills than your research skills. The only restriction is that you may not choose a subject that we have explored carefully in the course (e.g., Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 or the Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001). If you are having trouble choosing, or narrowing down, a topic, please come and see me.

You should select a topic and submit a one-page description of the policy decision that you intend to analyze no later than Tuesday, December 1. Please send the proposal as an ordinary e-mail (no attachment) to arnold@princeton.edu. I will respond by e-mail within a few days.

The final paper should be typed, double-spaced, single-sided, and a *maximum* of 25 pages. The paper is due on Tuesday, January 12, at 4:00. Please provide a cover page and number all subsequent pages. The cover page and the bibliography do not count against the page limit. Please note that 25 pages is a maximum length, not a target length.

The real world of politics and public affairs does not grant extensions, and neither do I. Unlike the real world, I do accept late research papers, but only after assessing a penalty of one third of a letter grade for each day of lateness. The penalty is in fairness to other students who manage to submit their papers on time.

Papers should either be placed in my Robertson Hall mailbox (fourth floor) or given to my WWS assistant, Helene Wood, in 301 Robertson Hall. Late papers must be logged in, with date and time, by my assistant.

5. **Due Dates.**

- Short papers: Due at the *start* of each week's seminar.
- Research plan: Due Tuesday, December 1.
- Research paper: Due Tuesday, January 12, 4:00.

6. Grading.

Seminar participation	20%
Short papers	30%
Final paper	50%

C. Availability of Readings

1. **Books Available for Purchase.** Labyrinth Books (122 Nassau Street) has copies of the nine books that we use most intensively (marked LB in the readings).
2. **Reserve Readings.** There are also multiple copies of these nine books on reserve in the Donald E. Stokes Library in Wallace Hall (marked DES in the readings).
3. **Electronic Course Reserves.** Most chapters and articles are available as part of the library's electronic course reserves (marked ECR in the readings). You will find these materials in the E-Reserves section of Blackboard. Several other papers are in the Course Materials section of Blackboard (marked CM in the readings).

D. Times and Places

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| 1. Seminar Meetings | Tuesday, 1:00-4:00 | Robertson Hall, Room 005 |
| 2. Office Hours | By appointment | Robertson Hall, Room 310 |

I am readily available by appointment. About a week in advance, I post blocks of available times in the Web Appointment Scheduling System. You can make an appointment on-line at: <https://wass.princeton.edu/pages/login.page.php>. After you log in, you will find my calendar by entering my NETID (arnold). You can sign up for either a 15 minute or a 30 minute appointment.

If you have conflicts with all my available times, please send an e-mail (arnold@princeton.edu) that includes all the times that are *impossible* for you over the coming week. I will respond with an appointment that works for both of us.

E. Weekly Readings

1. Politics and Policy Making (September 22)

Required (106 pages)

Richard Himelfarb, *Catastrophic Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988* (1995), pp. vii-ix, 1-103 [LB, DES]. Congress and the president first enact, by overwhelming margins, a major increase in health coverage for senior citizens; then, a year later, they repeal it.

2. Origins of Public Opinion (September 29)

Required (215 pages)

John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), pp. 1-215 [LB, DES]. A theory of why citizens acquire opinions about policies and politicians.

3. Dynamics of Public Opinion (October 6)

Required (115 pages)

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (2002), pp. 1-23 [ECR]. Why are partisan attachments so stable?

Benjamin I. Page, "Zoe Baird, Nannies, and Talk Radio," in his *Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy* (1996), pp. 77-105 [ECR]. Ordinarily, the media shapes public opinion. What happens when it doesn't?

Arthur Lupia, "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 63-76 [ECR]. What cues do poorly informed citizens use in complicated situations?

Patrick J. Egan, Nathaniel Persily, and Kevin Wallsten, "Gay Rights," in Nathaniel Persily, Jack Citrin, and Patrick J. Egan (eds.), *Public Opinion and Constitutional Controversy* (2008), pp. 234-266 [ECR]. The dynamics of opinion change on gay rights.

Patrick J. Egan and Kenneth Sherrill, "California's Proposition 8: What Happened and What Does the Future Hold?" (2009), pp. 1-16 [ECR]. As it says.

4. Macro Opinion (October 13)

Required (170 pages)

James A. Stimson, *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics* (2004), xi-xx, 1-95, 137-171 [LB, DES]. What are the causes and consequences of macro changes in public opinion?

Gary C. Jacobson, "The 2008 Presidential and Congressional Elections: Anti-Bush Referendum and Prospects for the Democratic Majority," *Political Science Quarterly* 124 (2009): 1-30 [ECR]. How do macro changes in public opinion affect national elections?

5. Inequality and American Politics (October 20)

Required (213 pages)

Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2008), pp. 1-126, 162-196, 252-302 [LB, DES]. How has politics contributed to the increasing economic inequality in America?

6. Mass Media (October 27)

Required (65 pages)

James T. Hamilton, *All the News That's Fit to Sell: How the Market Transforms Information into News* (2004), pp. 1-36, 265-273 [ECR]. How do economic forces shape the production of a public good like news?

“Tossed by a Gale: It Isn’t Just Newspapers: Much of the Established News Industry Is Being Blown Away,” *The Economist* (May 14, 2009), 5 pages [ECR]. More on the changing face of the mass media.

Markus Prior, “News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout,” *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (2005): 577-592 [ECR]. How have changes in the structure of the media – the advent of cable and the internet – affected what citizens know about politics and how they behave politically?

Paul Starr, “Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers (Hello to a New Era of Corruption),” *The New Republic* (March 4, 2009), pp. 28-35. The political consequences of changes in the mass media.

David Carr, “A Newsroom Subsidized? Minds Reel,” *New York Times* (October 19, 2009), B1 [CM].

7. Agenda Setting (November 10)

Required (208 pages)

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (1995), pp. 1-208 [LB, DES]. How does government decide which problems to attack?

8. Explaining the Shape of Public Policy (November 17)

Required (187 pages)

R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (1990), pp. 3-146, 265-276 [LB, DES]. What accounts for legislatures sometimes serving narrow and particularistic interests and sometimes serving more general interests?

Paul Skidmore, "The Politics of Public Behavior: Gun Control, Anti-smoking Policy and Social Regulation in the United States," (January 2007) [CM]. An excellent student paper from WWS 521 that tests six hypotheses for why the United States regulates smoking strictly and guns lightly.

9. Explaining the Durability of Public Policy (November 24)

Required (142 pages)

Eric M. Patashnik, *Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes Are Enacted* (2008), pp. 1-71, 110-180 [LB, DES]. What determines whether reforms that pass are reforms that persist?

10. Dynamics of Policy Change (December 1)

Required (177 pages)

David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-2002*, 2nd ed. (2005), pp. ix-xii, 1-7, 34-145, 170-222, 226 [LB, DES]. Does it matter whether one party controls the House, Senate, and White House? If it doesn't, how can we explain macro changes in lawmaking?

11. The Courts and Policy Change (December 8)

Required (262 pages)

Gerald N. Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change*, 2nd ed. (2008), pp. 1-169, 339-431 [LB, DES]. How much influence do courts have in the making of public policy? Read Chapters 1 and 14 with care. Read the empirical chapters quickly to get an overall sense of the argument.

12. Finale (December 15)

Required (93 pages)

Representation

Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox, "Why Are Women Still Not Running for Public Office?" *Issues in Governance Studies* (May 2008), pp. 1-20 [ECR]. It's not the voters; it's the candidates. What encourages people to run for office? http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/05_women_lawless_fox.aspx

Campaign Contributions and Their Effects

Stephen Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder, Jr., "Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2003), pp. 105-130 [ECR]. Myths and realities about the role of money in American politics.

Richard L. Hall and Frank W. Wayman, "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees," *American Political Science Review* 84 (1990), 797-820 [ECR]. Money buys access.

Assessing Parties and Policy Making

David R. Mayhew, "Congress as Problem Solver," in Alan S. Gerber and Eric M. Patashnik (eds.), *Promoting the General Welfare: New Perspectives on Government Performance* (2006), pp. 219-236 [ECR]. Congress used to be a better problem solver. Considers various reforms that might encourage better problem solving.

Pietro S. Nivola, "In Defense of Partisan Politics," (April 2009) [ECR]. Majoritarian politics leads to greater accountability.
http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0408_partisan_nivola.aspx

William A. Galston, "One and a Half Cheers for Bipartisanship," (April 2009) [ECR]. Partisanship has made things worse.
http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0408_bipartisanship_galston.aspx

F. Doing Research on Congress

Although students are free to choose research topics at any level of government, many students choose to write about congressional decision making. One advantage of this choice is that there is an abundance of information about congressional policy making. Unfortunately, you won't find most of this information with a Google search.

If you are searching for a paper topic, you should begin with the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* (described below). This annual volume is organized by policy area, so that you can read about one or two policy areas that you care about and search for interesting or puzzling policy decisions. If you are searching for a paper topic in the current year, you should begin with *CQ Weekly* (described below). Take care to find an issue that Congress has resolved, whether by passing or rejecting a bill.

The electronic version of this syllabus has hyperlinks that go directly to the reference sources listed below. Some of these links require that you be logged in inside the princeton.edu firewall.

1. Congressional Quarterly Publications

If you want to know what Congress has done (or is doing) in any policy area, you need to consult one of three titles published by Congressional Quarterly. This is a news organization with more than one hundred reporters, editors, and researchers who cover what is happening on Capitol Hill.

CQ Weekly is published each Friday as a magazine and on-line. It was known as *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* from 1945 to 1998. Each issue contains articles about what is happening in Congress in specific policy areas. This is the very best source for following the details of policy making. These weekly articles are the foundation for the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, which is published annually. There are also lists of how every representative and senator voted on each roll call during the previous week. You will find paper copies of *CQ Weekly* in Stokes Library and the Social Science Reference Center at Firestone. Electronic access is available, beginning in 1983, at <http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/>.

Congressional Quarterly Almanac has been published annually since 1945. Each volume is organized by broad policy area, and within each chapter, by specific bills. This is the very best source for determining the legislative and political history for any bill. References are included to previous volumes for issues that spanned more than one year. Appendices include how every representative and senator voted on each roll call during the year. You will find complete collections in Stokes Library and the Social Science Reference Center at Firestone (JK1 .C66). Electronic access, beginning in 1945, is available at <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac>.

Congress and the Nation has been published at four-year intervals since 1965, corresponding to each presidential term (the first volume covered 1945-64). Each volume is organized by broad policy area, and within each chapter, by specific bills. The coverage is

not as detailed as in the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, but references are included to appropriate volumes of the *Almanac*. This is a good source for identifying what happened in a specific policy area during a four-year period. You will find complete collections in Stokes Library and the Social Science Reference Center at Firestone (KF49 .C653). Electronic access, beginning in 1945, is available at <http://library.cqpress.com/catn/>.

Congressional Quarterly has also published *Politics in America* at two-year intervals beginning in 1982. This is a comprehensive guide to the 435 members and their districts and the 100 senators and their states, including biographical material, committee assignments, interest group ratings, and district demographics. Although it is similar to *The Almanac of American Politics* (see below), it places greater emphasis on legislators in Washington, whereas the *Almanac* places greater emphasis on legislators at home. You will find paper copies in Stokes Library and the Social Science Reference Center at Firestone (JK1010 .P64).

Congressional Quarterly also publishes a wide range of other titles about politics and policy making. For electronic access to the complete CQ Press Political Reference Suite, including *Congress A to Z*; *Elections A to Z*; *The Presidency A to Z*; *The Supreme Court A to Z*; *The U.S. Constitution A to Z*; and *Vital Statistics on American Politics*, see: <http://library.cqpress.com/prs/>.

2. Congressional Publications

Congress publishes a wide variety of materials including, bills (proposed laws), hearing transcripts (testimony before committees), committee prints (research reports for committees), committee reports (reasons for and against bills reported out of committee), and the *Congressional Record* (a daily record of House and Senate floor debates). Firestone Library has comprehensive paper collections of all these materials. Electronic access is available for many items for more recent years.

The best comprehensive guide to congressional publications is published by the Documents Center at the University of Michigan. This site describes in great detail what you can find in specific documents. See: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/fedlegis.html#ldraft>

Firestone library also has an excellent guide to congressional materials, called “The United States Congress: A Research Guide at Princeton.” This guide is especially helpful for determining where to find paper copies at Princeton and when electronic access begins for specific items. See: <http://www.princeton.edu/%7Edocs/USPriRut.html>

You should first read the Michigan and Princeton documents to learn the ins and outs of congressional documents. Electronic access for some documents is available through several sites, including:

Lexis-Nexis Congressional: <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp>

Government Printing Office: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>

THOMAS (Library of Congress): <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

CQ Electronic Library: <http://library.cqpress.com/index.php>

3. National Journal Publications

National Journal is a weekly magazine that has covered policy making in Washington since 1969. It covers both Congress and the executive branch. You will find paper copies in Stokes Library and the Social Science Reference Center at Firestone. Electronic access is available at <http://nationaljournal.com/about/policycentral/>

The Almanac of American Politics, published biennially since 1972, is a comprehensive guide to the 435 representatives and their districts and the 100 senators and their states. Includes biographical material, committee assignments, interest group ratings, election results, campaign expenditures, and district demographics. You will find paper copies in Stokes Library and the Social Science Reference Center at Firestone. Electronic access is available at <http://nationaljournal.com/pubs/almanac/moved.htm>

4. Newspapers

Three Washington newspapers provide superb coverage of Congress. The *Washington Post* provides the most comprehensive coverage. *Roll Call*, which is published Monday through Thursday, strives to cover the people and politics of Congress. *The Hill* is a weekly paper with intensive coverage of Congress. You can search all three papers with the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe. Go to the following site, and navigate through (a) Power Search, (b) More Sources, (c) Browse by Publication Type, (d) Filter by Country – United States, (e) Filter by Region – District of Columbia, (f) Select News, (g) Select Newspapers, and (h) then select the specific sources you want. Access at:
<http://libweb.princeton.edu/catalogs/articles.php?start=L>

The *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* are also important resources. The *Times* is available through Lexis-Nexis. The *Journal* is available through ProQuest.

5. Public Opinion Polls

For a searchable archive of public opinion polls from most of the leading pollsters (Gallup, National Opinion Research Center, Pew Research Center, ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*), use the public opinion archives at the Roper Center. Go to the following site and click on iPoll. You need to provide your Princeton University e-mail address in order to search the archives. <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>

Another good poll site is maintained by National Journal. The site has good archives organized by key issues, campaigns, people, and institutions. See:
<http://nationaljournal.com/members/polltrack/>

For a comprehensive guide to polling data, try another superb resource from the Documents Center at the University of Michigan. See:

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/government-documents-center/explore/browse/statistics+political-science+public-opinion/1764/search/>

6. Statistical Data

For a guide to statistical data on politics, including campaign finance, elections, and public opinion, try another superb resource from the Documents Center at the University of Michigan, see: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stpolisc.html>

For a comprehensive guide to statistical data on just about every policy area, from economics, education, energy, and the environment, to government finances, health, housing, and transportation, see: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html>

For statistical data on presidential, congressional, and gubernatorial elections, try the CQ Voting and Elections Collection at: <http://library.cqpress.com/elections/>

7. Reference Librarians

You should also consult any of the ten reference librarians at Stokes Library (Wallace Hall) or the Social Science Reference Center (Firestone Library). Three librarians who specialize in politics, law, and public policy are listed below.

Public Policy

Nancy Pressman Levy
pressman@princeton.edu
609-258-4782
Stokes Library

Politics

Mary George
mwgeorge@princeton.edu
609-258-3254
Firestone A-12-J-1

Law

David Hollander
dholland@princeton.edu
609-258-5316
Firestone A-15-J-2