

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Woodrow Wilson School

WWS 521
Domestic Politics

Fall 2008
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, the media, and elections. The next six weeks focus on political institutions and the making of policy decisions, with attention given to agenda setting, legislatures, executives, bureaucracy, and courts.

******* Please Note: Seminar participants are *******
******* required to read one short book before *******
******* the first seminar on September 16. *******

A. Weekly Schedule

1. Politics and Policy Making	September 16
2. Origins of Public Opinion	September 23
3. Dynamics of Public Opinion	September 30
4. Macro Opinion	October 7
5. Inequality and American Politics	October 14
6. Elections	October 21
FALL BREAK	
7. Agenda Setting	November 4
8. Legislatures	November 11
9. Executives	November 18
10. Courts	November 25
11. Dynamics of Policy Change	December 2
12. Bureaucracy	December 9

B. Course Requirements

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The amount of reading averages 168 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 8, a second group writing in weeks 3, 6, and 9, and the third group writing in weeks 4, 7, and 10.

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., Tax Reform Act of 1986, 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, November 25. 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, and a *maximum* of 25 pages, and is due on Tuesday, January 13, at 4:30. The cover page and the bibliography do not count against the page limit. 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 all 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 <i>start</i> of each week's seminar.
Research plan:	Due Tuesday, November 25.
Research paper:	Due Tuesday, January 13, 4:30.

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.** Sixteen chapters and articles are available as part of the library's electronic course reserves (marked ECR in the readings).

D. Times and Places

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|----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1. Seminar Meetings | Tuesday, 1:30-4:20 | Robertson Hall |
| 2. Office Hours | By appointment | Robertson Hall, Room 310
Corwin Hall, Room 135 |

I am readily available by appointment. Please contact my assistant, Wendy Brill, in the Politics Department for an appointment (258-4757 or wendyb@princeton.edu). You should also confirm whether the appointment will be in my Robertson or Corwin offices.

E. Weekly Readings**1. Politics and Policy Making (September 16)**

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 23)

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 (September 30)

Required (107 pages)

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?

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?

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?

Nathaniel Persily, “Introduction,” in Nathaniel Persily, Jack Citrin, and Patrick J. Egan (eds.), *Public Opinion and Constitutional Controversy* (2008), pp. 3-17 [ECR]. What are the ways that court decisions might affect public opinion?

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.

4. Macro Opinion (October 7)

Required (158 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, *A Divider, Not a Uniter: George W. Bush and the American People* (2008), pp. 1-18 [ECR]. How has support for President Bush changed over time?

5. Inequality and American Politics (October 14)

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. Elections (October 21)

Required (109 pages)

Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (2002), pp. 1-23, 204-229 [ECR]. How do partisan attachments structure political competition in America?

James E. Campbell, "The Fundamentals in US Presidential Elections: Public Opinion, the Economy, and Incumbency in the 2004 Presidential Election", *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties*, 15 (2005): 73 – 83 [ECR]. How do the economy, incumbency, and presidential approval affect presidential elections?

Christopher Wlezien and Robert S. Erikson, "The Fundamentals, the Polls, and the Presidential Vote" *PS: Political Science & Politics* (2004): 747-751 [ECR]. Do pollsters' polls or political scientists' models predict presidential elections better?

Gary C. Jacobson, "Polarized Politics and the 2004 Congressional and Presidential Elections," *Political Science Quarterly* 120 (2005): 199-218 [ECR]. Explaining the 2004 congressional and presidential elections.

Gary C. Jacobson, "Referendum: The 2006 Midterm Congressional Elections," *Political Science Quarterly* 122 (2007): 1-24 [ECR]. Explaining the 2006 congressional elections.

Possible addition (or substitution) of articles that were published after this syllabus was completed.

7. Agenda Setting (November 4)

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. Legislatures (November 11)

Required (187 pages)

R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (1990), pp. 3-146, 193-223, 265-276 [LB, DES]. What accounts for legislatures sometimes serving narrow and particularistic interests and sometimes serving more general interests? The whole theory and one case from the past (tax policy).

9. Executives (November 18)

Required (103 pages)

Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (1998), xiii-xvi, 3-48, 227-236 [ECR]. An introduction to the spatial model. What are the consequences of separation of powers and divided government?

Brandice Canes-Wrone and Scott de Marchi, "Presidential Approval and Legislative Success," *Journal of Politics*, 64 (2002): 491-509 [ECR]. Under what conditions can presidents affect whether legislators support presidential proposals?

Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell, "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29 (1999): 850-872 [ECR]. What powers can presidents exercise independently of Congress and the courts?

10. Courts (November 25)

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 to get an overall sense of the argument.

11. Dynamics of Policy Change (December 2)

Required (209 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?

Eric Patashnik, "After the Public Interest Prevails: The Political Sustainability of Policy Reform," *Governance* 16 (2003): 203-234 [ECR]. What determines whether reforms that pass are reforms that persist?

12. Bureaucracy (December 9)

Required (138 pages)

David E. Lewis, *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance* (2008), pp. 1-74, 141-171, 202-219 [LB, DES]. How do presidents use political appointments to control the bureaucracy? What are the consequences of tighter control?

Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1984), 165-179 [ECR]. What strategies does Congress use to control the bureaucracy?

Doing Research on Congress

There is an abundance of information for students who choose to write about congressional policy making. But you won't find it 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.

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 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 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#Bills>

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/govdocs/stpolisc.html#opinion>

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

John Hernandez
jhernand@princeton.edu
609-258-3209
Firestone A-15-J-1

Law

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