

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Woodrow Wilson School

WWS 322
The Politics of Policy Making

Spring 2007
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 participation, public opinion, and elections. The next five weeks focus on political institutions and the making of policy decisions, with attention given to agenda setting, legislatures, parties, the president, and the courts. The final week assesses the current condition of American democracy.

******* Please Note: Seminar participants are *******
******* required to read one short book before *******
******* the first seminar on February 8. *******

A. Weekly Schedule

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| 1. Politics and Policy Making | February 8 |
| 2. Participation, Polarization, and Inequality | February 15 |
| 3. Origins of Public Opinion | February 22 |
| 4. Dynamics of Public Opinion | March 1 |
| 5. Macro Changes in Public Opinion | March 8 |
| 6. Electoral Politics | March 15 |

SPRING BREAK

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| 7. Agenda Setting | March 29 |
| 8. Congress and Public Policy | April 5 |
| 9. Macro Changes in Public Policy | April 12 |
| 10. Political Institutions and Public Policy | April 19 |
| 11. Courts and Public Policy | April 26 |
| 12. American Democracy | May 3 |

B. Course Requirements

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The reading averages 175 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 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 a 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. In order to provide adequate time for completing the senior thesis, each senior may choose to reschedule one of the short papers.

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. 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 by Thursday, April 12. Please send the proposal as an ordinary e-mail (no attachment) to arnold@princeton.edu.

The final paper should be typed, double-spaced, and a *maximum* of 25 pages, and is due on Tuesday, May 15, at 4:30. The maximum length refers to text, tables, figures, and footnotes, but not bibliography. 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. Late papers must be logged in, with date and time, by my assistant.

Papers should either be placed in my Robertson Hall mailbox (fourth floor) or given to my assistant, Helene Wood, in 301 Robertson Hall (hwood@Princeton.edu). Late papers must be logged in with my assistant.

5. **Due Dates.**

Short papers:	Due at the <i>start</i> of each week's seminar.
Research plan:	Due Thursday, April 12.
Research paper:	Due Tuesday, May 15 at 4:30.

6. **Grading.**

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

C. Availability of Readings

1. **Books Available for Purchase.** The Princeton University Store has copies of the eight paperback books that we will use most intensively (marked PUS in the readings).
2. **Reserve Readings.** There are also multiple copies of these eight books on reserve in the Donald E. Stokes Library in Wallace Hall (marked DES in the readings).
3. **Additional Free Copies.** Many of the books for this course are also used in other Princeton courses and may be found in the appropriate libraries. For example, you may find copies in the Reserve Collection, located on A Floor of Firestone Library, or in other specialized libraries. Check the University's online catalogue for details.
4. **Electronic Course Reserves.** Published articles are available as part of the library's electronic course reserves (marked ECR on the syllabus). Unpublished work is available in the Course Materials section of Blackboard (marked BB on the syllabus).

D. Times and Places

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| 1. Seminar Meetings | Thursday, 1:30-4:20 | Robertson Hall, Room 020 |
| 2. Office Hours | By appointment | Robertson Hall, Room 310 |
| | Phone: 258-4855 | arnold@princeton.edu |

I am readily available by appointment. Please send me an e-mail 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 (February 8)

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 [PUS, 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. Participation, Polarization, and Inequality (February 15)

Required (173 pages)

Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in American* (1993), pp. 1-56 [ECR]. Why do people participate in politics?

Robert D. Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *PS: Political Science & Politics* (December 1995), pp. 664-683 [ECR]. Why do Americans bowl alone? What difference does it make?

Larry M. Bartels, "The New Gilded Age," Chapter 1, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (29 pages) [BB].

Larry M. Bartels, "The Partisan Political Economy," Chapter 2, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (36 pages) [BB].

Morris P. Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized Electorate*, second edition (2006), pp. 1-32 [ECR]. Pundits say the nation is deeply divided. Fiorina says it is the elites, not the citizens, who are polarized.

3. Origins of Public Opinion (February 22)

Required (149 pages)

John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), pp. 1-149 [PUS, DES]. A theory of why citizens acquire opinions about policies and politicians.

4. Dynamics of Public Opinion (March 1)

Required (173 pages)

John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), pp. 151-211, 265-309 [PUS, DES]. Explaining opinion change at the micro level.

Benjamin I. Page, "Zoe Baird, Nannies, and Talk Radio," in his *Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy* (1996), pp. 77-105 [ECR]. Public opinion change at the grassroots.

Patrick Egan, Nathaniel Persily, and Kevin Wallsten, "Gay Rights, Public Opinion, and the Courts," (2006), unpublished paper (38 pages) [BB]. How and why have attitudes toward gay rights changed over time?

5. Macro Changes in Public Opinion (March 8)

Required (181 pages)

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

6. Electoral Politics (March 15)

Required (171 pages)

Gary C. Jacobson, "Congressional Voters" in his *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6th ed. (2004), pp. 113-150 [ECR]. What do citizens know about congressional candidates and how do they decide whom to support?

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

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?

Larry M. Bartels, "Class, Politics, and Partisan Change," Chapter 3, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (50 pages) [BB].

Larry M. Bartels, "Partisan Biases in Economic Accountability," Chapter 4, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (36 pages) [BB].

7. Agenda Setting (March 29)

Required (208 pages)

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

8. Congress and Public Policy (April 5)

Required (187 pages)

R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (1990), pp. 3-146, 193-223, 265-276 [PUS, DES]. What accounts for legislatures sometimes serving narrow and particularistic interests and sometimes serving more general interests?

9. Macro Changes in Public Policy (April 12)

Required (185 pages)

David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-2002*, second edition (2005), pp. ix-xii, 1-7, 34-145, 165-226 [PUS, DES]. Does it matter whether one party controls the House, Senate, and White House? If it does not, what can account for macro variations in the production of public policy?

10. Political Institutions and Public Policy (April 19)

Required (177 pages)

Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (1998), xiii-xvi, 3-75, 227-236 [PUS, DES]. What are the consequences of separation of powers, divided government, and the Senate filibuster?

Read the preface and chapters 1 and 2 with great care. This is not easy reading and deserves your careful attention. Chapter 3 is an empirical test of the theory using evidence from David Mayhew's book. Chapter 10 puts the findings in broader perspective.

Larry M. Bartels, "Homer Gets a Tax Cut," Chapter 6, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (49 pages) [BB].

Larry M. Bartels, "The Eroding Minimum Wage," Chapter 8, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (41 pages) [BB].

11. Courts and Public Policy (April 26)

Required (273 pages)

Gerald N. Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* (1991), pp. 1-265, 336-343 [PUS, DES]. How much influence do courts have in the making of public policy?

12. American Democracy (May 3)

Required (139 pages)

Representation and Accountability

Brandice Canes-Wrone, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan, "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting," *American Political Science Review*, 96 (2002), 127-140 [ECR]. Voters punish extremist legislators.

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.

Inequality and American Democracy

Larry M. Bartels, "Economic Inequality and Political Representation," Chapter 9, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (46 pages) [BB].

Larry M. Bartels, "Unequal Democracy," Chapter 10, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (2007), book manuscript (29 pages) [BB].

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. Following are some of the most important sources for congressional research, including both print and electronic resources. Princeton students have access to the electronic resources only if they connect from inside the Princeton.edu firewall.

If you are searching for a paper topic, you should begin with either the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* or *Congress and the Nation*. The former is an annual volume, 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. The latter uses the same format as the *Almanac* to cover a four-year presidential administration. If you are searching for a paper topic in the current year, you should begin with *CQ Weekly*. Both *Congress and the Nation* and *CQ Weekly* are available in print and electronic editions. The *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* is available only in print.

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. The latest volume is 2005. 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).

Congress and the Nation has been published at four-year intervals since 1965, corresponding to each presidential term (the first volume covered 1945-64). The latest volume covers 2001-2004. 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 (KF49.C653) and the Social Science Reference Center at Firestone (KF49.C653). Both libraries also have a special index that covers 1977-2001.

Electronic access is available (1945-2004) at: <http://library.cqpress.com/index.php>. There is also a cumulative index available electronically at the same site.

Politics in America, published biennially since 1981, 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, beginning in 2000, is available at <http://library.cqpress.com/index.php>

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) Congressional, (b) Inside Washington. http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/form/academic/s_guidednews.html?_m=

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 at http://sfx.princeton.edu:9003/sfx_pul?sid=sfx:citation&genre=journal&issn=0193-2241

You can also use the basic University portal to American newspapers at <http://library.princeton.edu/catalogs/articles.php?subjectID=142>. Lexis-Nexis provides access to the text of various newspapers. ProQuest gives you access to both text and page images (the latter is especially helpful if you want to view graphs or photos).

5. Public Opinion Polls

For a searchable archive of public opinion polls from most of the leading pollsters (Gallup, Harris, Roper; ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC; *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today* and *Wall Street Journal*), use the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe. Go to the following site, and navigate through (a) Academic, (b) Reference, (c) Polls and Surveys. See: http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/form/academic/s_guidednews.html?_m

The Roper Center also maintains a large Public Opinion Archive. Princeton students have full rights to this archive, but you need to enter your Princeton e-mail address after logging in from inside the Princeton.edu firewall. The site is at: <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/> and then look for Polling Archives.

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>

7. Reference Librarians

You should also consult any of the reference librarians at Stokes Library or the Social Science Reference Center at 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