

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**  
**Woodrow Wilson School**

WWS 322  
The Politics of Policy Making

Spring 2006  
R. Douglas Arnold

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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 elections. The next four weeks focus on political institutions and the making of policy decisions, with attention given to agenda setting, legislatures, parties, and the president. The seminar then returns to the politics of policy making, allowing students to apply the theoretical tools from the course to analyze why policy makers make the choices they do. The final week assesses the current condition of American democracy.

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

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**A. Weekly Schedule**

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|---|-------------|
| 1. Politics and Policy Making                   | February 8  |
| 2. Origins of Public Opinion                    | February 15 |
| 3. Dynamics of Public Opinion                   | February 22 |
| 4. Macro Opinion                                | March 1     |
| 5. Political Culture                            | March 8     |
| 6. Electoral Politics                           | March 15    |
| SPRING BREAK                                    |             |
| 7. Agenda Setting                               | March 29    |
| 8. Congress and Public Policy                   | April 5     |
| 9. Political Parties and Public Policy          | April 12    |
| 10. Political Institutions and Public Policy    | April 19    |
| 11. The Politics of Welfare and Social Security | April 26    |
| 12. American Democracy                          | May 3       |

## B. Course Requirements

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The reading averages 181 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 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 Wednesday, April 12. Please send the proposal as an ordinary e-mail (no attachment) to [arnold@princeton.edu](mailto:arnold@princeton.edu).

The final paper should be typed, double-spaced, and a *maximum* of 25 pages, and is due on Tuesday, May 16, at 4:30. 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. 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 Wednesday, April 12.
Research paper:	Due Tuesday, May 16 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 nine paperback books that we will use most intensively (marked PUS 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.** Seventeen chapters, articles, and papers 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. <b>Seminar Meetings</b> | Wednesday, 1:30-4:20 |                          |
| 2. <b>Office Hours</b>     | 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. Origins of Public Opinion (February 15)**

*Required* (184 pages)

John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), pp. 1-184 [PUS, DES]. A theory of why citizens acquire opinions about policies and politicians.

### 3. Dynamics of Public Opinion (February 22)

*Required* (168 pages)

John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), pp. 185-309 [PUS, DES]. Explaining opinion change at the micro level.

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?

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.

### 4. Macro Opinion (March 1)

*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?

### 5. Political Culture (March 8)

*Required* (228 pages)

Morris P. Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized Electorate*, second edition (2006), pp. 1-228 [PUS, DES]. Pundits say the nation is deeply divided. Fiorina says it is the elites, not the citizens, who are polarized.

### 6. Electoral Politics (March 15)

*Required* (123 pages)

Larry M. Bartels, "The Impact of Electioneering in the United States," in David Butler and Austin Ranney (eds.), *Electioneering: A Comparative Study of Continuity and Change* (1992), pp. 244-277 [ECR]. What is known about campaigns and elections?

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.

James E. Campbell, "Why Bush Won the Presidential Election of 2004: Incumbency, Ideology, Terrorism, and Turnout," *Political Science Quarterly* (2005), 219-241 [ECR]. Explaining the 2004 election.

Matthew Hindman, "The Real Lessons of Howard Dean: Reflections on the First Digital Campaign," *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2005), pp. 121-128 [ECR]. The internet and election campaigns.

James A. Stimson, "The Great Horse Race: Finding Meaning in Presidential Campaigns," in his *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics* (2004), 96-136 [PUS, DES]. Review this chapter from week #4.

Morris P. Fiorina, "The 2004 Election and Beyond," in his *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized Electorate*, second edition (2006), pp. 145-164 [PUS, DES]. Review this chapter from week #5.

## **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* (233 pages)

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

## **9. Political Parties and Public Policy (April 12)**

*Required* (204 pages)

David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-2002*, second edition (2005), pp. ix-xii, 1-7, 34-226 [PUS, DES]. Does it matter whether one party controls the House, Senate, and White House?

**10. Political Institutions and Public Policy (April 19)**

*Required* (167 pages)

Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (1998), xiii-xvi, 3-75, 147-236 [PUS, DES]. What are the consequences of separation of powers and divided government?

Read the preface and chapters 1, 2, and 10 with great care. The rest of the book contains some technical materials. Please do not get bogged down with the evidentiary details. Read these chapters for the overall argument, the nature of the evidence supporting it, and the ways in which the argument can be applied to the real world. Chapter 3 is an empirical test of the theory using evidence from David Mayhew's book. Chapter 7 uses the theory to explore variations in presidential power. Chapters 8 and 9 explore the partisan basis of congressional activities.

**11. The Politics of Welfare and Social Security (April 26)**

*Required* (245 pages)

Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Programs* (1999), pp. 1-79, 102-153, 174-203 [PUS, DES]. Explaining citizens' views on welfare.

Kent Weaver, "Ending Welfare as We Know It," in Margaret Weir, ed., *The Social Divide: Political Parties and the Future of Activist Government* (1998), pp. 361-416 [ECR]. Explaining welfare reform.

R. Douglas Arnold, "The Politics of Reforming Social Security," *Political Science Quarterly* (1998), pp. 213-240 [ECR]. What are the prospects for reforming Social Security?

**12. American Democracy (May 3)**

*Required* (120 pages)

*Representation and Accountability* (37 pages)

James A. Stimson, Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson, "Dynamic Representation," *American Political Science Review* (1995), pp. 543-565 [ECR]. A macro theory of representation.

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* (50 pages)

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* (33 pages)

American Political Science Association Task Force, "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality," *Perspectives on Politics* (December 2004), pp. 651-666 [ECR]. Both economic inequality and political inequality are growing problems.

Lawrence M. Mead, "The Great Passivity," *Perspectives on Politics* (December 2004), pp. 671-675 [ECR]. Neither problem is that serious.

Margaret Weir, "Challenging Inequality," *Perspectives on Politics* (December 2004), pp. 677-681 [ECR]. Strategies to promote greater equality.

Linda Faye Williams, "The Issue of Our Time: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America," *Perspectives on Politics* (December 2004), pp. 683-689 [ECR]. The relationship between race and class.



## 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*. 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. The latest volume is 2004. 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 1997-2001. 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.

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

#### 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=](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/form/academic/s_guidednews.html?_m=)

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>

## 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](mailto:pressman@princeton.edu)  
609-258-4782  
Stokes Library

### **Politics**

John Hernandez  
[jhernand@princeton.edu](mailto:jhernand@princeton.edu)  
609-258-3209  
Firestone A-15-J-1

### **Law**

Position currently  
vacant  
609-258-5316  
Firestone A-15-J-2