

Political Science 237
Public Policy and Public Administration
Spring 2014

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Office Hours: T – 10:30 to noon, W 11:30 to 1:00, Th 1:00 to 2:00 and by appointment

Introduction

The U.S. political economy has two principal ways to organize the collective action necessary to meet human needs and solve social problems. One is private markets. The other is public administration. The former requires establishing the authority of private property rights and their manipulation by private interests. The latter requires a system of law and administration directed by democratic processes and executed by administrative entities wielding public authority. To a considerable degree, both private and public organizations rely on some form of complex organization and an ongoing commitment to rational decision making. These propositions extend to the formulation of policy, the administration of programs and the evaluation of administrative performance. This course is primarily concerned with how these factors characterize the administrative process in the U.S. As such, the course has six intended outcomes:

1. Understanding the administrative state and how it represents one of the principal alternatives for organizing and executing collective action in the United States.
2. Identifying the basic elements of the complex organizations that constitute the administrative state.
3. Understanding how the administrative operations of the public sector are structured by constitutional and political variables and identify the types of institutional structures which have been constructed within that context.
4. Recognizing the normative and empirical problems that characterize the operations of public administration.
5. Understanding how the organization and use of information, constituency interests and the political constraints impact agency performance and accountability.
6. Understanding the importance of decision making, policy design and implementation in solving public problems and describe the available means by which public policy can be designed and implemented.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all classes. Absences due to legitimate Moravian College extracurricular activities, a doctor's excuse or notification by the Dean of Students Office will allow a student to be excused from class. All other excuses are subject to the instructor's discretion. Attendance will be included in the instructor evaluation grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students should be aware of their obligations under the Academic Honesty Policy published in the Student Handbook.

LEARNING DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

BOOKS

Donald Kettl, The Politics of the Administrative Process, Fifth edition, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 2012)

Deborah Stone, Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making, Third edition, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011)

EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT'S WORK

The student's grade will be determined on a 400 point basis through the following assignments:

Policy goal assignments (4)	20 points each
Take Home Essay I	100 points
Take Home Essay II	100 points
Take Home Essay III	100 points
Instructor evaluation	20 points

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

This portion of the student's grade will be based on attendance, student performance in class and meeting student responsibilities including completion of the readings.

POLICY GOAL ASSIGNMENTS

Four of the chapters in the Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making will be the subjects of written homework assignments. Each will be eligible to earn 20 points towards the final grade. The four chapters in question are:

- Ch. 2 - Equity (due to be read for 2/11)
- Ch. 4 - Welfare (due to be read for 2/20)
- Ch. 5 - Liberty (due to be read for 3/11)
- Ch. 6 - Security (due to be read for 3/25)

The assignments will be a typewritten summary of each chapter. The summaries should be between 250 and 300 words in length. The summaries should include:

- The principal thesis of the chapter
- Identification of key variables that pertain to the policy goals and succinct definitions of key terms
- Discussion of the most important conditions identified by Stone in analyzing the nature of the policy goal
- Good economy of language as part of the function of the assignment is to practice stating basic points clearly and directly

Each summary should be submitted electronically as a word file the day prior to the class for which the chapter is to be read.

To illustrate what a completed assignment might look like, a sample for Chapter 3 – Efficiency is attached to the syllabus.

TAKE HOME ESSAYS

Each student will complete three take home essays. These essays are intended to demonstrate the degree to which the students have mastered the material in the course and the degree to which the student outcomes listed above have been achieved. The essays will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Clear definition of terms
- Organization, clarity and concreteness of the discussion
- Evidence of engagement in the reading

Each essay is constructed to cover a portion of the course materials. The materials that should be referenced in preparing each essay and the due date for each essay are listed below the essay number.

Take Home Essay I

Course assignments to be included: 1/21 through 2/6

Due date: 2/18

What is the administrative state, why does it exist, what does it do and how is it organized?

Take Home Essay II

Course assignments to be included: 2/13-2/18, 2/25-2/27, 3/13 and 3/12-3/20

Due date: 4/1

What are the key elements of the administrative process? What sources of power do administrative agencies have in the process?

Take Home Essay III

Course assignments to be included: 4/1 through 4/22

Due date: Final exam date

Explain what is meant by policy design? What are the key requirements for an effective policy actions and what are the principal means available to government in designing a policy program?

Course Outline

- I. Introduction (1/14)
- II. Understanding the administrative state: what government does
 - A. The Functions of the State (1/21-1/23)
 - 1. Political economy
 - 2. Markets vs. administration
 - B. Governmental activities (1/28)
 - C. The organization of the federal executive branch (1/30)
 - 1. The Constitutional system
 - 2. The federal executive branch
 - D. The nature of complex organizations and organizational challenges (2/4-2/6)
- III. Policy goals and normative values
 - A. Equity (2/11)
 - B. Welfare (2/20)
 - C. Liberty (3/11)
 - D. Security (3/25)
- IV. Administrative processes and politics
 - A. Administrative power: expertise and constituency (2/13-2/18)
 - B. Decision making (2/25-2/27)
 - C. Budgeting (3/13)
 - D. Implementation (3/18-3/20)
 - E. Accountability, management and oversight (3/27)
- V. Policy design
 - A. Problem definition and policy types (4/1)
 - B. Theory (4/3)
 - C. Measurement (4/8)
 - D. Policy tools
 - 1. Incentives (4/10)
 - 2. Persuasion (4/15)
 - 3. Regulation/rules (4/17)
 - 4. Adjudication (4/22)

Reading Assignments

1/21	Stone, Introduction and Ch. 1; Charles Lindblom, "The Market as Prison," http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2130588.pdf
1/23	Stone, Ch. 3
1/28	Kettl, Ch. 2 and 3
1/30	Kettl, Ch. 5
2/4-2/6	Kettl, Ch. 4 and 6
2/11	Stone, Ch. 2
2/13-2/18	Stone, Ch. 10
2/20	Stone, Ch. 4
2/25-2/27	Kettl, Ch. 10; Stone, Ch. 11
3/11	Stone, Ch. 5
3/13	Kettl, Ch. 11
3/18-3/20	Kettl, Ch. 12
3/25	Stone, Ch. 6
3/27	Kettl, Ch. 1 and 14
4/1	Stone, Ch. 7
4/3	Stone, Ch. 9
4/8	Stone, Ch. 8
4/10	Stone, Ch. 12
4/15	Stone, Ch. 13
4/17	Stone, Ch. 14, Kettl, Ch. 13
4/22	Stone, Ch. 15
4/24	TBA

Stone – Chapter 3 – Efficiency

A principal policy goal is efficiency. Efficiency is a comparative idea; it is a way of judging alternative ways of doing things by comparing how much is needed to produce desired consequences. Things are assumed to be efficient when the desired consequences of actions are greatest in relation to the resources used to produce those consequences. Conflicts over the application of the efficiency criteria to any policy center around three questions:

- 1) Who benefits and who bears the costs?
- 2) How should we measure the benefits and costs of a policy?
- 3) What mode of organizing human activity is likely to yield the most efficient results?

Markets are considered as an “ideal” way to organize human activity to achieve efficiency. Markets are characterized as voluntary exchanges based on ownership of the commodities being traded under conditions of perfect information resulting in at least one party is better off and the other party is not worse off. Otherwise the exchange would not be voluntary. In the marketplace, social welfare is determined by the aggregation of individual welfare as measured by individual market transactions and, in this context, market exchanges make the entire society better off.

Challenges to markets as the preferred form of social organization often focus on the problematic nature of the assumptions of how markets operate and how these problems undermine assumptions of efficiency. These include:

- Irrational and non-self-interested behaviors
- Imperfect information
- Coercive elements in exchanges
- Externalities
- Public goods
- Imperfect competition

As such, social welfare is not the equivalent of aggregating individual welfare functions