

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY**

**Course Title: PUBP 805 -- Public Policy Systems and Theory**

**Semester: Spring 2004, Tuesday, 4:30-7:00**  
**Krug Hall, Room 2420**

**Professor: Dr. Susan J. Tolchin**  
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**“Gloria discipuli gloria magistri est ”**

(Translation : **“The advancement of the student is the glory of the professor.”**) From Epistle 194 of Benedict Gerbertus, a Benedictine monk who became the first French pope, Pope Sylvester II, who reigned from 999-1003 A.D.)

**Plagiarism:** All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of others without attribution is plagiarism and a George Mason University Honor Code violation punishable by expulsion from the university. All students should familiarize themselves with this honor code provision (<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>). To guard against plagiarism and to treat students equitably, written work may be checked against existing published materials or digital data bases available through various plagiarism materials or digital data bases available through various plagiarism detection services. Accordingly materials submitted to all courses must be available in electronic format.

**Course description:** An inquiry into the theories of public policy, emphasizing the historical, intellectual and international development of the discipline. The discussions will focus on the political and social environment of the policy system, with special emphasis on the policy making environment.

**Course requirements:** 1)- A research paper that integrates the fundamental principles of the course. Students may select any specific public policy that interests them, and analyze that policy from the perspective of one policy theory from the literature assigned and discussed in class. Papers are due on the last day of class, April 27. Outlines for the papers will be due February 24; 2)- A mid-semester assignment will be announced in class early in the semester, and will be due on March 16. There will be no class on March 2, so that students can do the field work necessary for the assignment. A take-home final examination will be given on April 27, and will be due 48 hours later. Final grades will be evaluated on the following basis: papers will count toward 50%; the final and midterm 20% each, and class participation, 10%.

**Texts:**

Randall Clemons and Mark K. McBeth, **Public Policy Praxis – Theory and Pragmatism: A Case Approach.** Prentice-Hall, 2001.

A. Lee Fritschler and James M. Hoefler. **Smoking and Politics – Policy Making and the Federal Bureaucracy.** 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Prentice-Hall, 1996.

Charles Goodsell, **The Case for Bureaucracy,** Congressional Quarterly Press, rev. ed., 2003.

John W. Kingdon. **Agendas, Alternatives and Public Choices.** 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. HarperCollins College Publishers, 1995.

Anne Larason Schneider and Helen Ingram. **Policy Design for Democracy.** University Press of Kansas, 1997.

James Q. Wilson. **Bureaucracy – What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do it.** Basic Books, 1989.

**Class format:**

The course will be taught in a seminar format, with emphasis on student discussion at each class session. Students are expected to keep up with the reading, and come to class prepared to participate.

## *Class Sessions*

### **I – January 20 – INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC POLICY SYSTEMS AND THEORY**

### **II – January 27 – PUBLIC POLICY AND POLITICAL REALITY**

- \*Administrative Process and Regulation
- \*The Role of Political Variables

#### **Readings:**

Fritschler and Hoefler

### **III – February 3 – AGENDA SETTING**

- \*Major Theories of Policy-making
- \*How Policies Reach the Decision-making Agenda

#### **Readings:**

Kingdon, chs. 1-5.

### **IV – February 10 – THE POLICY MIX**

- \*The Policy Environment
- \*The Policy Stream, Policy Community and Policy Window
- \*Policy Entrepreneurs

#### **Readings:**

Kingdon, Chs. 6-10.

### **V – February 17– THEORIES OF PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS**

- \*Policy Design
- \*Pluralism
- \*Rationalism, Incrementalism and Systems Theory
- \*Public Choice

#### **Readings:**

Schneider and Ingram, chs. 1-4.

**VI – February 24 – THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD (outlines due)**

- \*Thinking critically
- \*Criticisms of Policy Theories
- \*Social Policy

**Readings:**

Schneider and Ingram, chs. 5-7.

**VII – March 2 – MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT**

**VIII – March 9 – SPRING BREAK**

**IX & X – March 16 and March 23 (midterm assnmts. due on Mar. 16)**

**– THE APPLICATION OF  
THEORY TO THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC POLICY**

- \*Case Studies
- \*Critiques

**Readings:**

Clemons and McBeth, Parts I-III. (Different sections to be assigned to separate class groups).

**XI – March 30 – BUREAUCRACY AND POLICY**

- \*The Policy Crucible
- \*Key Actors
- \*The Role of Organizations in Policy

**Readings:**

Wilson, Preface and Parts I-III.  
Goodsell

## **XII – April 6 – POLICY IN THE EXECUTIVE AGENCIES**

- \*Evolution of bureaucracies
- \*Turf
- \*Political Context
- \*Political/organizational Environment

### **Readings:**

Wilson, Parts IV-VI.

## **XIII – April 13 – THE APPLICATION OF PUBLIC POLICY THEORIES TO INTERNATIONAL ISSUES**

- \*The Politics of Protest
- \*The Effects of Globalization

### **Readings:**

Dealer's Choice – to be assigned in class

### **Recommended:**

Wesley K. Clark, **Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat**. Paperback, Public Affairs Press, 2002.

## **XIV – April 20 – Class presentations of papers**

## **XV – April 27 – Class presentations of papers (papers due) (Take home final distributed)**