Syllabus
Making Public Policy
11.002j/17.30j
Fall 2019

UG (1) HASS-CI
Credit: 4-0-8

Lecture: Monday & Wednesday 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm; Room: 4-237
Recitations:
TH (3:00-4:00), TH (4:00-5:00), F (11:00-12:00), F (12:00-1:00)

Instructor:
Karilyn Crockett
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Office Hours: Thursday 1:30-3:30pm
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Teaching Assistants:
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Course Objectives and Organization

This course aims to get students thinking about politics and policy as a part of their everyday life. We examine how the struggle among competing actors shapes the outputs of government as well as the role of government in defining social order and norms. We consider how conditions become problems for government to solve, why some political arguments are more persuasive than others, why some policy tools are preferred over others, and whether policies achieve their goals. Investigates the interactions among elected officials, activists, interest groups, the media, and the public in controversies over criminal justice reform, urban development and health care.

Over the course of the semester, we raise the following questions: How do conditions become problems for government to solve, while other problems fail to attract government’s attention? What sorts of political arguments are persuasive, and why? Why do we choose the policies we do? Do policies ever “work,” and how would we know? We spend the first class of the course developing a policymaking framework and understanding ideology—taking a whirlwind tour of the American political system. After that, we examine six policy issues: climate change, health care, gun control, criminal justice reform, the racial wealth gap and equitable urban development. We wrap up with a summary class and a student-driven, in-class oral project.
Requirements and Evaluation:

The course is organized around two 80-minute lecture sessions and a one-hour recitation section each week. Attendance in both the lectures and recitation is mandatory. *Missing more than two classes without prior permission from the instructor will result in an automatic deduction of a full grade for the course, regardless of grades received on assignments.* (We're not kidding about this.) Communicate with your TA if you anticipate missing a class for a legitimate reason.

Students write four short (five-page) essays over the course of the semester. Papers are submitted via Stellar and are due by the time and date noted on the syllabus. Papers turned in after that time/date will be considered late and will lose one half-grade per day. Students are also required to rewrite one of the first two essays.

The final project for the course consists of an in-class exercise, with questions prepared by students and answers delivered orally on the last two days of class.

We grade student performance according to the following general formula:

- Class participation (in both lecture and recitation): 25%
- Essays: 65% (10% (essay #1), 15% (essay #2), 20% (essay #3), 20% (essay #4))
- Final Oral Project: 10%

(Note that this course contributes to your communication-intensive requirement and so aims to provide substantial opportunity for oral and written expression. See the HASS-CI guidelines for a full explanation of the requirements for communication-intensive courses.)

Reading

We expect students to do the assigned reading prior to each class and come prepared to discuss the material. All required readings are posted on the Stellar site for the course: https://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/11/fa19/11.002/

In addition to reading the material listed on the syllabus, we strongly urge students to read a daily newspaper—the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, or the Boston Globe. All are available online through the MIT library system (see Factiva) and online. Listening to the radio is also a good way to stay up to date on public policy. We also recommend that students unfamiliar with how the U.S. government works consult a textbook on American politics. Several are available at each of the MIT libraries.

Academic Integrity

We encourage students to talk to one another outside of class about issues discussed in class and to brainstorm about essays. You often learn best from your peers. That said, we expect each student to write her or his own essays individually. For more on academic integrity, please see the MIT Web site: http://web.mit.edu/academicintegrity/index.html.

Writing Guidelines

As you compose your essays, please keep the following points in mind:
Format
*All essays should be double-spaced and in 12-point type. Please make sure to number pages.
*Page limits are firm; we will not read beyond the assigned length.
*Use reference-list format for all cited work. (You can find a guide to reference-list format in the Chicago Manual of Style.)

Style
Write for your reader, and make your writing lively and interesting. That means:
*Short, simple sentences are always better than long, complicated ones.
*In nearly every case, the active voice is preferable to the passive voice.
*Direct, concrete statements are better than vague, indirect statements.
*Write for an audience that consists of educated generalists who are unfamiliar with the topic, not for your TA or your professors.
*Along those lines, avoid jargon.
*Take the time to write a draft in advance, so you have time to revise and edit. You might start with an outline. When you’re editing, try reading your essay out loud.
*Avoid dramatic writing. Instead, provide evidence for your arguments (and cite it).

Other
*Submit your essay via Stellar, and please submit a Word document, not a pdf.
*Late essays lose one half-grade per day. We grant extensions only in emergencies and with advance notification.
*Finally, be vigilant about plagiarism, as it is an extremely serious offense and quite easy to avoid. Whether you are quoting another author, or simply paraphrasing her ideas, you must cite the source. There are no exceptions, so when in doubt, cite the source. For guidance see: http://humanistic.mit.edu/wcc/avoidingplagiarism

Please consider using the services of the Writing and Communication Center (12-132), which offers free, one-on-one, professional advice from published writers about oral presentations and about all types of academic, creative, and professional writing. Go to http://writing.mit.edu/wcc to schedule an appointment. If you cannot find an open appointment slot, do not despair. There are always cancellations on the day of the appointment. The best way to guarantee yourself an appointment is to schedule early, in advance of your deadlines!

Wednesday, September 4: Introduction

I. POLICY AND POLITICS FRAMEWORK

Monday, September 9: An Introduction to Policy and Politics
II. SETTING THE AGENDA AND SHAPING POLICY OPTIONS

Wednesday, September 11: Climate Change—Science, Advocacy, and Storytelling

- Lemonick, Michael D. 2009. Interview with Freeman Dyson, Yale Environment 360, June.

Monday, September 16: Climate Change—Interest Group Tactics and the Media

Wednesday, September 18: Climate Change—Policy Mechanisms Across 3 Branches

Guest Speaker: Prof Susan Solomon, MIT Dept of Earth, Atmospheric & Planetary Sciences


Monday, September 23: Gun Control—Agenda Setting & Issue Framing

Theory readings: Advocates (Interest Groups) and Their Stories

Case readings
- Toobin, Jeffrey 2012. “So you think you know the second amendment?” *The New Yorker*, December 17.


- Everytown for Gun Safety, explore their website: http://everytown.org/
- Americans for Responsible Solutions – read website, including solutions section: http://americansforresponsiblesolutions.org/

**Wednesday, September 25: Gun Control—Organized and Unorganized Interests**


**Case readings**


**ESSAY #1 DUE Monday September 30 @ 1pm in class & via Stellar**

**Monday, September 30: Gun Control—Policy and Evaluation**

**Theory readings: Policy Evaluation**


**Case readings**

Wednesday, October 2: Gun Control -- local measures, activists and consequences

Guest Speaker: Kim Odom, Co-pastor, True Vine Church

- Lopez, German. 2018. “Massachusetts offers a model for dealing with gun violence that the rest of the country could follow,” Vox, November 13.
  http://mothersforjusticeandequality.org/about/

III. MAKING POLICY DECISIONS

Monday, October 7: Health Care: Interest Groups and Public Opinion—Defining the Problem in the Contemporary Era


Wednesday, October 9: Health Care: Passing Health-Care Reform in Congress

Theory readings: Congressional Action

Case readings

----------Monday, October 14 Indigenous People’s Day [NO CLASS]----------

Wednesday, October 16: Health Care: Implementing Health-Care Reform

Theory readings: Federalism
Case readings

  https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/31/upshot/up-uninsured-2016.html
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2018. “Sabotage Watch: Tracking Efforts to Undermine the ACA.”

Monday, October 21: Criminal Justice Reform: Issues & Directions

- Stevenson, Bryan. 2019. *NYTimes 1619 Project*
- Americans for Prosperity President Tim Phillips on First Step Act

*****ESSAY #2 Draft DUE Wednesday, October 23 @ 5pm via Stellar*****

Wednesday, October 23: Criminal Justice Reform at the Crossroads, Now what?

Monday, October 28: Criminal Justice Reform within Massachusetts' Suffolk County

- Rachael Rollins/Suffolk County DA Policy Memo
  https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c671e8e2727be4ad82ff1e9/t/5d44a5f79807850001acc3d9/1564780028241/The_Rachael_Rollins_Policy_Memo..pdf

Wednesday October 30: Beyond Criminal Justice Reform -- Intersectionality and Movement-building

- Kimberlé Crenshaw TED talk (watch video)
  https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality_Fusion/discussion#t-1117455

*****ESSAY #2 Final Draft DUE Monday, November 4 @ 5pm via Stellar*****

Monday, November 4: Racial Wealth Gap -- Framing and Data
Guest Speaker: Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins
Wednesday, November 6: Racial Wealth Gap -- Policy Directions and Debates


Wednesday, November 13: Making Public Policy -- Agendas, Reflections and Questions

****ESSAY #3 DUE Monday, November 18 @ 5pm in class and via Stellar****

Monday, November 18: Urban Development -- Theories & Tensions


Wednesday, November 20: Urban Development -- History, Issues & Opportunities
Monday, November 25: Urban Development -- Can Amazon Save U.S. Cities?
Guest Speaker: Jonathan Greeley, Director of Development Review, Boston Planning & Development Agency

- Optional: City of Boston’s Amazon pitch: https://amazon.boston.gov

Wednesday, November 27: Urban Development -- How can private and state actors implement equity-driven policy for cities?

• https://www.brookings.edu/podcast-episode/how-cities-are-creating-inclusive-economies-part-i/

Monday, December 2: Urban Development -- What’s next?

• Shearer, Chad and Alan Berube. 2017. “The Surprisingly Short list of US metro areas achieving inclusive economic growth”
• https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2017/04/27/the-surprisingly-short-list-of-u-s-metro-areas-achieving-inclusive-economic-growth/
• Business Roundtable, Statement on the purpose of a corporation

*****ESSAY #4 DUE Wednesday, December 4 @ 1pm in class and via Stellar*****

Wednesday, December 4: Class Retrospective
No reading for Today

Monday, December 9: Oral Projects

Wednesday, December 11: Oral Projects