

**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY INTERN COMMITTEE  
2011**

**POLITICS AND POLICY  
IN THE  
NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Policy is what government does and does not do. Politics is the process by which it decides what to do and how. Politics and policy are integral to each other: just as there can be no policymaking without politics, we can also understand public policy as both the product of political struggle and the source of grievances for subsequent battles.

In a democracy, choices have to be made, and politics is the best means we have of making those choices. Legislative processes are key to political action, since the legislature is literally the lawmaking branch of a representative government; however, politics goes beyond these arenas, since it refers to all activity designed to acquire and use power for some collective good and includes any arena in which one mobilizes constituents, acquires allies and confronts resistance.

This course is designed to explore how politics influences policy in the New York state legislative process, as well as the role of policy analysis. We will examine the critical issues confronting New York State, and models for understanding how these issues get on the policy agenda. We will focus on the points in the policy process when politics can and does play a role, as well as the various political actors in the process, including legislators, the governor, the attorney general and comptroller, state agencies, citizens, lobbyists and policy entrepreneurs, as well as the media.

We will discuss how policymakers translate their preferred solutions into an agenda that others take seriously and how they take political action to advance this agenda. We will also explore the built-in institutional relationships and fragmentation of the New York political system, as well as the constellation of constituent interests, agency rivalries, legislative conflicts, and external political factors. We will review the way that the political process functions in New York State, the benefits and obstacles that these political features can represent for orderly deliberation, and the proposals for reform.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of the course each student is expected to understand:

- how politics influences policy in the New York State legislative process
- the role of policy analysis
- how issues get on the policy agenda
- the points in the policy process when politics can and does play a role
- the various political actors in the process, including legislators, legislative leaders, the governor, the attorney general, the comptroller, state agencies, political parties, citizens, lobbyists and policy entrepreneurs, as well as the media
- how policymakers translate their preferred solutions into an agenda that others take seriously
- how policymakers take political action to advance this agenda
- the built-in relationships and institutional fragmentation of the New York political system, as well as the constellation of constituent interests, agency rivalries, legislative conflicts, and external political factors
- the way that the political process functions in New York State
- the obstacles these political features can pose to orderly deliberation, and the proposals for reform
- the political and cultural diversity of New York State
- how to communicate effectively orally and in writing on diverse aspects of complex issues
- how to undertake and write a complex research paper

### **GRADING POLICIES:**

1. **Interns must receive at least a “C” in this course in order to receive a final grade recommendation for the course and the program. If a student’s overall grade in the course is less than a “C”, no report indicating completion of the course and the program will be made to your home college.**

2. **Plagiarism:** Any student proved guilty of plagiarism through electronic searches or traditional search methods will be failed for the specific assignment, the entire course and/or the entire Internship Program, given college, university and Internship Program guidelines. Plagiarism is defined as the representation of someone else's work as your own, or the use of someone else's wording without indicating the source by using footnotes and quotation marks. Changing a few words here and there is not sufficient to avoid plagiarism, nor is placing a footnote at the end of a paragraph taken from someone else's work without using quotation marks. **A required academic honesty workshop will be given at the beginning of the program. It is the student's responsibility to attend this workshop, and to be aware of what plagiarism is and the penalties against it within the Internship Program and your own University or College.**
3. **Late assignments:** Late assignments and papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (e.g. A to A-) for each calendar day late. **No late papers will be accepted after one week from the due date.**
4. **Revisions and extra credit:** Assignments and papers cannot be revised and resubmitted. However, a bonus question will be given on each quiz.
5. **Proofreading and writing skills:** Good writing skills are crucial for participants in the policy process. Therefore, errors of spelling, typing and grammar will negatively impact your grade. Please check, spell-check, and proofread your papers and assignments.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. The use of electronic devices is not permitted in classes, workshops, and Issue Forums. This includes cell phones, pagers, iPods, iPads, texting, instant messaging, etc. Interns should turn off all such devices prior to the beginning of these events.
2. Provided that you have met the requirement of receiving at least a "C" in this course (see p. 3 above), 45% of your proposed final grade will be based on the evaluation from your office supervisor, and the remaining 55% will be allocated to the academic component.
3. This 55% for the academic component will be calculated as follows:
  - a. Observe required attendance rule at all classes, discussion sections, assigned Monday or Tuesday night forums, and group exercises. Only a signed doctor's note will be accepted as an excuse. Promptness is necessary in order to sign in to receive credit for attendance.

- b. Quizzes on readings—10%. Quizzes will be administered on days when there are no written assignments due, i.e. on January 13, January 27, February 3, February 17, March 17 and March 24. Also, spot quizzes are always a possibility. **QUIZZES WILL BE ADMINISTERED EXACTLY AT 9 AM FOR PROFESSOR DESFOSSES'S CLASS, AND AT 11 AM FOR PROFESSOR SMITH'S CLASS. LATE-ARRIVING STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THE QUIZ.**
- c. Written assignments—20%. These include papers on district characteristics, legislative reform proposals, as well as political parties and connecting with the district constituency.
- d. Research paper (25%). This paper, 15-20 double-spaced, typewritten pages, should focus on an analysis of a specific bill. The proposal is due February 10; the Research paper is due March 31 at the beginning of class.

Note that the paper must have a title page, headings and sub-headings, appropriate citations (footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations), and a separate bibliography. It must be typed and proof-read. Paper should be double-spaced, with 1" margins and 12-point font print.

Topics should be chosen in consultation with your professor based on the areas of policy or legislation that interest you or your office, what is in the newspapers, what was mentioned in the State of the State Address by the Governor, or in Speaker Silver's Address, and whether, for purposes of research, as well as ability to answer all the questions on pp. 5-7 of this syllabus, the bill is a two-house bill with an active and researchable legislative history, as well as strongly articulated public views expressed by various supporters, opponents and interest groups.

NOTE: BECAUSE THIS IS THE FIRST YEAR OF A NEW LEGISLATIVE SESSION, AND EVEN CONTINUING BILLS MUST BE REINTRODUCED, YOU MAY CHOOSE AS A RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC A BILL THAT HAS ALREADY PASSED BOTH HOUSES, AND BEEN ACTED UPON BY THE GOVERNOR.

### **REQUIRED QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN YOUR RESEARCH PAPER:**

Based on the assigned readings for this course and your research on a particular bill (using materials mentioned in handouts on New York legislative research; readings in the New York Times, district newspapers, and relevant academic literature, and information from the LRS), address the following questions in your paper:

1. What is the specific bill that you are analyzing? (Attach copy in Appendix.)
2. What conflict or catalyst precipitated the bill? Did a specific problem suddenly emerge, or has the problem been building up gradually? Were there any policy windows and policy entrepreneurs?

3. Does the conflict involve large groups, or is it relevant to only a small group? What are the implications either way?
4. What does the legislation propose to do to resolve the conflict?
5. Who is in favor of the bill and why? Which groups and Assembly Members are supporting it? Which groups and Senators are supporting it?
6. Who is opposed to the bill and why? Which Assembly Members? Which Senators? Any organized groups against it? If the bill is not moving out of committee in the Assembly or the Senate, why not?
7. Has the leadership in each House taken a position on the bill? What about the Governor's office?
8. How well have the staffs of the legislature (Assembly and Senate) analyzed the pros and cons of the legislation? Are there any unknowns? What role if any does policy analysis play in this policy story?
9. What are the implications of the legislation for your Member's district? Have there been any public statements on his/her part, and from district newspapers or constituents?
10. What do you think are the prospects for the legislation, or how do you explain its history? Why?
11. If your piece of legislation was not passed or is highly unlikely to be passed, are there specific strategies for either the political or policy process that might enhance the likelihood of this bill's passage in the future?
12. What are the lessons about the intersection of politics and policy around the issue that you chose for your research paper?
13. Do you think democracy has been well served by the legislative process around this issue?

### **REQUIRED READINGS FOR THE COURSE:**

- 1) Edward V. Schneier, John Brian Murtaugh, and Antoinette Pole, New York Politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010, ppb.
- 2) Robert B. Ward, New York State Government. What It Does. How It Works, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Albany, NY: Rockefeller Institute Press, 2006, ppb.
- 3) READINGS PACKET distributed to all interns
- 4) Daily newspaper—New York Times or district newspaper; newspaper articles on current events will often be used in class as case studies for the week's readings.

**CLASS SESSIONS:****January 13 INTRODUCTION—INSTITUTIONS IN THE NEW YORK POLICY PROCESS**

Robert B. Ward, New York State Government. What It Does How It Works, New York: Rockefeller Institute, 2006, pp. **1-10**, (“A Broad Impact”), **55-94** (“The Governor and Other Statewide Elected Leaders”); **95-132** (“The Legislature”); **133-135** (“The Judiciary”); **591-605** (“Federalism: What is the Role of State Governments?”)

Schneier, Murtaugh and Pole, New York Politics, pp.**217-260** (“Making Public Policy”)

\*\*\*\*\* **QUIZ**

**January 20 POLITICAL REALITIES AND THE POLICY PROCESS (Combined Lecture—Hearing Room C, 10-11 am)**

Robert D. Behn, “Policy Analysis and Policy Politics,” Policy Analysis, Vol 7, No. 2 (Spring 1981), pp. **199-226**.

Schneier, Murtaugh and Pole, New York Politics, pp. **3-29** (“The State of New York”) and Appendix A, pp. **329-337** (“A Citizen’s Guide to the New York State Legislature”) and Appendix B (“Maps”), pp. **338-344**

“District Characteristics” survey in readings packet

“Tips for Completing the District Characteristics Paper”

\*\*\*\*\* **ASSIGNMENT DUE: 3-4 PAGE PAPER ON CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR MEMBER’S DISTRICT.**

This paper should be based on discussing the survey in your readings packet with your Assembly member, if at all possible, or his/her representative, plus research on all the web sites and in the volumes listed in the document, “Tips for Completing the District Characteristics Paper,” which is also in your readings packet.

**January 27 POLICY ANALYSIS AND THE POLICY PROCESS  
(Combined Lecture-- Hearing Room C, 10-11 am)**

Michael Kraft and Scott Furlong, Public Policy. Politics, Analysis and Alternatives, Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2007, pp. **93-178**

**\*\*\*\* QUIZ**

**\*\*\*\* WORK/LEARNING CONTRACTS DUE. SIGN UP FOR INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH FACULTY FROM 1-3PM ONLY IF YOU WISH TO DISCUSS ANY PROBLEMS WITH YOUR WORK/LEARNING CONTRACTS. OTHERWISE, HAND THEM IN AT THE INTERNSHIP OFFICE.**

**February 3 THE ALL-IMPORTANT BUDGET PROCESS**

Ward, New York State Government, 2006, pp. **241-276** ("State Government's Biggest Job: The Budget"); **511-544** ("The 3166 Local Governments")

Schneier, Murtaugh and Pole, New York Politics, pp. **29-59** ("New York in the Federal System,") and pp. **261-309** ("Taxing, Spending and Public Policy Priorities")

**\*\*\*\* QUIZ**

**February 10 CRITICAL POLICY ISSUES IN NEW YORK STATE TODAY**

"How to Choose a Research Topic" (readings packet)

Ward, New York State Government, 2006, pp. **301-509** (Pick any three chapters that might help with your search for a research topic; section includes chapters on health, education, transportation and economic development, labor and family assistance, public protection, and environment and parks.)

**\*\*\*\* ASSIGNMENT DUE: RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL.**

Turn in a proposal that includes the following: 1) a copy of the bill you propose to analyze; 2) the legislative history from LRS; 3) a 3-page analysis of why the bill involves an important policy problem in New York;

4) a bibliography of materials that exist on the topic, and 5) a tentative outline of the proposed paper. We will return the proposal with an indication of whether the proposed topic is doable and acceptable, from the point of view of whether your proposed topic allows you to answer all the questions listed on pp. 5-7 of this syllabus. We will also let you know whether we need to meet to discuss questions or concerns.

**February 17 POLITICS AND POLICY IN NEW YORK STATE:  
INSTITUTIONS AND CHANGE**

Ward, New York State Government, 2006, pp. **35-54** ("The Upstate Challenge"); **161-192** ("The Constitution")

Schneier, Murtaugh and Pole, New York Politics, pp. **133-170** ("The Living Constitution,"), and pp. **171-216** ("Struggle for Power, Position and Access").

\*\*\*\* **QUIZ**

**February 24 NO CLASS. REPORT TO ASSIGNED OFFICE**

**March 3 PROPOSALS FOR POLITICAL REFORM**

"Tips on Writing the Proposals for Legislative Reform Paper" (assignment)

Jeffrey M. Stonecash (as updated by Suzanne Post), "The Proposal and Disposal of Legislation in the New York Legislature"

Ward, New York State Government, pp. **11-34** ("Reform: Is This the Time?"); **279-300** ("State Debt and Public Authorities")

Schneier, Murtaugh and Pole, New York Politics, pp. **310-328** ("New Directions for New York")

"The Philip Weinberg Forum on the Brennan Center Report: The New York State Legislative Process—An Evaluation and Blueprint for Reform: Two Views," January 6, 2005, 33pp.

Andrew Stengel, Lawrence Norden, and Laura Seago, "Still Broken: New York State Legislative Reform 2008 Update," Summary of Findings and Recommendations, NYU Brennan Center for Justice, 6 pp.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, "Assembly Approves Sweeping Ethics and Campaign Finance Reform Legislation," Press Release, January 20, 2010

"Statement from Speaker Silver and Minority Leader Kolb Regarding the Assembly's Override of Governor Paterson's Veto of Ethics Legislation," Press Release, February 8, 2010

Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, "Is Albany Working for You?," Press Release, July 27, 2010

\*\*\*\* ASSIGNMENT DUE: 3-4 pages on your suggestions for procedural or political reforms in the New York legislative process

\*\*\*\* Mid-session Evaluations due; sign up for individual mid-session meetings from 2-4pm only if you want to discuss a concern, issue or problem; otherwise, hand in evaluations at the Internship Office. See Attachment E for forms.

\*\*\*\*\* HAND OUT MATERIAL ON MOCK SESSION TO BE DISCUSSED IN PARTY CONFERENCES

## **March 10 ENGAGING THE PUBLIC: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE MEDIA**

Schneier, Murtaugh and Pole, New York Politics, pp. **60-98** ("Parties, Politics and Elections,"), and pp. **122-132** ("Power, Pluralism, Public Opinion and the Permanent Government")

Elizabeth Benjamin, "Reporters and Politicians in Albany: Access, Reciprocity and News Management," in Pecorella and Stonecash, Governing New York State, Fifth edition; New York: SUNY, 2006, pp. **111-123**

Robert Ward, New York State Government, pp. **581-585** ("Open Government; the News Media")

Assignment sheets: "Political Parties, the Media and Connecting with the District Constituency"

\*\*\*\* Interview your Assembly member (or staff member if he or she is not available) using the questions listed in the assignment sheets in the readings packet. Compose a 3-4 page typewritten paper that discusses his or her responses to the questions.

**MARCH 17 VALUES AND FRAMING THE ISSUES: EQUITY AND RIGHTS**

Deborah Stone, Policy Paradox, NY: Norton, 1997, pp. **1-14; 39-60**

Matt Bai, "The Framing Wars," New York Times Magazine, July 17, 2005, entire

\*\*\*\* **QUIZ**

**March 24 THE POLITICS OF POLICY: ENTREPRENEURS AND LOBBYISTS**

John Kingdon, Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies, NY: Harper Collins, 1995, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. **179-195**

Robert Ward, New York State Government, pp. **561-580; 585-590** ("The People's Government")

Schneier, Murtaugh and Pole, New York Politics, pp. **99-122** (rest of chapter on "Power, Pluralism, Opinion and the Permanent Government")

\*\*\*\* **QUIZ**

**March 31 THE ROLE OF CITIZENS IN THE POLICY PROCESS: ENSURING THAT THEIR VOICES GET HEARD**

Russell J. Dalton, Citizen Politics (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), NY: Chatham House, 2001, pp. **32-57; 235-258**

Carl E. Van Horn, Politics and Public Policy, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed; Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2001, pp.**231-269**

\*\*\*\* **RESEARCH PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.**

\*\*\*\* **FIRST MOCK SESSION PARTY CONFERENCES**

**April 7 MOCK SESSION COMMITTEE MEETINGS ALL DAY**

**April 14 SECOND MOCK SESSION PARTY CONFERENCES**

\*\*\*\* **FINAL EVALUATIONS** are due; sign up for individual final evaluation meetings from 2-4pm only if you want to discuss a concern, issue or problem; otherwise, hand in evaluations at the Internship Office. See Attachments C-2 and C-3 for forms.

**APRIL 18-25 SPRING BREAK**

**May 3 MOCK SESSION – ASSEMBLY CHAMBER – 5-8 PM**

**CLASS PICTURE PRIOR TO MOCK SESSION IN THE WELL OF THE LOB.**

**May 4 MOCK SESSION DEBRIEFING – HEARING ROOM C, 10-12 NOON**

**May 11 ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY – WELL OF THE LOB, 9:00-11 AM**

**INTERNSHIP ENDS CLOSE OF BUSINESS**