

Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
Princeton University
Graduate Program

WWS 595
Charles Cameron

Political Analysis for Policy Research
Th 1.30-420

Being right isn't enough.

For policy researchers who want to offer practical advice based on the best available evidence, convince policy makers, see policies implemented, and watch them succeed, having the right policy prescription is only the beginning. Also essential is an understanding of the political environment of policy and policy research.

The aim of this course is to provide policy researchers with a set of conceptual frameworks for analyzing the political environment of public policy and policy research, and to practice forming effective strategies for policy analysis, program evaluation, policy design, and advocacy. The concepts, skills, and analytical tools students learn in the course rest upon a foundation of economic principles, institutional analysis and, to a lesser extent, political and social psychology. They identify patterns of behavior and outcomes, ways of thinking about those patterns and outcomes, and methods of analysis that facilitate understanding and prediction, and, ultimately, the shaping of strategies to improve the success of policy researchers in their professional life.

The course is aimed at doctoral students in the Woodrow Wilson School, including students in the Population and Public Policy cluster, the Politics and Public Policy cluster, and the STEP program. MPA, MPP, and doctoral students in Arts and Sciences departments should consult with the instructor about the appropriateness of this course for their course of study.

Teaching Approach

We will use cases, social scientific readings, discussions, and lectures to achieve the goals of the course. The goal of each session is to augment your ability to analyze, evaluate, formulate or implement some facet of political analysis or strategy. Accordingly, some weeks deal directly with translating policy research into policy or the intersection of policy analysis and politics. Others deal more generally with the political environment of public affairs.

Course Materials

Many materials are available on the web or Blackboard. Because we read most of these books, however, you may choose to purchase them:

R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action*.
Martha Derthick, *Up in Smoke: From Legislation to Litigation in Tobacco Politics*
Richard Himelfarb, *Catastrophic Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988* (1995)

In addition, we will read ___ KSG case studies. We will discuss the logistics of purchasing them.

Assignment

Your assignment is, first, to read the assigned readings thoughtfully and to come to class prepared to discuss them. You should pay special attention to the cases, including applying the assigned analytic material. At least once during the semester, I will ask you to **prepare a case to present orally in class**, specifically addressing the issues in the case as if you were advising the key policy maker.

In addition, working singly or in groups, you are to prepare a **case study of policy research and its impact on public policy**. In general, this will require you to understand a policy area, acquire and utilize primary documents, and interview researchers and policy makers. This project will require careful advance planning so you should confer with me and begin executing as quickly as possible.

Schedule

1. Policy Research and Policy Impact	9/20
2. Public Opinion and the Media	9/27
3. Activists and Collective Action	10/4
4. Activists and Private Politics	10/11
5. Interest Groups, Firms, and NGOs	10/18
6. Legislators & Policy Evaluation	10/25
No class, Fall Break	11/1
7. Agencies and Bureaucratic Politics	11/8
8. Adversarial Legalism, Litigation, and Public Policy	11/15
No class, Thanksgiving	11/22
9. Politics of Program Evaluation	11/29
10. Science Policy	12/6
11. Health Policy	12/13
12. Population Policy	12/17

1. Policy Resesarch and Policy Impact: Success and Failure (9/20)

- KSG Case 1233.0. "From Research to Policy: The Cigarette Excise Tax"
- Richard Himelfarb, *Catastrophic Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988* (1995), pp. vii-ix, 1-103 [PUS, DES].

Your assignment: Identify the factors that enabled research on the price elasticity of smoking to translate into policy success, and the factors that led to the policy failure of catastrophic health insurance. Come to class with a list and be prepared to present it and defend it.

2. (3?) Public Opinion & the Media (9/27)

- John Zaller, *Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Chapter on scientists, public opinion, and gay rights.
- Allan Yang, chapters from dissertation. Contra Zaller.
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John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), Chapter 3, Chapter 6, Chapter 7 (pp. 40-52, 97-150). A theory of opinion change, at the individual level. You may want to wander around in some of the other chapters, to see how he uses these ideas.

Achen, Christopher H. 1992. "Social Psychology, Demographic Variables, and Linear Regression: Breaking the iron Triangle in Voting Research." *Political Behavior* 14: 195-211.

Canes-Wrone, *Who Leads Whom?* Selections (empirics on going public)

Groseclose and Milyo, media bias paper

Recent study

Optional

Morris Fiorina *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized Public* (2005), Chapters 1-3 pp. 1-33 (Chapters 4 and 5 highly recommended). How different are the red and blue states?

3. (2?) Activists and Collective Action (10/4)

- KSG Case C14-00-1541.0. " 'No Prison in East L.A.!' Birth of a Grassroots Movement"

[Susanne Lohmann](#). 1994. "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades: The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig East Germany, 1989-91,". *World Politics* 47: 42-101. [JSTOR]

Todd Sandler, *Collective Action*, selections

4. Activists and Private Politics (10/11)

- KSG Case: Sunk Costs: The Plan to Dump the Brent Spar 1 and 2
- Brent Spar Tape
- Nike and Sweat Shop Labor (Baron text book)

David Baron, "Private Politics, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Integrated Strategy" *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy* 10:7-45 (2001). Rather hard going, but defines the cutting edge in the study of private politics.

5. Interest Groups, Firms, and NGOs (10/18)

- Kimberley Elliot, “Big Sugar and the Political Economy of US Agricultural Policy,” Center for Global Development CGB Brief April 2005.
<http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2794>

George Stigler, “Economics of Regulation”

Jack Walker, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*, Chapter 5 “Origins and Maintenance of Groups” and Chapter 6 “Pathways to Influence in American Politics,” pp. 75-121.

Stephen Ansolabehere, John M. de Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder, Jr., “Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?” *Journal of Economics Perspectives* (2003), pp. 105-130 .

6. Legislators and Policy Evaluation (10/25)

- KSG Case C15-01-1613.0, “Debt Relief for Poor Nations: The Battle in Congress”
- “Lobbyists”, Vote for Me Video
- “The Floor,” Vote for Me Video

Arnold, *Logic of Congressional Action*, entire.

Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (1998). Preface, chapters 1 & 2, pp. 3-50.

7. Bureaucratic Politics (11/1)

- KSG Case: The US Government and Global Environmental Change Research: Ideas and Agenda, Parts 1 and 2

Canice Prendergast, “Selection and Oversight in the Public Sector, with the Los Angeles Police Department as an Example,” NBER Working Paper 8664
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w8664.pdf>

Dixit review article

Robert Gibbons, “Team Theory, Garbage Cans and Real Organizations: Some History and Prospects of Economic Research on Decision-making in Organizations,” *Industrial and Corporate Change* 12(4): 753-787 (2003)

Prendergast, Canice. 2003. “Limits of Bureaucratic Efficiency,” *Journal of Political Economy* 111:929-958.

John Huber and Charles Shipan. *Deliberate Discretion?* Selected chapters.

Phillipe Aghion and Jean Tirole “Formal and Real Authority in Organizations,” *Journal of Political Economy* 105:1-29 (1997)

David Lewis, *Politicization of the Bureaucracy*, WWS manuscript

8. Adversarial Legalism and Public Policy (11/8)

- Martha Derthick, *Up in Smoke: From Legislation to Litigation in Tobacco Politics*. Washington: CQ Press.
- WWS Case: Oxycotin in West Virginia
- HBS McDonalds and obesity

Michelle Mello, David Studdert, and Troyen Brennan. 2006. "Obesity – The New Frontier of Public Health Law," *New England Journal of Medicine* 354(24):2601-2610.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/reprint/354/24/2601.pdf>

9. Politics of Program Evaluation (11/15)

- (Tentative) KSG Case C14-1584.4 "Good Neighbors? The Africa Center and the Local Community in Rural KwaZulu/Natal, South Africa" (video)
- KSG Case C16-04-1734.0, "Trust and Mistrust: External Evaluators Assess Mexico's Anti-Poverty Programs"

Lant Pritchett. 2002. "It Pays to be Ignorant: a Simple Political Economy of Rigorous Program Evaluation" *Journal of Policy Reform* 5(4):251-69.

Eleanor Chelinsky, "What Have We Learned about the Politics of Program Evaluation?" *Ed. Eval. and Pol. Analy* 9(3):199-213 [JSTOR]

(more)

10. Policy Research and Science Politics (12/6)

- (Tentative) KSG Case CR14-06-1831. "Agricultural Biotechnology Meets International Trade: The US-EU GMO Dispute (A)"

Readings to be determined

Possible guest: Michael Oppenheimer or Denise Mauzerall

11. Policy Research and Health Politics (12/13)

Possible: Clinton health care reform; switch and expand material on politics of obesity to here; defunding organ transplants in Arizona (case + video). Or, as guest wishes.

Possible guest: Elizabeth Armstrong or Uwe Reinhardt

12. Policy Research and Population Politics (12/17)

Possible: RU486 disputes; international case. Or, as guest wishes.

Possible guest: James Trussell?