POL 851 – Public Policy Analysis

2011-1
Time: Wednesday 1:30-4:30
Location: HC Campus rm. 101

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Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30-1:30

Overview:

This course focuses on the manner in which the field of public policy has evolved and the possible future directions the discipline may take. The course is designed to review relevant theoretical materials pertaining to public policy-making and test key hypotheses in the policy sciences through examinations of empirical cases in Canadian public policy-making. Policy theory related to the stages of the policy cycle; the impact of policy ideas, institutions and actors on policy outcomes; and the concepts of policy styles and policy regimes will be reviewed and tested against examples of actual policy making behaviour. Throughout the course an emphasis will be placed on methodological aspects of operationalizing key concepts as well as the identification of prominent research directions in the field. The course integrates readings in economics, political science, management and related disciplines in analyzing public policy and serves as preparation for the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination.

Required Texts:
M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, and A. Perl, Studying Public Policy (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Recommended Texts:

Grading:
1. Class Presentations (2) – 20%
2. Term Paper – 60%
3. Term Paper Presentation – 10%
4. Class Participation – 10%

Class Presentations:
At the beginning of term, each student will be assigned two weeks for which he/she will be responsible for commenting on the theoretical and methodological issues raised in that week’s readings through a review of selected readings from that week’s list. Missed assignments will receive a zero (0) grade. Students who are not presenting are expected to read the material covered in the overview readings and in that week’s presentation and comment and critique class presentations in order to contribute to the development of a common understanding of conceptual and methodological issues of interest to scholars engaged in public policy research.

Paper Topics:
No later than mid-term (Week VII), each student will identify a specific topic area and methodological issue which will be the subject of their term paper. These topics and issues will be investigated through examination of a specific empirical case of public policy-making. Preliminary drafts of the term papers will be presented to class in Weeks XI-XIII. Papers are due on the last day of class, with the exception of those students presenting in Week XIII who will be granted an automatic one week extension. Late papers will lose 10% per day late.
Weekly Topics and Reading List

Week 1 – Introduction and Administration: Theories of Public Policy-Making

Overview:


Approaches:


Background Reading:

** Students who are unfamiliar with the following concepts should cover the associated readings listed below prior to the start of the second class.

a. Policy Analysis and Policy Studies:


b. Policy Cycles:


c. Policy Regimes:


d. Policy Subsystems


Week II – Policy Cycles: Agenda-Setting

Overview:


Theories:


Methods:


Week III - Policy Cycles: Formulation

Overview:


Theories:


Methods:

Week IV – Policy Cycles: Decision-Making

Overview:

Theories:

Methods:
Week V – Policy Cycles: Implementation

Overview:

Theories:

Methods

Week VI – Policy Cycles: Evaluation

Overview:

Theories:
Methods:


Week VII - Policy Styles and Policy Change

Overview:


Theories:


Methods:


**Week VIII– Policy Regimes: Role of Ideas**

**Overview:**

**Theories:**

**Methods:**

*** PAPER TOPICS DUE ***

**Week IX – Policy Regimes: Role of Institutions**

**Overview:**
Theories:


Methods:


Week X – Policy Regimes: Role of Actors

Overview:


Theories:


Methods:


Week XI – Paper Presentations

Week XII – Paper Presentations

Week XIII – Paper Presentations

*** PAPERS DUE ***