PP6702 – Foundations of Public Policy: Theories and Methods

2013-1
Time: Tuesday 9:00-12:00
Location: OTH Conference Room

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00-1:00

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 (3) – 30%
2. Term Paper – 40%
3. Term Paper Outline – 10%
4. Term Paper Presentation – 10%
5. Class Participation – 10%

Class Presentations:
At the beginning of term, each student will be assigned three weeks for which he/she will be responsible for commenting on the theoretical, methodological and historiographical 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 research directions in the policy sciences and the 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 and prepare and submit an outline of the 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 the final week of class. Papers are due two weeks later. Late papers will lose 10% per day late.
Weekly Topics and Reading List

Week I (Jan 15) – 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 (Jan 22) – Policy Cycles: Agenda-Setting*

**Overview:**


**Theories:**


**Methods:**


Week III (Jan 29) – No Class – 1st Draft Paper Topics Due

Week IV (Feb 5) - Policy Cycles: Formulation

Overview:

Theories:

Methods:

Week V (Feb 12) – Policy Cycles: Decision-Making

Overview:

Theories:

Methods:

Week VI (Feb 19) – Policy Cycles: Implementation Overview:

Theories:


**Methods**


**Week VII (Feb 26) – Policy Cycles: Evaluation**

**Overview:**


**Theories:**


Methods:

Week VIII (March 5) - Policy Dynamics
Overview:

Theories:

Methods:


Week IX (March 12) – NO CLASS – Outline Draft 1 Due

Week X (March 19) – NO CLASS – Preparation of Final Outline

Week XI (March 26) – Policy Regimes: Role of Actors

Overview:


Theories:


Methods:


Week XII (July 26) – Policy Regimes: Role of Institutions

Overview:


Theories:


Methods:


Week XIII (April 2) – Policy Regimes: Role of Ideas

Overview:


Theories:


Blyth, Mark M. “‘Any More Bright Ideas?’ The Idealitical Turn of Comparative Political Economy.” Comparative Politics. 29(1997): 229-250.


Methods:

Week XIV (April 9) – No Class – Work on Paper Presentations

Week XV (April 15,16,17) – Paper Presentations

*** PAPERS DUE APRIL 28 ***