PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

PADM 0630 (41389)

SYLLABUS

Days:	Wednesday
Time:	6:30-9:15 p.m.
Venue:	Parenzo 114/online (hybrid course)
Instructor:	Peter Vickery, Esq. (413) 222 8760 peter@petervickery.com
Required reading:	Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (3rd ed.) (hereinafter *Paradox*)

This book is expensive, so feel free to rent it instead of buying it.

1. OBJECTIVES

In designing and teaching this course, I have three objectives for you.

1. Improving students' understanding of the policy process (i.e. who makes and implements policy and how) and
2. Improving students' understanding how to measure success and failure
3. Improving students' analytical thinking and writing.

Consistent with these three objectives a few themes run through the course, of which perhaps the most important are causation and path dependency. Let me introduce these ideas via a couple of admittedly trite sayings: (a) most of today's policy problems started out in life as policy solutions; and (b) hindsight is 20/20. Keeping these notions in mind as you read, reflect, and write will help hone your analytical skills.

When authors describe *what happened and why* in any given political clash the outcome assumes a certain inevitability and we, the readers, fall prey to what Nassim Taleb calls the "narrative fallacy."[1] As a result of misunderstanding the past, we may develop erroneous expectations about the future, e.g. the likely consequences of today's policy choices. We will examine the increasingly popular "narrative policy framework" for analyzing policy and assess its validity. One of my objectives in guiding our classroom discussions will be to challenge some of the causal connections that appear in the readings.

[1] Taleb, Nassim. *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. New York: Random House, 2010.

In this spirit I will encourage you to take the authors' ideas for a test drive, or at least kick the tires.

During our time together we will analyze policies that (a) may have contributed to, and (b) purport to remedy a variety of policy problems including the opioid-abuse crisis and voter fraud/voter suppression. In addition, we will examine case studies from other policy areas, e.g. the diesel-car policy in the United Kingdom, which ranges from initial encouragement in the early 2000s (for the purposes of protecting air quality) to today's policy of projected prohibition (for the purpose of protecting air quality). To analyze these policies we will experiment with counterfactuals and futuring. Along the way we will encounter and discuss concepts such as extrapolative, theoretical, and judgmental forecasting; path dependency; and new institutionalism.

As you will see, we will read the chapters Deborah Stone's book, *Policy Paradox*, out of order (I have my reasons for this, which I hope will pay off). I anticipate us reading most of the chapters in *The Science of Stories*, but have not yet decided on the sequence. So you may find it helpful to skim both books at the beginning of the course. I will supplement these texts with additional journal articles, so you should set aside at least two hours per week for reading. This is a hybrid course, meaning that we meet face-to-face only every other week, unless we find that we need to meet more often. Whether we meet in person or through Collaborate Live virtual classroom, it is essential that you read all the assigned material so that we can discuss it productively.

WORK PRODUCT AND GRADING

You will write two gradable papers. One will be due **March 9, 2018**. The other will be due **May 10, 2018**. Each paper is worth 50%. For the first paper, choose one discrete public policy that was designed to address a phenomenon and explain *how* you would go about analyzing the policy's efficacy. The analysis itself will be the second paper, in which I expect you to explain (1) who defined the phenomenon as a problem; (2) what caused the phenomenon; (3) who proposed the policy and who opposed it; (4) what the proponents claimed the policy would achieve and wat its opponents said would happen; (5) who implemented the policy; (6) the status of the phenomenon after the implementation of the policy; (7) whether the policy caused any change in the phenomenon; (8) whether that change was the outcome that the policy proponents intended; (9) whether other factors effected a change on the phenomenon; and (10) who benefited from the policy and who sustained a loss.

SCHEDULE

Class 1

Paradox, chapter 6, "Symbols"

Michael D. Jones and Mark K. Macbeth, "A Narrative Policy Framework: Clear Enough to be Wrong?"

Class 2

Paradox, chapter 2, "Causes"

Science of Stories, chapter 1, "Introduction to the Narrative Policy Framework"

Class 3

Paradox, chapter 13, "Facts"

Vivien Lowndes, "Narrative and Story Telling"

Class 4

Paradox, chapter 15, "Powers"

Michael Howlett and Jeremy Rainer, "Understanding the Historical Turn in the Policy Sciences: a critique of stochastic narrative, path dependency, and process-sequencing models of policy-making over time"

Edward Berkowitz, "History, Public Policy, and Reality"

Class 5

Paradox, chapter 2, "Equity"

Paradox, chapter 5, "Liberty"

Class 6

Paradox, chapter 3, "Efficiency"

Science of Stories, chapter 4, "The Blame Game"

Class 7

Paradox, Conclusion, "Political Reason"

Kevin P. Donnelly and David A. Rochefort, "The Lessons of Lesson Drawing: How the Obama Administration Attempted to Learn from the Failure of the Clinton Health Plan"

Class 8

Paradox, chapter 1, "The Market and the Polis"

Class 9

Paradox, chapter 8, "Causes"

Class 10

Paradox, chapter 9, "Interests"

Class 11

Paradox, chapter 10, "Decisions"

Class 12

Paradox, chapter 14, "Rights"

Class 13

Review