This seminar introduces students to the political analysis of policy making in the American setting. The focus is on developing tools for the analysis of politics in any setting — national, state, or local. The first three weeks examine policy making as a whole and the concept of power in political science. The next three weeks examine the environment within which policy makers operate, with special attention to public opinion and elections. Next we focus on political institutions and the making of policy decisions, giving attention to agenda setting, legislatures, political parties, executives, and the courts.

A. Weekly Schedule

1. Organizational Meeting February 5
2. The Politics of Policy Making February 12
3. The Analysis of Power in Politics February 19
4. Public Opinion I February 26
5. Public Opinion II March 5
6. Elections March 12
7. Agenda Setting March 26
8. Legislatures and Public Policy April 2
9. Political Parties and Public Policy April 9
10. Separation of Powers and Public Policy April 16
11. Courts and Public Policy April 23
12. Presidents and Public Policy April 30

B. Course Requirements

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The amount of reading averages about 200 pages per week, all of it nontechnical. Each student is expected to do the assigned reading before each seminar and come to class prepared for discussion.

2. **Discussion.** The main event each week is a structured discussion of the week's reading. I provide the structure; you provide the discussion. Our aim is to come to terms with a serious piece of scholarship and to see what lessons it offers for those involved in making and administering public policy. Each student is expected to participate actively in each week’s discussion.
3. **Three Short Papers.** Each student writes three short papers during the course of the semester. These are opportunities for you to discuss the week’s readings, unprompted by the instructor or your fellow students.

The key to a good paper is to pose an interesting question and then answer it. You might focus on the value of an author’s theory, examining its logical rigor, the plausibility of the arguments, or its relation to other theories. You might focus on the adequacy of the empirical evidence, asking whether the author used appropriate methods, whether the evidence really supports the hypotheses, or whether other evidence contradicts it. Alternatively, you might address the question of how well a piece of scholarship helps to illuminate other happenings in the real world. Does a book help to explain why government makes the decisions it does? Under what conditions does it appear useful? These papers are not an opportunity to summarize the week’s readings. You should assume that anyone who reads your paper has also done the week’s reading.

These papers should be well organized and well written. A paper that fails to develop an argument until the last paragraph is called a first draft. A paper that fails to anticipate potential counter arguments, is written in the passive voice, or is filled with grammatical, spelling, or typing errors, is called a second draft. A paper that you would be proud to read to the class is called a final draft. I like final drafts.

The class will be divided in thirds, with one group writing in weeks 3, 6, and 9, a second group writing in weeks 4, 7, and 10, and the third group writing in weeks 5, 8, and 11. Your papers should be typed, double-spaced, and a maximum of four pages. They are due at the start of the seminar in which their subjects are scheduled for discussion. I will return each of the short papers with comments a week after they are due.

4. **Final Paper.** The final paper requires that you apply the lessons of the seminar to explaining why some governmental institution enacted, or failed to enact, a significant policy change. The aim is to explain how and why political forces combined to produce or thwart change. You may choose any level of government — national, state, or local — and you may choose any significant policy change, whether adopted or rejected.

Although these papers require some outside research, the emphasis should be on original political analysis, not exhaustive research in primary source materials or extensive interviews with participants. Some description will undoubtedly be necessary, but your paper should primarily be a piece of analysis. You should attempt to explain why an institution adopted or rejected a proposed policy change.

You are free to choose a policy area in which you already have some expertise. You are free to choose a subject that journalists or other observers have already covered extensively. You are free to select a topic for which the gathering of research materials is relatively easy. I am
more interested in observing your analytic skills than your research skills. If you are having trouble choosing, or narrowing down, a topic, please come and see me. You should select a topic and submit a one-page description of the policy decision that you intend to analyze by Monday, March 26.

The final paper should be typed, double-spaced, and a \textit{maximum} of 25 pages, and is due on Tuesday, May 15, at 4:00. The real world of politics and public affairs does not grant extensions, and neither do I. Papers should be placed in my Robertson Hall mailbox.

5. \textbf{Due Dates.}
   
   Short papers: Due at the \textit{start} of each week's seminar.
   Research plan: Due Monday, March 26
   Research paper: Due Tuesday, May 15

6. \textbf{Grading.}
   
   Seminar participation \hspace{1cm} 20\%
   Short papers \hspace{1cm} 30\%
   Final paper \hspace{1cm} 50\%

C. \textbf{Availability of Readings}

1. \textbf{Reserve Readings.} There are multiple copies of each required book on reserve in the Wilson School Library in Wallace Hall.

2. \textbf{Books Available for Purchase.} If you prefer to buy books, the Princeton University Store has copies of 10 books that we will use most intensively.

3. \textbf{Suggested Readings.} The suggested readings are places you can turn if you want to learn more about a given subject. Although all of these works are available somewhere in the Princeton University library system, I have not placed them on reserve for this course.

D. \textbf{Times and Places}

1. \textbf{Seminar Meetings.} Monday, 1:30-4:20 Robertson Hall, Room 10

2. \textbf{Office Hours.} Wednesday, 1:30-3:30 Robertson Hall, Room 310
   
   Phone: 258-4855 arnold@princeton.edu

Occasional changes in office hours will be announced during Monday’s class. I am also available by appointment. Please send an e-mail outlining your constraints over the coming week. I will respond with an appointment that works for both of us.
Weekly Schedule

1. Organizational Meeting (February 5)

   General discussion of the politics of policymaking.

2. The Politics of Policy Making (February 12)

   Himelfarb attempts to explain the making and unmaking of Medicare policy. Arnold analyzes the future politics of Social Security.

   a. Required (134 pages)


3. The Analysis of Power in Politics (February 19)

   Power is one of the fundamental concepts in political science. Gaventa reviews several alternative conceptions of power and then seeks to measure power in an isolated Appalachian community. How well does Gaventa capture power relations in this community? How generalizable are his findings to other communities? How useful are the various notions of power?

   a. Required (266 pages)


   b. Suggested


### 4. Public Opinion I (February 26)

How do citizens acquire opinions about policies and politicians? Zaller offers a sophisticated theory to explain public opinion. How well does this theory explain your own opinions? Your friends and family? The mass public? What seems to account for the shape of mass opinion in society?

a. **Required** (96 pages)


b. **Suggested**


5. Public Opinion II (March 5)

How can one explain the dynamics of public opinion? What accounts for stability and change in public opinion over time?

a. **Required** (213 pages)


b. **Suggested**


6. **Elections (March 12)**

How can we explain election outcomes? How much are congressional elections national contests between two parties? How much are they local contests between pairs of candidates? How important are campaigns? Information? Money?

a. **Required** (201 pages)


b. **Suggested**


7. **Agenda Setting (March 26)**

How does government decide which problems to attack? Which solutions to consider? What are the roles of bureaucrats, executives, legislators, the mass media, interest groups, and public opinion in shaping the governmental agenda?

a. **Required** (230 pages)

b. *Suggested*


R. Kent Weaver, *Ending Welfare as We Know It* (2000).
8. **Legislatures and Public Policy (April 2)**

How do legislators respond to public opinion? What accounts for legislatures sometimes serving narrow and particularistic interests and sometimes serving more general interests? What strategies are available for encouraging legislators to adopt specific policies?

a. **Required** (233 pages)


b. **Suggested**


9. Political Parties and Public Policy (April 9)

What role do political parties play in the policy-making process? Does it matter whether a single party controls government? Mayhew first argues that it does not and then offers alternative macro-explanations for variations in policy making.

a. Required (174 pages)


b. Suggested


10. Separation of Powers and Public Policy (April 16)

What kind of an imprint does separation of powers leave on the shape of public policy?

a. Required (182 pages)


b. Suggested


11. Courts and Public Policy (April 23)

How much influence do courts have in the making of public policy? Can courts be used to bypass elected legislatures and executives? Under what conditions do courts matter?

a. Required (273 pages)


b. Suggested


**12. Executives and Public Policy (April 30)**

How much influence do individual executives have on politics and public policy? Can we generalize about the secrets of effective leadership?

a. **Required (200 pages)**


b. **Suggested**


