

CAS SS 350 AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

The Making of Public Policy Spring 2013

Kent Hughes

Course Objective:

The course on American institutions will examine how key national institutions help shape the making of public policy. The emphasis is on policy making in Washington, though similar institutions and forces are often at work in state and local government.

During your semester in Washington, you will be involved in making Washington policy, immersed in discussions about policy, and reading about policies and policy making on-line and in the daily papers. In the Spring of 2013 there will be an additional focus on the global challenges facing the United States and how those challenges affect the course of the making of public policy. The course is designed to deepen your understanding of policy making while you are in Washington and to give you a framework for future study (and perhaps the making) of public policy.

Course Requirements:

The course will meet on Tuesday evenings from 7-9:30 p.m. Please note that there may be one or two classes that will meet on a Thursday evening to accommodate guest speakers. Each session will explore a specific institution through assigned readings supplemented by guest experts in the institution being studied. Each session will open with a 90 minute presentation that will include time for questions, followed by a short break, and then an open forum that will integrate the formal presentation with earlier work, discuss the reading and formal presentation, and explore how the presentation illuminates one or more public policy issues of the day.

Requirements for the course consist of two writing assignments, class discussion, a mid-term exam, and a final exam. The first writing assignment will consist of an advocacy piece that deals with a specific policy concern or the need to reform one or more of the institutions that shape public policy. The second writing assignment will be a three page briefing memo for a Member of Congress, a cabinet secretary, a senior White House official, or the leader of another Washington-based institution.

The mid-term and final exams will both be take home exams. In addition to covering the material presented and discussed in class, the mid-term and final exams will ask you to adapt your learning to the policy and political moment in Washington. For instance, the mid-term might ask the student to discuss the legislative and executive branch hurdles in seeking to respond to a specific policy challenge. The final exam might take the form of a memo to the president on how to build support for a reform agenda.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend class – discussion periods are an important part of the class.

Text:

Readings will be taken primarily from six texts:

Politics and Public Policy (third edition, CQ Press) by Carl E. Van Horn, Donald C. Baumer and William T. Gormley Jr.

In Praise of Deadlock (Johns Hopkins University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, (2009) by W. Lee Rawls.

Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations, edited by James A. Thurber, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., New York, 2006

Obama in Office, (Paradigm Publishers) edited by James A. Thurber

Competition of Ideas: The World of Washington Think Tanks, by Murray Weidenbaum, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (2009)

Red Ink: Inside the High-Stakes Politics of the Federal Budget, by David Wessel, Crown Publishing, 2012.

All students will be provided with a copy of the U.S. Constitution that will frame some of the public policy issues considered in the 112th Congress and the expected Lame Duck Session.

Handouts will supplement the required readings as appropriate and are intended to supplement the readings from Van Horn et. al. and to focus on current policy challenges.

Grading Distribution:

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| Class Participation | 15% |
| Op-Ed Piece | 20% |
| Briefing Memo | 20% |
| Mid Term Exam | 20% |
| Final Exam | 25% |

(Up to a 5 point bonus on the course grade can be earned by reading and submitting a one page summary of one of the books listed below coupled with advice for policy making based on the book's findings.)

Hail to the Chief: The Making and Unmaking of American Presidents by Robert Dallek, Oxford University Press 1996. .

The Power Game: How Washington Works, by Hedrick Smith, Ballantine Books, New York, 1988

Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power by David E. Sanger, Crown Publishers, 2012.

Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History by Thomas Barfield, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2010

Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War, Cornell University Press (2010)

The Post- American World by Fareed Zakaria W.W. Norton & Co., 2008

In Fed We Trust: Ben Bernanke's War on the Great Panic by David Wessel, Crown Business, 2000

Capital Offense: How Washington's Wise Men Turned America's Future Over to Wall Street, by Michael Hirsh, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey, 2010

Reckless Endangerment: How Outsized Ambition, Greed, and Corruption Led to Economic Armageddon, by Gretchen Morgenson and Joshua Rosner, Times Books, Henry Hold and Company, New York 2011

The Price of Politics by Bob Woodward, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2012

The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy, by Dani Rodrick, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2011

THE COURSE: WEEK by WEEK

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| Week 1 | January 22 | Introduction to the Course <u>Reflections on the Impact of Inaugurations in Washington The History, Festivity, and its Tradition</u> |
| | | Readings: Politics and Public Policy, Chapter 1. Pp. 1-25 |
| Week 2: | January 29 | The Peoples' House (U.S. House of Representatives) and The World's Most Deliberative Body (The U.S. Senate) |
| | | Guest Speaker |
| | | Readings: In Praise of Deadlock, pp. 1-38; 79-104 |
| | | Readings: Politics and Public Policy Ch. 5, pp. 121-56 In Defense of Gridlock, pp. 39-77, 105-115 |
| Week 3 | | Debts, Deficits, and the Budget |
| | | Guest Speaker |
| | | Readings: Obama in Power, Chapter 11, From Ambition to Desperation on the Budget |
| | | Red Ink: Inside the High-Stakes Politics of the Federal Budget |
| | | Obama in Power, Chapter 11, From Ambition to Desperation on the Budget |
| Week 4 | February 12 | The Executive Branch: Departments and Agencies |
| | | Speaker |
| | | Readings: Politics and Public Policy: pp. 89-103; 111 to 115 |
| | | Rivals in Power, Chapter 1 |
| OP ED DUE | | |
| Week 5 | February 19 | The Judicial Branch |
| | | Guest Speaker |

Readings: Politics and Public Policy, Ch. 7 pp. 193-230

Week 6 February 26 The President, The Congress, and Foreign Policy

Guest Speaker

Readings: Rivals in Power, Chapter 11

Readings: Obama in Power, Chapter 17

Week 7 March 5 The Presidency (And the Office of the President)

Guest Speaker

Readings: Politics and Public Policy, Ch. 6 pp. 157-192

Rivals for Power, Chapter 5

MID-TERM EXAM DUE

March 9-14

SPRING BREAK

Week 8 March 19 Foundations and Think Tanks

Guest Speaker

Reading Politics and Public Policy, pp. 63-65 and

Reading: *The Competition of Ideas: The World of the Washington Think Tanks*, by Murray Weidenbaum (Transaction Publishers, 2009)

Week 9 March 26 Global Challenges: Rising Powers and State Capitalism

Speaker Kent Hughes

Readings: TBA

Week 10 April 2 Special Interests: The Battle over Trade and Globalization

Guest Speakers

Reading: Rivals for Power, Chapter 10

Reading: Negotiating for a Trans-Pacific Partnership,
William Krist, Wilson Center
Center

Week 11 April 9 Mother's Milk, Politics, and Policy

Guest Speaker

Reading TBA

Week 12 April 16 Innovation and the Global Economy

Guest Speaker

Readings

BRIEFING MEMO DUE

Week 13 April 23 Pollsters, Politics and Public Opinion

Guest Speaker

Reading TBA

Week 14 April 30 The Media

Guest Speaker

Reading: Politics and Public Policy, pp. 239-245, 259-263

Reading: Obama in Power, Chapter 9

Week 15 April 7 FINALS WEEK

Washington: What did I learn? Do I have Potomac Fever?

FINAL EXAM DUE