Description: This course examines the American public policy process through a case study approach. We use the case studies of federal taxes, health care reform, and immigration policy to test theories in political science and to assess how democratic are American politics and policies. We explore the ways our politics produce certain policies but also how policies produce politics.

Student Learning Objectives: To become familiar with a number of public policies and their politics in order to answer the following questions:

1. How democratic is our decision-making?
2. Are we meeting our democratic aspirations?
3. What are the obstacles/barriers to both?

Texts:
- Graetz and Shapiro: Death by a Thousand Cuts: The Fight over Taxing Inherited Wealth, Princeton University Press, 2005

Course Requirements: You are expected to come to class having read and thought about the assigned material. This class relies heavily on student participation. I will expect you to have read the assigned materials and will call on you to respond to the materials—with questions, comments, revelations, frustrations. Willamette’s Credit Hour Policy holds that for every hour of class time, there is an expectation of 2-3 hours work outside of class. Thus, for a class meeting three hours a week you should anticipate spending 6-9 hours outside of class engaged in course-related activities. I have designed readings and assignments with this credit hour requirement in mind and you should plan accordingly.

Midterm 25%
Public Policy Project and Presentation 25%
Final Exam 30%
Class Participation 20%

Respect for Diversity: In pursuit of the goal of academic excellence, I seek to develop and nurture diversity, believing that it strengthens classroom engagement, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. I do not condone discrimination against any member of the school’s community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, health status, or veteran status. I welcome your ideas and suggestions about how to ensure the creation of such an inclusive learning community.
Religious Holidays: Willamette University recognizes the value of religious practice and strives to accommodate students’ commitment to their religious traditions whenever possible. When conflicts between holy days or other religious practice and academic scheduling arise, every effort should be made to allow students to adhere to their tradition, including, when possible, excusing class absences and allowing make-up work. A student anticipating the need to miss a class for religious reasons should alert the faculty member within the first two weeks of the semester, and the two of them should determine the next course of action. Any unresolved difficulty should be referred to the Office of the Chaplains.

Students with Disabilities: In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access to this class, please contact me at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students must verify their eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services in the Bishop Wellness Center (672-3391). If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact me. In addition, I am willing to work with students to find the best way to accommodate them given their particular disability. University disability policy is found here: http://www.willamette.edu/dept/policies/selected/students/disability.html

Cheating and Plagiarism: Representing someone else’s work as your own and other forms of cheating will result in a zero for that assignment and may result in failure of the course. See http://www.willamette.edu/cla/catalog/resources/policies/categories/plagiarism_cheating.php for university policies. When you are quoting from a source you must place that material in quotation marks and correctly cite the source of the quotation. If you are paraphrasing the words of another you must provide the source from which you are paraphrasing. If you are ever unsure if some action constitutes cheating or plagiarism, ask me. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable defense.

Honor Code: http://www.willamette.edu/cla/dean/ethic/index.html
“We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of moral, academic excellence. We will proudly submit only our original work. We will never attempt to give ourselves or others an unfair advantage. We will commit to upholding our honor and the value of our work. Through this commitment we will serve as an example to our peers.”

Introduction

8/26 (Wed): What should democratic policymaking look like?

8/31 (Mon): Agenda-Setting
Kingdon, chapters 1-3

9/2 (Wed) Policy Processes
Kingdon, Chapters 4-5

9/7 Labor Day—No Classes

9/9 (Wed) Kingdon, Chapters 6-8  [Note: This is a long reading so please plan accordingly.]

Tax Policy

9/14 (Mon): Tax Reform in Perspective
And...

9/16 (Wed): Inheritance/Death Tax
Gratz and Shapiro, Chapters 1-5

9/21 (Mon) Graetz and Shapiro, Chapters 6-11

9/23 (Wed) Graetz and Shapiro, Chapter 12
And

9/28 (Mon) Graetz and Shapiro, Chapters 13-19

9/30 (Wed) Graetz and Shapiro, Chapter 20
And

Health Care Reform

10/5 (Mon) Markets vs. Government
Ann Schneider and Helen Ingram, Policy Design for Democracy (University Press of Kansas, 1997) Chapter 3: Alternatives to Pluralism [on WISE]
And

10/7 (Wed) McDonough, Intro and Chapters 1-2.

10/12 (Mon) McDonough, Chapters 3-4

10/14 (Wed) McDonough, Chapters 5-6.

10/19 (Mon) McDonough, Chapters 7-8, 13

10/21 (Wed) McDonough, Chapters 14 and Conclusion

10/26 (Mon) Mid-term Exam

Immigration Policy

10/28 (Wed): Social construction of “illegal aliens”

11/02 (Mon) Policy Design Theory
Schneider and Ingram, Chapter 4: Foundations, Elements and Consequences of Design (on WISE)


11/9 (Mon) Kanstroom, Chapters 3-4
11/11 (Wed) Kanstroom, Chapter 5
11/16 (Mon) Kanstroom, Chapter 6
11/18 (Wed) Kanstroom, Chapter 7

**Student Case Study Presentations**

11/23 (Mon): Student Presentations
   (Student who present this day will have Annotated Bibliography due November 2nd)

11/25 (Wed): No class due to Thanksgiving break. Travel safely. [Note: I will hold a “conclusions and questions” meeting during one of our study days as a make-up for this class.]

11/30 (Mon): Student Presentations
   (Student who present this day will have Annotated Bibliography due November 4th)

12/2 (Wed): Student Presentations
   (Students who present this day will have Annotated Bibliography due November 11th)

**Final take home exam due Friday, December 11th at 5pm. Late exams will be penalized.**
The annotated bibliography, class presentation and part of the final take-home exam essay are meant to be complementary activities designed to turn you into an “expert” on a public policy topic. You will develop your expertise through examination of both primary and secondary sources, meetings with me to guide you through the issues, collaborative work with your team and feedback from your classmates on the presentation. Each team of two will examine and define the “problem,” analyze the political and policy streams (to use Kingdon’s language) and propose solutions. Such solutions may be wholesale system reforms, smaller-scale implementation strategies or maintenance of the status quo. All solutions should be mindful of both the political realities and the policy imperatives.

For the annotated bibliography, each team of two should divide responsibilities for the political and policy streams and then come together to write one policy proposal, informing each other of the pertinent issues, obstacles and resources in each stream. You will receive individual grades for the bibliography and one grade for the presentation and policy proposal. Take home exams are done independently as individual work.

Topics: You are asked to build on the subjects selected for this course but you are not to duplicate the individual case studies. For example, in tax policy, we examine the elimination of the estate tax (or death tax). That would not be an appropriate topic for your policy project, but you could choose a variety of other tax-related topics. See below for a suggestive list of related but not redundant topics.

**Tax Topics:** capital gains taxation; E.I.T.C., income tax distribution, home mortgage (or other) deductions; simplification of tax code; reducing costs of tax compliance.

**Health Care Topics:** health care for unauthorized residents; drug costs; cultural competency in health care delivery; health equity across racial and class groups; underinsurance; state initiatives designed to curb costs.

**Immigration Topics:** Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals; Deferred Action for Parents of Americans; tuition equity measures; driver’s license law; wage theft; federal-local enforcement coordination; employer sanctions; naturalization process; work permits/green cards; citizenship pathways.

The Annotated Bibliography: Identify primary and secondary sources in an annotated bibliography that summarizes the argument of the article, book, document, etc. you are citing. You should read broadly in your policy area to get a range of perspectives on the problems that need to be solved. Use Chicago Manual of Style bibliographic form. I would like to see at least 15 sources identified and summarized. Here is a link to more information about writing Annotated Bibliographies: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/)

Class Presentations
Prepare a policy proposal summary sheet in memo format (see below) where you: 1) Select an audience; 2) Identify the problem; 3) Analyze the political and policy forces at play; and 4) Propose a solution. Bring copies of your proposal for everyone. The presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes. Assume that we are not experts in your field, but that we have some power to bring about change. Be prepared to answer questions about the problem and your analysis. You may want to think about creative ways to illustrate the problems or issues involved.

You will receive one grade per presentation. The grade will be based upon the clarity and coherence of the presentation and policy proposal summary as well as an assessment of how well you identified and addressed the political and policy factors involved. Fellow students will be asked to provide feedback on these issues as well as the overall feasibility and persuasiveness of the solution you propose. **I need to see a draft of your proposal before your presentation.**

Note: There are sample policy proposals on WISE.
Policy Proposal Summary
(Do not exceed 500 words for 1-3.)
To:
Office:
From:
Re:
1. Problem Statement:

2. Proposed Solution(s):

3. Major Obstacles/Implementation Challenges:

References, Footnotes and Exhibits

Take home exam
Part of your take home exam is your final report on your policy topic. The best essays will be able to synthesize lessons from the class and theories about public policy to inform your analysis. In other words, your essay should make an argument about the nature of the policy process using one or more of the theories discussed in class. Your topic, then, is a case study that illustrates that argument. Your essays should be informed by the academic literature on your policy issue. Due Date: December 11 at 5pm uploaded to WISE.