



Crafting Public Policy Interterm 2010

<http://craftingpublicpolicy.pbworks.com>

Facilitators

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Meeting times and locations

Class: Mon/Wed, 9:30-11:30AM (first week Tues/Thurs); Class Location: Chapin 203
Field Work: Tues/Thurs (first week Wed/Fri), mornings and as needed; locations and logistics arranged in class.

Course description

Crafting Public Policy is an introductory course that explores policy-making as both a problem-solving and political process. Through this course, students will get a first-hand experience with a participatory public policy process. After engaging briefly at the theoretical level, students will form groups to focus on the regional implications of four current national issues: charter schools, homelessness, food security, and biomass.

These groups will work with community-based organizations ("clients") to:

- Conduct a participatory needs assessments
- Develop policy recommendations

- Plan for implementation and sustained engagement

In this process, students will understand, record, and organize the perspectives of a diverse range of stakeholders, with an emphasis on underrepresented groups. The final product will be policy recommendations that reflect these perspectives, and incorporate additional data and perspectives from your team. These recommendations will be disseminated to a broad range of stakeholders and the larger Pioneer Valley community using a variety of formats and media. This class aims to create meaningful, ongoing, and mutually beneficial relationships between Amherst College students and community-based organizations.

Social contract

We are going to have fun! We are going to make some amazing connections between “the big ideas” and the people who are making it happen. We are going to work and learn collaboratively and creatively, and come away with some very compelling stuff.

We also have some serious responsibilities. We have made commitments to our client organizations, and they have agreed to take a chance on us. We have tried to anticipate how much work (and time) our projects will require. But field work is demanding and unpredictable. Nonetheless, the priority must be to do a great job for the client. Be prepared to finish what you start, and to be proud of your contribution.

Required texts

1. Birkland, Thomas A., *Introduction to the Policy Process*, Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001. <http://www.amazon.com/o/ASIN/0765614898?tag=betteraddons-20>
2. “A Manual for Community-Based Participatory Research,” Center for Excellence in Assisted Living and the University of North Carolina, 6/15/09:
<http://springfieldinstitute.wordpress.com/2009/07/07/cbpr/>

In addition to the two required texts listed above, there are a number of supplemental readings that are specific to the four policy topics we are using. Students only need to read the supplementary materials for their topic before class, though we will consider all of the readings--at least briefly--together.

New media/social media

We will use emerging media as a way to make our work more useful, compelling, and accessible. Here is a partial list of tools to choose from:

- Blogs: Wordpress
- Wikis: PBWiki
- Digital video: Flip Cam
- Video editing: (eg, iMovie)
- YouTube
- Power Point
- PhotoVoice

Schedule/assignments

You will be expected to have completed (or nearly completed) the core and supplemental reading for your topic *before each week begins*.

Supplementary readings have been assigned numbers. Go to bibliography section below to find reading associated with each number.

WEEK 1: INTRO TO POLICY THEORY, TOPIC, AND LOCAL CLIENT ORGANIZATION

Core reading:

Introduction to the Public Policy Process, Ch. 2

Supplemental Readings:

- A. Food security: 1-2
- B. Homelessness: 1-3
- C. Biomass: 1-2
- D. Charter schools/HCZ: 1-4

Field work:

Meeting with community organizations.

WEEK 2: DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Core reading:

CBPR manual, pp. 1-93

Supplemental readings:

- A. Food security: 3-7
- B. Homelessness: 4
- C. Biomass: 3-4
- D. Charter schools/HCZ: 5-8

Workshop:

Cost-benefit analysis

Field work:

Collecting data, Interviewing stakeholders.

WEEK 3: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PLANNING

Core reading:

Birkland, Ch. 8-9

Supplemental reading:

- A. Food security: 8-9
- B. Homelessness: 5-7
- C. Biomass: 5-6
- D: Charter schools/HCZ: 9-11

Workshop:

Writing a policy brief

Field work:

Developing policy recommendations with community organizations.

Bibliography

A. FOOD SECURITY/HEALTH DISPARITIES

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<http://springfieldinstitute.wordpress.com/2009/05/26/put-down-the-cheeseburger-and-go-run-some-laps-is-not-rational-public-health-policy/>
2. "Unnatural causes: Is inequality making us sick?" [Video]
<http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/>
3. Pollan, Michael, "The Vegetable-Industrial Complex," NYT 10/15/06
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/15/magazine/15wwln_lede.html
4. MIT North End Food Map [interactive Google map]
<http://springfieldinstitute.wordpress.com/2009/02/26/interactive-north-end-food-map-a-community-project-with-mit/>
5. "Strategy Map," Holyoke Food and Fitness Policy Council, 5/09 [a graphic]
<http://springfieldinstitute.files.wordpress.com/2009/05/picture-12.png>
6. "Fuel or Food?," Reuters, 2/23/07
<http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/117224445861.htm>
7. The Meatrix: <http://www.themeatrix1.com/>
8. "Customers Prove There's a Market for Fresh Produce," NYT, 6/10/09
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/11/nyregion/11carts.html?_r=2
9. "Feeding Our Communities: A Call for Standards for Food Access and Job Quality in Los Angeles' Grocery Industry," July 2008
<http://74.10.59.52/goodgrocery/index.aspx>
10. "A disgraceful Farm Bill," NYT 5/16/08
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/16/opinion/16fri3.html>

B. HOMELESSNESS

1. Gladwell, Malcolm, "Million-dollar Murray," The New Yorker, 2/13/06

<http://www.gladwell.com/pdf/murray.pdf>

2. "Amherst 'safety center' considered for homeless," Hampshire Gazette, 10/24/09
<http://www.gazettenet.com/2009/10/24/amherst-safety-center-considered-homeless>
3. "Homeless projects advance," Scott Merzbach, Amherst Bulletin, 10/16/09
<http://www.amherstbulletin.com/story/id/157891/>
4. "All Roads Lead Home: The Pioneer Valley's Plan to End Homelessness," 2/08
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/mayor/rh/>
5. "Hilltowns to Downtowns: Homelessness in the Pioneer Valley," 6/07
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/mayor/rh/>
6. "Planning to End Homelessness," Geraldine McAfferty, 6/07
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7. Remarks by Don Bianchi delivered at Regional Homeless Symposium, 1/22/07
<http://www.northamptonma.gov/mayor/rh/>
8. "What Governor Patrick's 9c cuts mean for our work, and what you can do," Western Mass Network to End Homelessness, 10/29/09
<http://westernmassrcn.wordpress.com/2009/10/29/what-governor-patricks-9c-cuts-mean-for-our-work-and-what-you-can-do/>

C. BIOMASS

1. "Springfield biomass: some facts and references," Andreas Shepard, The Springfield Institute, 8/7/09
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2. Greenfield Mayor William Martin supports proposed biomass plant
http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2009/10/greenfield_mayor_william_marti.html
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<http://springfieldinstitute.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/residents-experts-biomass-plant-will-increase-health-disparities-video-x3/>
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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SmF3B3734E>

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<http://michaelannland.blogspot.com/search/label/biomass>
6. Story of Stuff [web video]
www.storyofstuff.org

D. CHARTER SCHOOLS/HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE

1. "Springfield's Promise (Travel Team Report)," prepared by Frank Robinson, 12/09
<http://craftingpublicpolicy.pbworks.com/f/Travel+Team+Reportout.pdf>
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<http://springfieldinstitute.wordpress.com/2009/12/07/springfield-accepts-the-challenge-harlem-childrens-zone-part-2-of-2/>
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http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/05/01/for_children_an_urban_lifeline/?s_campaign=8315
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