**SYLLABUS: PUBLIC POLICY**

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**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the process of public decision-making in western liberal democracies, and explains how policy-makers formulate and implement public policies. The main theories of decision-making are reviewed as well as the role of official and unofficial actors—particularly, the power of economic elites-- in the policy-making process as they seek to influence public policy. Students will study the different types of policies as well as the process by which those policies are designed and how their outcomes are evaluated. By the end of course students should be able to be able to: understand what public policy is, know how decisions are made as well as the theories which explain policy-making, and be familiar with the key stages in the policy process.

**Course Outline**

1. **What is Public Policy and Why do we Study it?** (**Birkland, pp.3-15**)
2. **Defining Major Concepts (Cochran, pp.5-16)**
* Models of the policy process
* Policy analysis
* Stages of policy development
* Aspects of policy evaluation
1. **Official Actors and their Roles in Policy-Making (Birkland, pp.92-123)**
* Legislature
* Executive branch
* Judiciary
1. **Unofficial Actors and their Roles in Public Policy (Birkland, pp.130-158)**
* Individual Citizens
* Interest Groups
* Social Movements and Mobilization
* Types of Interest Groups
* Political Parties
* Think Tanks and Other Research Organizations
* Communications Media
* Subgovernments, Issue Networks, and Domains
1. **Agenda Setting, Power, and Interest Groups** (Birkland, pp.168-178)
* Agenda Setting
* The Idea of Political Power
* Groups and Power in Public Policy
* Academic study: “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens” (article)
1. **Policies and Policy Types (Birkland, pp.202-226)**

 **Policy Types**:

* Distributive Policies
* Regulatory Policies
* Redistributive Policies
* Substantive and Procedural Policies

**Other Policy Typologies:**

* Material and Symbolic Policies
* Public versus Private Goods
* Liberal and Conservative Policies
1. **Policy Design, Policy Tools, and Decisions (Birkland, pp.228-259)**
* Preparing to design policies
* Policy tools
* Theories of decision-making
1. **Policy Implementation, Failure, and Learning (Birkland, pp.263-283)**
* The Implementation of Public Policies
* Approaches to the Study of Implementation:

Top-Down Approaches to Implementation

Bottom-Up Approaches to Implementation

* Synthesis: A Third Generation of Implementation Research
* Policy Failure, and Learning from It
* Types of Learning