

TO: GOVT 350 Students

FR: Larry Evans

DT: August 26, 2009

RE: Course Overview

The purpose of this memo is to provide background information about GOVT 350, *Introduction to Public Policy*, for Fall 2009. GOVT 350 is a comprehensive introduction to domestic public policy making in the U.S. It is a fairly popular elective course within the government concentration and the keystone class for the public policy major, but my hope is that any student interested in politics and policy making will find the class enjoyable and informative. There are no prerequisites beyond an interest in public affairs and a willingness to do a lot of work. Our focus this semester will be on developing precise generalizations about the processes through which domestic public policy is formulated in American government and the forces that shape the contents of policy outcomes. Although we will learn a lot about the details of pressing issues such as health care reform, immigration, and climate change, our main goal will be to develop the conceptual tools necessary to understand the policy-making process. You can find detailed information about the course on the Blackboard course site.

Course Site. If you registered for GOVT 350 you should be enrolled in the Blackboard site for the class. Notice that both sections of this course share the same course site. Throughout the class, I will regularly use the e-mail, assignment, and other features of the course site to communicate with you.

Personal. My office hours are Fridays, 2-5, but I should be in my office most days throughout the fall semester. If you want to meet with me outside of normal office hours, just drop by or contact me by telephone (1-3030) or email (clevan@wm.edu) to set up an appointment. My office is in Morton 137-B. And please contact me over the semester by email with any questions you might have. I routinely monitor my email even when I am out of the office.

Structure and Grading. GOVT 350 will include readings, discussion, a midterm and final exam, and the writing of a policy memo. The midterm will count for 25 percent of the grade and the final will count for 40 percent. The policy memo will count for 25 percent. The remaining 10 percent will derive from class participation throughout the semester. As the semester proceeds, detailed information about all of the assignments, including the policy memo, will be placed on the course site.

Reading and Assignment Schedule. I established this course during my first year at William and Mary (Spring 1988) and have taught it periodically since that time. Still, I have yet to find an adequate textbook for it. As a result, I have pieced together the readings from diverse sources – chapters from books and edited volumes, journal articles, think tank studies, government reports, and media accounts. PDF's or links to all of the readings are provided on the Blackboard site for GOVT 350. You don't need to purchase any books. A schedule for the readings and other assignments is provided below. Although course lectures and discussions will sometimes parallel, sometimes diverge

from the reading schedule, you will be expected to have read the assignment for a particular day prior to the class meeting on that day.

Syllabus

I. A Policy Crisis?

- 8/26 President Barack Obama, "Address to Joint Session of Congress" (2/24/09)
The Long-Term Budget Outlook, CBO, 6/09 (Ch. 1-2)
- 8/28 *The Long-Term Budget Outlook*, CBO, 6/09 (Ch. 3-5)
- 8/31 Kraft and Furlong, "Public Policy and Politics," (in *Public Policy*, 3rd ed., Ch. 1)

II. Conceptual Ingredients

- 9/2 A. Problem Definition:
Rocheftort and Cobb, "Problem Definition: An Emerging Perspective" (in *Problem Definition*, Rocheftort and Cobb)
Mucciaroni, "Problem Definition and Special Interest Politics in Tax Policy and Agriculture" (in *Problem Definition*, Rocheftort and Cobb)
- 9/4 B. Agenda Setting:
Baumgartner and Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (Ch. 1, 2, 5)
- 9/7 C. Federalism:
Peterson, *The Price of Federalism* (Ch. 2)
- 9/9 Peterson, *The Price of Federalism* (Ch. 3)
- 9/11 D. Public Opinion:
Page and Shapiro, *The Rational Public* (Ch. 4)
- 9/14 Jacobs and Shapiro, "The Politicization of Public Opinion" (in *The Social Divide*, Wier)
- 9/18 E. Advocacy Groups:
Cigler and Loomis, "The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics" (*Interest Group Politics*, 7th ed., Cigler and Loomis)
Kersh, "The Well-Informed Lobbyist" (*Interest Group Politics*, 7th ed., Cigler and Loomis)

- 9/21 F. Congress:
Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (Ch. 2)
- 9/23 Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (Ch. 4)
- 9/25 Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (Ch. 6)
- 9/28 G. Executive Branch:
Brady and Volden, *Revolving Gridlock*, 2nd ed. (Ch. 2)
- 9/30 Moe, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure" (in *Can the Government Govern?*, Chubb and Peterson)
- 10/2 Lewis, "Presidents and the Bureaucracy" (in *The Presidency and the Political System*, 8th ed., Nelson)
- 10/5 H. Courts:
Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope* (Ch. 1, 2, 3)
Midterm (take-home portion due)
- 10/7 **Midterm (in-class portion)**
- 10/9 TBA
- III. Policy Challenges**
- 10/14 A. Economic Policy:
Reread *The Long-Term Budget Outlook*, CBO, 6/09 (Ch. 1-5)
Pierson, "The Deficit and the Politics of Domestic Reform" (in *The Social Divide*, Wier)
- 10/16 Bartels, *Unequal Democracy* (Ch. 2, 6)
- 10/19 B. Health Care:
Patel and Rushefsky, *Health Care Politics and Policy in America*, 3rd ed. (Ch. 1-2)
- 10/21 Patel and Rushefsky, *Health Care Politics and Policy in American*, 3rd ed. (Ch. 9)
Clemmitt, "Rising Health Costs," *CQ Researcher*
- 10/23 Lyke, "Health Care Reform: An Introduction," *CRS Report* (7/29/09)
- 10/26 C. Social Security and Welfare:
Cooper, "Social Security Reform," *CQ Researcher*
Katel, "Straining the Safety Net," *CQ Researcher*

- Glazer, "Welfare Reform," *CQ Researcher*
- 10/28 Winter, "Beyond Welfare: Framing and the Racialization of White Opinion on Social Security," *AJPS* (2006)
- 10/30 Butler and MacGuineas, "Rethinking Social Insurance," *The Heritage Foundation* (2/19/08)
Favreault, "Revitalizing Social Security," Statement before the Select Committee on Aging, U.S. Senate (6/17/09)
- 11/2 D. Environment and Energy:
Potential Impact of Climate Change in the United States, CBO, 5/09
- 11/4 Leggett, "Climate Change: Current Issues and Policy Tools," *CRS Report* (3/6/09)
- 11/6 Clemmitt, "Energy and Climate," *CQ Researcher*
Samuelson, "Global Warming and Hot Air," *The Washington Post* (2/7/07)
- 11/9 E. Immigration:
Bush and McLarty, *U.S. Immigration Policy*, Council on Foreign Relations, (pages 1-82)
- 11/11 *America's Immigration Quandary*, The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 3/30/06
- 11/13 Bush and McLarty, *U.S. Immigration Policy*, Council on Foreign Relations, (pages 82-end)
- 11/16 F. Agriculture:
Hansen, *Gaining Access* (Ch. 3, 4)
- 11/18 Jones, "Representation in Congress: The Case of the House Agriculture Committee," *APSR* (1961)
Ferejohn, "Logrolling in an Institutional Context: A Case Study of Food Stamp Legislation" (in *Congress and Policy Change*, Wright et. al.)
Hurwitz, Moiles, and Rohde, "Distributive and Partisan Issues in Agriculture Policy in the 104th House," *APSR* (2001)
- 11/20 Hosansky, "Farm Subsidies," *CQ Researcher*
Riedl, "How Farm Subsidies Harm Taxpayers, Consumers, and Farmers Too," *The Heritage Foundation* (2/19/07)

- 11/23 G. Financial Regulation:
Baily, Litan, and Johnson, “The Origins of the Financial Crisis,” *The Brookings Institution* (11/08) (first half)
- 11/30 **Policy Memos Due**
- 12/2 Baily, Litan, and Johnson, “The Origins of the Financial Crisis,” *The Brookings Institution* (11/08) (second half)
- 12/4 Johnson, “The Quiet Coup,” *The Atlantic* (5/09)
- 12/14 **Final Exam Sec. 2, in-class portion (9 am-12 pm)**
- 12/16 **Final Exam Sec. 1, in-class portion (2 pm-5 pm)**
Final Exam, take-home portion due (5 pm)