POLI 495-002
Framing Public Policies
M, W 2:00–3:15pm, Hamilton 452
Spring 2013

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Office hours: M, W, 3:15-5:00 pm and by appointment

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This class will focus on the process by which policies get framed, or defined in public discussion. Framing is focusing attention on some elements of a complex public problem rather than others. Politicians constantly attempt to frame issues in ways that are advantageous to their side of the debate, and we often refer derisively to "spin" when we see this. But framing is inevitable. Furthermore, frames sometimes change over time. Smoking was once seen as glamorous and the tobacco industry was held up as one of the most powerful lobbies in American politics. Today you can't smoke in most public places. So the course will focus on something you see around you every day, at least if you read the newspapers and pay attention to politics.

We will begin with a review of a number of theories from political science and psychology about how we frame things, about why some frames are more powerful than others, and about how the brain processes new, unfamiliar, or unwanted information. Then we get into the core of the course, which is reading articles that document how frames change over time. We will go through a lot of examples, from why we and other countries adopted alcohol prohibition many decades ago, to smoking, nuclear power, obesity, and policies toward children.

We are fortunate that enrollment is limited in this class to a relatively small number and students will all be juniors or seniors, so we can run the class with lots of time for discussions about the readings. In fact, this class has been designated by the Office of Undergraduate Research as a "research exposure" course, and you will be working with a Graduate Research Consultant, Jacob Smith, who will assist you in a research project. The GRC Program is sponsored by the Office for Undergraduate Research (www.unc.edu/depts/our), and you may be able to use this research-exposure course to meet a requirement of the Carolina Research Scholars Program (http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/students/students_crsp.html). I encourage you to visit the OUR website to learn about how you might engage in research, scholarship and creative performance while you are at Carolina.

What this means is that Jacob and I will help you design a research project where you trace the framing of a public policy in much the same way as some of the authors we read in class have done. Essentially this means that you: a) pick a topic of public policy that interests you; b) identify different ways that the issue can be framed; and c) track using media or government sources how often the different frames associated with the issue have been mentioned over time or document how policy actors with different goals frame the issue selectively. Rather than just

read some books or articles and write a standard term paper, you will "get your hands dirty" with some actual research. Assignments will include a number of short projects designed to push you along the way to completing an interesting and original research project. Further, Jacob will conduct some lab sessions in which he will go over the technical aspects of some research skills you will need, and he will be available for individual consulting as well.

Your research project may involve one of two approaches. One is to trace a given policy over time, using media sources such as the *New York Times*, available for a sufficient period to observe change. The minimum acceptable is 25 years, but longer is better. A second option is systematically to code which political actors make which types of arguments in a policy debate, to investigate whether they are strategically attempting to use frames to advance their interests. In either case, you will need to pay attention to identifying a policy debate very early in the semester, and then checking whether you can use computerized sources and keyword searches to identify the major frames. So you'll need to get started early, and you may need to change your topic if you can't measure the frames accurately. Welcome to the world of empirical research!

Finally, let me mention that the topic of this course is the area where I do most of my research. So come to class with questions about how we do it. You may be surprised at how simple it is in some ways, but complicated in others. In any case, you should get a real feel for the process of political science research in this class. We will pay attention in class discussion not only to the substance of the conclusions that the authors reach about how policies have or have not been reframed over time, but also how they collect their evidence and support their conclusions.

Assignments will be as follows:
Participation in class discussion and quizzes on the readings	20%
Three intermediate term paper progress reports / drafts (3 x 10%)	30
Final paper	20
In class exam	10
Final exam	20
Total	100%

Missed class and late assignments: Missing class more than a few times will certainly affect your participation grade; missing class more than 5 times will lead to a full grade reduction in your final grade. Similarly, missing the in-class or the final exam will lead to a 10 point reduction in your grade and a revised exam which may well be more difficult. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Any late papers will be accepted but down-graded by 10 points after the class when they are due, then 10 more points each 24 hours including weekends; if you are late with the assignment, email me the paper. Now, all this sounds very harsh and I apologize for that. If you know ahead of time you will miss an assignment for some good reason, contact me after class, by email, or in my office hours and we may agree on an alternative, without any penalty. Similarly, if you have an illness or a university supported excuse then no penalties will apply. Just stay in touch.

Caveat: I consider the syllabus in a class to be a contract. However, I do reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates (excluding the officially

scheduled final examination), when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedules.

Books for purchase: There is just one book required for purchase; we read it in April but please buy it on-line as soon as possible. All the other required readings should be on the class web site.
- Gormley, William T. Jr. 2012. *Voices for Children: Rhetoric and Public Policy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Disabilities: Please let me know in the first two weeks of class if you need any accommodation for a disability. No problem. But don't delay in letting me know.

Academic Honesty: Study together but make sure the work you hand in is your own. For all course work, the Honor Code applies; the student's signature on her/his work confirms that the Code rules were respected. Familiarize yourselves with the Code at http://honor.unc.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=44&Itemid=71. You also need to familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism in order to make sure that you avoid it. Plagiarism is defined as deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise. Take the library's tutorial at http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/ and ask me if you have any questions.

Effort: Don't come to class unprepared to participate.

Intimidation Factor: I'm the author of some of the work discussed here. That can either be a cause not to critique and discuss, or an opportunity to engage with a person who is active in the field. I have thick skin and welcome criticism, discussion, and challenges. So feel free!

Computers and cell phones: Turn them off, period. Pay attention to the discussion. Bring paper copies of the readings, and a pad and pen to take notes. Type your notes into a computer file after class; that will help you review and learn the material.

Weekly schedule and discussion topics

Note: Readings should all be done *before the Monday class*. Most of these readings are easy to understand but a few get technically difficult at times. Don't worry too much about any statistical presentations that you can't understand. However, do your best, and come to class with questions. You should definitely understand and pay careful attention to the concepts and conclusions being presented. I'll occasionally have quick quizzes designed to evaluate whether you've done the readings. This will be partially based on my sense of whether people are doing the readings. So, to avoid quizzes, come with questions and comments that show you have read the material!

Week 1, Wed Jan 9, Introduction and overview

Part One: Theories of How People Think and How Policies are Framed

Week 2, Jan 14, 16 Causal Stories and Target Populations
1. Stone, Deborah A. 1989. Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas. *Political Science Quarterly* 104, 2: 281–300.
2. Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. 1993. Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy. *American Political Science Review* 87, 2: 334–47.

Week 3, Jan 23 How We Differ when Thinking of Gains versus Losses
3. Quattrone, George A., and Amos Tversky. 1988. Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice. *American Political Science Review* 82, 3: 719–736.

(No class on MLK day, Monday Jan 21; happy holiday)

Week 4, Jan 28, 30 Motivated Reasoning, or Why It Is Hard to Make People Change their Mind
4. Lord, Charles G., Lee Ross, and Mark R. Lepper. 1979. Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarization: The Effects of Prior Theories on Subsequently Considered Evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37 (11): 2098-2109.
5. Kunda, Ziva. 1990. The Case for Motivated Reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin* 108(3): 480-98.
6. Ditto, Peter H. and David F. Lopez. 1992. Motivated Skepticism: Use of Differential Decision Criteria for Preferred and Nonpreferred Conclusions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63 (4): 568-84.

Week 5, Feb 4, 6 Exam and Lab session
•   Monday Feb 4, exam on theories covered so far
•   Wednesday Feb 6, lab session led by Jacob Smith

Part Two: Examples of Policy Changes

Week 6, Feb 11, 13 Nuclear Power, Poverty
7. Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 1991. Agenda Dynamics and Policy Subsystems. *Journal of Politics* 53 (November): 1044–74.

8. Rose, Max, and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2013. Framing the Poor: Media Coverage and US Poverty Policy, 1960–2008. *Policy Studies Journal*, forthcoming.

Assignment 1 due, Wednesday February 13. In 2 single-spaced pages, explain in general terms the policy issue you are expecting to study, at least five bibliographic sources about the substance of the topic, and explain the different frames associated with it. (Be careful, see assignment 2 below.)

Week 7, Feb 18, 20 Smoking and Gun Control

9. Nathanson, Constance A. 1999. Social Movements as Catalysts for Policy Change: The Case of Smoking and Guns. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 24, 3: 421-488.

Week 8 Feb 25, 27 More on Smoking

10. Shipan, Charles R. and Craig Volden. 2006. Bottom-Up Federalism: The Diffusion of Antismoking Policies from U.S. Cities to States. *American Journal of Political Science* 50, 4: 825–843.
11. Cairney, Paul. 2007. Using Devolution to Set the Agenda? Venue Shift and the Smoking Ban in Scotland. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9: 73–89

Week 9, Mar 4, 6 Obesity, Alcohol

12. Lawrence, Regina G. 2004. Framing Obesity : The Evolution of News Discourse on a Public Health Issue. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 9: 56-75.
13. Schrad, Mark Lawrence. 2007. Constitutional Blemishes: Understanding American Alcohol Prohibition and Repeal as Policy Punctuation. *Policy Studies Journal* 35, 3: 437-464.

Assignment 2 due, Wednesday March 6. Identify the key-words you will use to measure the prevalence of the frames you identified in your first assignment and show that they are accurate. If you can't measure the frames you identified in Assignment 1, then pick a new topic and re-do assignment one. (I'm not being mean! You have to be able to measure it, so take this into consideration when you do Assignment 1.) This means a spreadsheet with identified frames and a test of 100 cases showing at least 80 percent "true-hits."

(Spring Break, March 9-17)

Week 10, Mar 18, 20 An Alternative to the GDP as a Measure of Quality of Life, catch-up

14. Bache, Ian. 2013. Measuring quality of life for public policy: an idea whose time has come? Agenda-setting dynamics in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy* 20 (1): 21-38.

Assignment 3 due, Wednesday March 20: Generate a time-line of media or government attention to your topic and to the frames you have identified. This should be a spreadsheet with at least 25 years of data. Generate graphs relating to your frames showing their relative prominence over time. Alternatively, generate codes of rival speakers in a Congressional setting debating the same issue showing how different actors emphasize different frames. In either case, present your findings in professional looking tables and/or figures.

Week 11, Mar 25, 27 Why is Policy Hostile to Children even if Children Are Positively Framed?

15. Gormley, William T. Jr. 2012. *Voices for Children: Rhetoric and Public Policy*.
    Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, chapters 1-4.

Week 12, Apr 1, 3 More on Children the Consequences of Framing
    16. Gormley, William T. Jr. 2012. *Voices for Children: Rhetoric and Public Policy*.
        Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, chapters 5-8.
    • Wednesday April 3, Special Guest: Bill Gormley, from Georgetown University. Come
      with questions about his research!

Week 13, Apr 8, 10 The Death Penalty
    17. Frank R. Baumgartner, Suzanna Linn, and Amber E. Boydstun. 2009. The Decline of
        the Death Penalty: How Media Framing Changed Capital Punishment in America. In
        Brian F. Schaffner and Patrick J. Sellers, eds. *Winning with Words: The Origins and
        Impact of Framing*. New York: Routledge, pp. 159–84.
    18. Peffley, Mark and Jon Hurwitz. 2007. Persuasion and Resistance: Race and the Death
        Penalty in America. *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 996-1012.

Week 14 , Apr 15, 17 Framing as Competition: Sometimes You Win, Sometimes You Lose
    19. Riker, William H. 1986. The Art of Political Manipulation. New Haven: Yale University
        Press, ch. 10, Warren Magnuson and Nerve Gas.
    20. Baumgartner, Frank R., Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth
        L. Leech. 2009. *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*.
        Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 9, Washington: The Real No-Spin Zone,
        pp. 166-89.
    Term paper due, Wednesday April 17: Draft your paper, 14-16 pages double-spaced,
    incorporating your own analysis based on the data you collected as well as your sources from
    the literature.

Week 15, Apr 22, 24 Review, discussions, complaints about the professor (optional)

Final Exam: TBA, according to the official schedule from the registrar's office.

Draft January 2, 2013