PS 307 Seminar in Urban, State, and Local Politics
Public Policy in Pennsylvania: Building the First State Database
SPRING 2006

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OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

Students will study the punctuated equilibrium theory of American public policy, learn to use the web-accessible national public policy database constructed by Professors Frank Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, and write a term paper based on original research using the national database to study issues in which state and local governments also are involved.

As the initial participants in Temple University's Pennsylvania Policy Database Project, students will also be involved in a collaborative process with the instructor and graduate assistants in developing the first state database built on the national model. Students will write abstracts of state bills, laws, legislative committee hearings, studies and reports commissioned by the legislature, Pennsylvania Supreme Court decisions, and newspaper accounts of state government activity.   Students will then code abstracts of these records according to main and subtopic codes used in the Baumgartner-Jones national database.

Students who successfully complete the course will have an opportunity to continue working on the Pennsylvania Policy Database Project for compensation and to obtain three additional credits in a future term by registering for a second directed study credit course and completing a research project based on the Pennsylvania data.

Pre-Requisites

Required: PS 051 Introduction to American Politics

Recommended: PS 145 State and Local Government
                PS 151 Public Policy Analysis

Grades: Students will take a one-hour test on Baumgartner and Jones punctuated equilibrium theory of policy development and change as indicated on the syllabus below

(15 points) and a quiz on the Pennsylvania policy codebook (5 points). Each student will make an in-class presentation and lead a discussion of a case study from *Policy Dynamics* by Baumgartner and Jones (10 points). Each student will complete weekly assignments in abstracting and coding government documents and newspaper accounts of government records (40 points). Each student will complete a seven-to-eight page course paper using the national database to explore an issue of policy development or change that also involves state and/or local government (30 points). The course paper will be double-spaced with normal margins and follow a recognized stylebook (*Chicago, MLA*, etc.). The bibliography, tables, and graphs will not count toward the page length. Students will have an opportunity to make poster presentations based on their course paper at the end of the term.

Summary of Grading	Points	Due
Test on Punctuated Equilibrium Theory	15	February 7
Quiz on Pennsylvania code book	05	February 21
Presentation on Policy Dynamics chapter	10	As assigned by instructor
Coding documents	40	As assigned by instructor
Course paper	30	May 10
Total	100	

Student Disability: Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the situation as soon as possible. In such a case we can work with Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in Ritter Annex to ensure that your needs are met.

Baumgartner, Frank, and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baumgartner, Frank, and Bryan D. Jones, Eds. 2002. *Policy Dynamics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, Richard A. Joslyn, and H. T. Reynolds. *Political Science Research Methods*, 4th Edition. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. (The Pennsylvania Policy Database Project will lend copies of this book to students who register for the course.)

1. Week of January 17: Introduction to Public Policy

    Tuesday: Punctuated Equilibrium Theory and Its Antecedents
    Thursday: *Agendas and Instability,* Chapters 1-3

2. Week of January 23: Tracing Policy Change

    Tuesday: *Agendas and Instability,* Chapters 4-6
    Thursday: *Agendas and Instability*, Chapters 7-8

3. Week of January 30: Structural Change in Politics

Tuesday: *Agendas and Instability,* Chapters 9-12
Thursday: *Policy Dynamics*, Chapters 1 and 2

4. Week of February 6: Using the National Database

   Tuesday: Test on Punctuated Equilibrium Theory
   Thursday: Workshop on the national database

5. Week of February 13: Collecting Data

   Tuesday: Pennsylvania government and the Pennsylvania database
   Thursday: Briefing by government documents librarian in Paley Library

   Reading: *Research Methods,* chapters 4 (Measurement) and 7 (Sampling).

6. Week of February 20: Coding Data

   Reminder: One to two-page proposal for topic for course paper is due March 16.
Students should read Chapters 2 (Studying Politics Scientifically) and 3 (Hypotheses,
Concepts and Variables) in *Political Science Research Methods* as background for
submitting a proposal.
   Tuesday: In-class exercises on collecting and coding data
   Thursday: Test on the Pennsylvania codebook and workshop on coding data

   Reading: *Political Science Research Methods*, chapter 9 (Document Analysis).
           Woolley, John T. 2000. Using Media-Based Data in Studies of Politics.
           American Journal of Political Science. Vol. 4, No. 1 (January): 156-73.

7. Week of February 27: Case Studies and Exercises

   Tuesday: Student presentations on *Policy Dynamics* chapters
   Thursday: Visit by Frank Baumgartner; in-class exercises

SPRING BREAK

8. Week of March 13: Case Studies and Exercises

   Tuesday: Student presentations on *Policy Dynamics* chapters
   Thursday: Student course paper proposals due. Students turn in weekly exercises
   in collecting and coding data

9. Week of March 20: Case Studies and Exercises

   Tuesday: Student presentations on *Policy Dynamics* chapters
   Thursday: Students turn in weekly exercises in collecting and coding data

10. Week of March 27: Students will collect and code Pennsylvania data for entry into the data base and turn in records to the TAs on Thursday.

11. Week of April 3: Students will collect and code Pennsylvania data for entry into the data base and turn in records to the TAs on Thursday.

12. Week of April 10: Students will collect and code Pennsylvania data for entry into the data base and turn in records to the TAs on Thursday.

13. Week of April 17: Students will collect and code Pennsylvania data for entry into the data base and turn in records to TAs on Thursday.

14. Week of April 24: Students will collect and code Pennsylvania data for entry into the database and turn in records to the TAs on Thursday. Initial draft of course paper due to instructor.

15. May 10: Course Paper Due.