The Pennsylvania State University
Departments of Political Science and Sociology
PLSC 497B
Protest, Social Movements, and Public Policy: A Research Seminar
Professors Frank Baumgartner and John McCarthy
Spring 2008
M, W 6:30-7:45pm, 268 Willard

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Office hours: M, W 3:00-4:00 and appt	Office hours: by appt.

Note: Baumgartner is the instructor of record in this class, but McCarthy will also participate as much as possible.

This course is designed for students interested in exploring methods of research in the social sciences. We will explore particular aspects of how social movements emerge, why some issues become the objects of concern and action in public policy, and how public policies change over time in response to social forces of many kinds. Mostly, the focus will be on teaching you how to do hands-on, original research projects. In this sense the methods that you learn about how to do research will be just as important as the substance of what you learn about any particular areas of public policy. In fact, we will put more emphasis on teaching research skills.

Given the hands-on focus of the class, participation and intellectual engagement are fundamental. While the assigned readings are not particularly onerous, we have high expectations about the time and effort each student will spend on their research projects. Compared to other courses, this will be relatively time consuming and we will expect your final projects to be highly professional. Of course, we'll also teach you how to reach those standards, but be prepared for work.

Consider the following public policy issues / social movements:

Climate Change	Nuclear Power
Women's Rights	Drunk Driving
Smoking	Gambling
Pornography / censorship	Mandatory sentencing / 3 strikes laws
Racial profiling	Health Care / Insurance Availability
Agricultural Subsidies	Free Trade / Globalization
Minimum wage	Labor rights
Social Security	Contraception / Family Planning
Underaged drinking / binge drinking	Illegal / illicit drug use
Gun control	

Start thinking right away about what of those issues interest you particularly. Early in the semester, we will divide into of groups of 4 or 5 students each, and each group will do coordinated research into one of these issues. Don't worry, this is not a standard group project. Rather, each of you will work on a separate part of the project, but you will coordinate your efforts. Over the semester you will each do original research into the history and development of social movements, organizations, media coverage, or public policy toward the issue you have chosen or been assigned. Together with others working on the same issue, you will make presentations in class. In addition, each of you will write a separate and independent term paper focusing on your part of the group project (say, just the media coverage part, for example) and comparing it to another public policy issue or issues. Thus, you'll actually end up doing focused research on two different issues, not just one. You'll also have other detailed assignments requiring you to get familiar with various resources for research on any public policy.

Readings will focus on articles from the recent professional literature on the growth of interest groups and SMOs as well as on theories and indicators of policy change over time. In addition, we'll read about research methods. We'll also do overviews of a number of data resources including the Policy Agendas Project (www.policyagendas.org), the historical record of the New York Times available on-line, Associations Unlimited, Lexis-Nexis electronic bibliographic resources, and other data resources. Often, we'll have assignments related to those projects.

Since each student will be researching a different topic, but using similar methodologies during the term, there is a premium upon students helping one another. Class discussions will provide a time to explain your own research projects as well as to get feedback from others. By the same token, helping other students in their research projects, through constructive criticisms and suggestions is an integral part of the class. Accordingly, when one student makes a presentation to the class, the other students should be ready to give feedback and help. This is not a class in which to sit quietly.

Assignments will be as follows:
       20% Class participation
       20% Small assignments / homework based on the different data sources
       30% Your contribution to a group-based presentation about a given issue
       30% Term Paper comparing the issue from your group project to another of your choice

       100% total

There are no required textbooks for purchase. The course web site, available through Baumgartner's home page (http://www.personal.psu.edu/frb1/teachingmaterials.htm) will contain links to all the relevant articles, web sites, and data sources. Any papers not available on the web site will be distributed in class.

The following information comes from the Political Science Department. We encourage you to ask questions about any parts of it that are not clear.

Academic Dishonesty[1]

The Departments of Political Science and Sociology, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, take violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Other violations include, but are not limited to, any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in regard to an examination, such as tampering with a graded exam or claiming another's work to be one's own. Violations shall also consist of obtaining or attempting to obtain, previous to any examinations, copies of the examination papers or the questions to appear thereon, or to obtain any illegal knowledge of these questions. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of a violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to impose appropriate penalties that are consistent with University guidelines.

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[1]Much of the text above has been directly obtained from the sections of the Princeton University website hftp://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/rrr/99/pages/Ol.htm) concerning academic integrity (Rights, Rules, Responsibilities introductory text as well as pages 55-69) as well as from the website of the Department of Economics at The Pennsylvania State University.

Disabilities

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities, but it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor early in the term. Do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.

Weekly class assignments, readings, and discussion topics

Week 1 January 14, 2008: Introduction and Overview
Monday: Introduction and overview

Wednesday: The Policy Agendas Project, Part I
- Baumgartner, Frank R., Bryan D. Jones, and John Wilkerson. 2002. Studying Policy Dynamics. Chapter 2 (pp. 29-49) in *Policy Dynamics*. Ed. Bryan D. Jones and Frank R. Baumgartner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 2 January 21: More on the Agendas Project
Monday: No class, happy Martin Luther King Day!

Wednesday: Measurement issues
- W. Lawrence Neuman. 2000. *Social Research Methods* 7th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Chapter 7. Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement. Pp. 156–94.

Assignment #1 due on Wednesday. See course web page for instructions on observing and recording pedestrians. Come to class with your results. Being late with this is not an option, as the results will be collated in class.

Week 3 January 28: Tracing Policy Change Over Time Using Quantitative Sources
Monday: Nuclear Power traced over time
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 1991. Agenda Dynamics and Policy Subsystems. *Journal of Politics* 53 (November): 1044-74.

Assignment #2 due on Monday. In one page, single-spaced, evaluate the processes that could have lead to the distribution of results you collectively observed in your observations of pedestrians. That is, develop a *theory* to explain the *observations*.

Wednesday: Protest and Policy Change
- King, BG, Bentele, KG and Soule, SA. 2007. Protest and Policy Making: Explaining Fluctuation in Congressional Attention to Rights Issues: 1960-1986. *Social Forces* 86:137-163.

Week 4 February 4: Media Coverage Over Time
Monday: Using the New York Times Historical and Lexis-Nexis
- Come to class with experience in tracing your issue in both data sources. Note how the keywords may change over time if you extend over several decades. Be prepared to discuss and justify your own use of keywords. Note that for some policy topics this is close to impossible. For other topics, it seems to work well.

Wednesday: "Media Attention Cycles" and continuation from Monday
- Hilgartner, Stephen and Charles L. Bosk. 1988. The Rise and Fall of Social Problems—A Public Arenas Model. *American Journal of Sociology* 94: 53-78.
- Boykoff, M. T. and J. M. Boykoff. 2007. Climate Change and Journalistic Norms: A Case-Study of U.S. Mass media Coverage. *Geoforum* 38:1190-1204.

Assignment #3 due on Wednesday. Choose a policy topic from the list on the first page of the syllabus and evaluate your ability to identify relevant documents / events in the agendas project databases. Compare to another policy topic where the fit is easier / harder. Explain why. Present graphs showing your results. 2 pages plus graphs.

Week 5 February 11: The Development of Associations over Time
Monday: Overview of the Encyclopedia of Associations database
- Baumgartner, Frank R. 2005. The Growth and Diversity of US Associations, 1956–2004: Analyzing Trends using the *Encyclopedia of Associations*. Working paper. March 29.

Wednesday: More on Associations
- Martin, Andrew W., John McCarthy, and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2006. Measuring Association Populations Using the *Encyclopedia of Associations*: Evidence from the Field of Labor Unions. *Social Science Research* 35 (2006): 771-778.
- Brulle, Robert J., Liesel Turner, J. Craig Jenkins and Jason Carmichael. 2007. "Measuring Social Movement Organization Populations: A Comprehensive Census of US Environmental Movement Organizations." *Mobilization* 12: 255-70.

Assignment #4 due on Wednesday. Following from your last assignment, pick your topic based on a combination of theoretical and substantive interest as well as data availability. Present a greater range of data, covering more time and more data sources on your chosen topic. Explain your search procedures for each data source. Justify the validity of the resulting data. 2 pages and graphs.

Week 6 February 18: Media Coverage, Measuring Frames, and their Impact on Policy
Monday: Media Coverage of the Death Penalty
- Baumgartner, Frank R., Suzanna L. De Boef and Amber E. Boydstun. 2008. *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4, "The Shifting Terms of Debate"

Wednesday: A Statistical Model of the impact of media coverage on death sentences (it works!)
- Baumgartner, Frank R., Suzanna L. De Boef and Amber E. Boydstun. 2008. *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7, "The Rise and Fall of a Public Policy"

Week 7 February 25: A Caution: Know Your Data and Your Sources
Monday: Review of a critique of using the New York Times and the Readers' Guide

- Woolley, J. T. 2000. Using Media-Based Data in Studies of Politics. *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 156-173.

Wednesday: Continuation

> *Assignment #5* due on Wednesday. Evaluate your own work in Assignment 4. Pretend you are Woolley and your assignment #4 is Baumgartner! One page. Then turn the tables and defend yourself and your methodology. One page. This will force you to address the potential flaws in your data collection and to justify your decision to go ahead with the project. Note that if your conclusion is that your data are fatally flawed, you will have to change your topic to one where you have confidence in your results!

Week 8 March 3: Presentations
Monday and Wednesday: Initial (informal) presentations of paper topics. Discussion of flaws and additional data sources for each project. Class discussion and feedback for each project.

Note: Spring Break, March 10-14

Week 9 March 17: Presentations, Round II
Monday and Wednesday: The beginnings of your presentations. Each group makes a more formal presentation of their results. Discussion and feedback.

Week 10 March 24: Presentations, Round II
Continuation from last week.

Week 11 March 31: Study / research
Baumgartner and McCarthy hold office hours during class, individual feedback, one group at a time.

Week 12 April 7: Study / research
Baumgartner and McCarthy hold office hours during class, individual feedback, one group at a time.

Week 13 April 14: Presentations, The Final Round
Final versions of the presentations.

Week 14 April 21: Presentations, The Final Round
Continuation from last week.

Week 15 April 28: Review and Discussion
Papers due Monday April 28
Note: Last class period, April 30.