**PS260: Public Policy and Democracy**  
Spring 2014  MWF 4-4:50pm  LLCS 101

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**COURSE SUMMARY**

This course is designed to provide an overview of the politics of public policy-making in the United States. Utilizing a historical and developmental approach, we will examine the interaction of political actors, institutions, and ideas through the various stages of the policy process. We will train a careful eye to the recurring tension between expectations of individuals’ right to liberty and expectations of government’s role in promoting collective security. To highlight the depth of this tension, we will use empirical examples across three thematic ‘states’: the welfare state, the warfare state, and the carceral state. We begin the course with a brief introduction to institutions of American government and their role in the policy-making process. The first section of this course explores the domestic social policies of the modern American welfare state, such as social security, health care, and poverty reduction. In the second section, we shift our attention to the warfare state and discuss issues of national security and the concern over the erosion of civil liberties during wartime. In the final section, we conclude with an investigation of the carceral state, with an in-depth look at crime, incarceration, and the war on drugs in the United States.

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**IMPORTANT POLICIES**

**Attendance and Participation:** This course is designed to encourage lively discussions, but this requires that you come to class both prepared in terms of the readings and willing to jump into the fray. Our discussions will include material not in your readings, for which you will be responsible on the exams. It should go without saying that in order to do well in class you will need to be present and ready to participate.

**Reading:** This is extremely important for the course! I expect that you will come to class having completed the day’s reading assignment as scheduled in the course outline. Be sure to read carefully and with a critical eye. This will enable you to be actively engaged in our discussions and better prepared to contribute questions. The amount of material is more demanding in some weeks versus others. Please read ahead when you can.

**Academic integrity:** It should go without saying that you are expected to produce your own work. Any form of plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated. It is your responsibility to
understand what constitutes plagiarism and cheating. With that being said, however, please contact the instructor if you have any questions about how to properly reference your sources. You may find the following links useful:

http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx
http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/

Technology policy: The use of laptops is permitted. However, if I find that you are using them for purposes other than taking notes or accessing readings, then I will prohibit their use. Also, please turn off your cell phones before entering the classroom.

Accommodations: Please see the instructor as soon as possible about any issues regarding disability services and/or special accommodations. You can visit or contact Disability Services at 164 Oregon Hall, x6-1155. I am more than happy to accommodate any request.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING (shown in percentages of total grade)

15% Attendance and Participation
40% Take Home Essays (2 @ 20%)
   You will be asked to respond to an essay prompt regarding 1) the welfare state, and 2) the warfare state. I will distribute the guidelines on the final week of each section.
20% Policy Presentation
   Your assignment is to construct a classroom presentation on the development of a public policy of your choosing. Throughout the course you will be asked to provide evidence of your research to date. Presentations will be given during the final week of class.
25% Final Essay (Take Home)
   Your final assignment is to complete an essay prompt on the carceral state and the war on drugs.

COURSE MATERIALS

All readings will be made available on blackboard. In addition to stand-alone articles and chapters, we will cover material selected from two very useful books. While you are not required to purchase them, copies can be found at the Duck Store or online.


COURSE OUTLINE AND THEMES

Introduction: Politics, Policy, and History

Week 1: Introduction to key actors, institutions, and ideas in the policy-making process; discuss historical approach to the development of public policy; the enduring tension of liberty, security, and the state
- “Contesting the Constitution” - Landy and Milkis
- “American Ideology” - Kingdon
- Be sure to take the Ideology Quiz. It should only take 15 mins.
- “Contexts of Public Policy”

Part I: Social Policy and the Foundation of the Welfare State

Week 2: The historical development of the welfare state; economic security, the New Deal, and the redefinition of liberalism
- “Introduction to the Puzzle of U.S. Welfare State” – Noble
- “Twice in a Lifetime” – Howard

Week 3: The politics of Social Security and Medicare; the conservative backlash to the Great Society; welfare reform in the 90s
- “Backlash” – Noble
- “GOP Congress in the 90s” – Weaver
- “Clinton and Welfare Reform” – Weaver

Week 4: The politics of health care reform; the visible state vs. the submerged state; austerity and the end of the Welfare State?
- “Politics of Health Insurance” – Beland and Waddan
- “Change vs. Progress” – Howard
- In-class viewing: Obama’s Deal (Frontline)

Part II: National Security and the Rise of the Warfare State

Week 5: Historical development of the warfare state; Politics of the homefront
- “Past Assaults on Freedoms” – Brinkley
- “World War I” – Stone, Ch. 3
- “World War II” – Stone, Ch. 4
Week 6: The Imperial Presidency, civil liberties, and democracy; the end of the War on Terror?
  o “Vietnam War” – Stone, Ch. 6
  o “War on Terror” – Stone, Ch. 7
  o “Obama is Still Fighting Bush’s National Security Legacy” – National Journal
  o “Obama’s Dismal Civil Liberties Record” – Salon.com
  o “Obama and Guantanamo Bay” – USA Today
  o “Vetting Obama’s Kill List” – National Journal

**Part III: The War on Drugs, Crime, and the Carceral State**

Week 7: Introduction to the Carceral State; rise of the Prison-Industrial-Complex; Nixon and the origins of the War on Drugs
  o “Prison Industrial Complex” – The Atlantic
  o “Apprenticeship” – Massing, Ch. 7
  o “To the White House” – Massing, Ch. 8
  o “The Great Experiment” – Massing, Ch. 9
  o “The Retreat” – Massing, Ch. 10

Week 8: Drug treatment vs. incarceration; Reagan and the criminalization of drug use
  o “The Counterrevolution” – Massing, Ch. 11
  o “Dismantlement” – Massing, Ch. 12
  o “Storm Warnings” – Massing, Ch. 13
  o “The Deluge” – Massing, Ch. 14
  o “1984” – Baum
  o In-class viewing: *The House I Live In* (Documentary)

Week 9: Debating marijuana legalization and the federal response to the states
  o “Obama’s Drug Policies Need an Update” – Thompson
  o “National Drug Control Strategy 2013” (skim chapter 1) – White House
  o “No Easy Federal Options on Legalization” – Clark
  o “Marijuana Legalization” – Office of National Drug Control Policy
  o “Administration Weighs Legal Action” – Savage
  o Video on Marijuana Legalization (watch comments by Prof. Hawkens) – Brookings

**Week 10: Wrapping up and Policy Presentations**