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Maastricht University

Maastricht Graduate School of Governance



The Public Policy Process

Online course



- **INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

The Public Policy Process

Overview

The world of policy and politics, governance and government can be murky with seemingly transparent and tangled connections. Who gets to define the agenda, what type of policy will come to the fore and who is accountable? This course sheds light on some of these concepts using the work of respected authors in the field. It allows learners to understand how a critical analytic and descriptive framework can help understand who is involved in the policy process, how it operates and ultimately leads to a discussion about who is accountable. The answers to these questions help lay a solid foundation for further exploration of policy analysis and formation in other courses.

The course will be divided into four units. The first unit will serve as an introduction to public policy. In the second unit, students will look more in detail at the structure of the public policy cycle as defined by Paul Cairney. Unit three is dedicated to the actors in the policy arena and their decision-making process. Finally, unit four will introduce the topics of accountability and policy evaluation.

Key Concepts

- Understanding the public policy process
- Learning theoretical frameworks underlying policy-making
- Being able to identify the different stages of a policy and which actors are involved

Learning Goals

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Understand the distinction between policy and politics; government and governance
- Understand how the national political discourse affects policy making and decision making
- Understand the stages of the policy cycle and their interactions
- Be able to think critically about the actors in the policy making process in their own country and the influences and motivations they may have in the policy process
- Be able to distinguish between outputs and outcomes, monitoring and evaluation
- Understand the importance and relevance of the policy process and all stages of the policy cycle, thereby laying an important foundation for the next course on the techniques for monitoring and evaluation
- Overall, the student should be able to critically reflect on the literature provided and be able to distil this knowledge into their own country context.

- **COURSE OUTLINE**

1. Unit 1: Introduction to public policy
2. Unit 2: The public policy cycle
3. Unit 3: Actors in the public policy process
4. Unit 4: Monitoring, evaluation, and accountability

- **LEARNING MATERIALS**

1. **Lectures / Video Recordings**

- Lecture slides are provided online
- There are introductory video recordings for each module.

2. **Readings**

REQUIRED

Paul Cairney, *Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues*, 2nd Edition, Red Globe Press (2011). Chapter 3

Christopher Bryant, « Government versus Governance: structure versus process », *EchoGéo* [Online], 43 | 2018, Online since 22 March 2018, connection on 04 May 2019. <http://journals.openedition.org/echogeo/152888>

Rodrik, Dani. 2018. "Is Populism Necessarily Bad Economics?" *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 108():196-99.

Michael Hill, *The Public Policy Process*, 6th Edition, Routledge (2013), Chapter 9

John L. Campbell, *Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 28 (2002), pp. 21-38. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3069233>

Buse, Kent, Mays, Nicholas, Walt, Gill, *Making Health Policy*, McGraw-Hill Education (UK), 2012, Chapter 2

Charles E. Lindblom, *The intelligence of Democracy: Decision-Making through Mutual Adjustment* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 21-84).

Suresh Chandra Babu, Smita Aggarwal, Junjie Chen, *Role of Media in Shaping the Policy Process*, IFPRI Discussion Paper 01651 (June 2017)

Amitai Etzioni, *Mixed-Scanning: A "Third" Approach to Decision-Making*, *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 27, No. 5 (1967), pp. 385-392

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page. *Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens*, 2014.

John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*, Little, Brown, 1984,

chapters 1-3

Thomas R. Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*, 2013. Chapter 3

Michael Hill, *The Public Policy Process*, Pearson (2013). Chapters 9, 11, and 13.

Sebastiaan Princen, *Agenda Setting* (Chapter 5), from Lelieveldt and Princen, *The Politics of the European Union*, Cambridge University Press (2011).

Gertler, Paul J.; Martinez, Sebastian; Premand, Patrick; Rawlings, Laura B.; Vermeersch, Christel M. J. 2016. *Impact Evaluation in Practice*, Second Edition. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25030> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

Binnendijk, A. (2000). Results based management in the development cooperation agencies: a review of experience. Background report, DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation.

FURTHER READING

Gyu-Jin Hwang, "When the Solution becomes the Problem: Policy Reversals in Korea and Japan" in Michael Hill (ed.), *Studying Public Policy: An International Approach*, Policy Press (2014).

Francis Fukuyama: Inequality. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxZBsALaVys>

Jesper Strömbäck, Frank Esser, *Mediatization of Politics: Towards a Theoretical Framework*, p3-28 from Strömbäck J., Esser F. (2014) *Mediatization of Politics: Towards a Theoretical Framework*. In: Esser F., Strömbäck J. (eds) *Mediatization of Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London

David Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965.

Cohen, M., March, J., & Olsen, J. (1972). A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(1), 1-25. doi:10.2307/2392088

- **REQUIRED ACTIVITIES**

1. Introduction videos
 - You are required to watch the introductory video recording for each module
2. Discussion Forum
 - You are advised to interact with others on the discussion forum to share ideas and knowledge. Online tutors will also be available to help.
3. Assignments
 - There is one assignment per unit. All four assignment contribute to the final grade. Self -assessment quizzes are also part of the exercises.

- **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Four assignments will contribute 25% each towards the final grade. A final oral examination is also part of the grading process to assess acquired knowledge.

- **TIMELINE**

1. Module order and time schedule
 - The course will begin with unit 1 in the first week. Each successive unit will be covered over 1 week. The course should cover a total of four weeks.
2. Deadlines required activities (specific time and day, CET time and verify the online platform is adjusted carefully – consider time added or time exactly set in the upload).
 - Students will be asked to complete an assignment at the end of each module.

- **CONTACT DETAILS**

- Course developers**

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