

PhD Programme in Political and Social  
Sciences  
XL Cycle

## Understanding Policy Dynamics

Instructor: *Giliberto CAPANO*

This seminar course is designed to introduce doctoral students to the literature on public policy and to develop their ability to think critically about policy-making in different political and social contexts. The course focuses largely on theories and conceptualisations related to understanding and explaining policy dynamics.

Doctoral students should consider this course as a stepping stone to mastering a broad knowledge of the key concepts of how policy dynamics (and even their policy trade-offs) evolve over time. Actors and agency, change and stability, institutions and ideas are the central concepts of the main theories of policy dynamics, although they are mixed and arranged in different ways according to the research questions the theories seek to answer.

Thus, by focusing on the drivers and components of policy dynamics, the course also sheds light on the political and social drivers of the processes through which collectivized decisions are made and implemented, at different institutional and governance levels, and their socio-political effects.

The course will serve as a foundation for the students' research not only in public policy, but also in sister disciplines like sociology and international relations.

**Class organisation:** Classes will be based on an introductory lecture by the instructor, followed by student presentations on the readings and general discussion in the following six meetings. Students will be required to read all the readings before class.

**Evaluation:** Students will be graded 50% on class presentations and active class participation and 50% on a term paper of approximately 5000 words due by the end of the term.

**Readings:** The readings are designed to provide the basic concepts for each class, and I expect all students to read before class,

## Course Outline

### **Seminar 1 (h.10-12, 4 November 2024)**

#### *The policy perspective. Definitions and some basic notions of the policy process*

- Lowi, T. (1968), Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice," *Public Administration Review* 33: 298-310.
- deLeon, P. (1999) *The Stage approach to the Policy Process: Was it done? Where it is going*, in Paul Sabatier (ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process*, Boulder, Westview Press, pp. 19-34.
- Capano, G. (2020). *Politics and Policy*, in: D. Berg Schlosser, B. Badie, and L. Morlino (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Political Science*, Beverly Hills, SAGE, 2020, pp. 1071 - 1085

### **Seminar 2 (h.10-13, 11 November 2024)**

#### *Institutions vs. Chaos: the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework and the Multiple Stream Approach*

- Ostrom, E, Understanding Institutional Diversity, Princeton University Press, 2005: chapters 1 and 2.
- Cohen, Michael, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen. 1972. A Garbage Can Theory of Organizational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17, pp. 1-25.
- Zahariadis, N. (1999). Ambiguity, Times and Multiple Streams In P. Sabatier (ed.), *Theories of the policy process*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Herweg et al. (2017) The Multiple Streams Framework: Foundations, Refinements, and Empirical Applications, in C. Weible and P. Sabatier (eds), *Theories of the policy process*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Haacke, J. (2021) Foreign Policy Entrepreneurs, Policy Windows, and "Pragmatic Engagement": Reconsidering Insights of the Multiple Streams Framework and the Obama Administration's 2009 Policy Shift Toward Military-Run Myanmar. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17(3).

### **Seminar 3 (10-13, 18 November 2024)**

#### *Stability vs. Dramatic change: the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory*

- Baumgartner, F. R. and Jones, B.D. (2009 ). *Agendas and instability in American Politics*, Chicago, UCP, pp. 1-56.
- Baumgartner, F., Jones, B.D., and Mortensen, P.T. (2017). Punctuated Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking.

In C. Weible and P. Sabatier (eds), *Theories of the policy process*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Joly, J and Richter, F. (2023) The calm before the storm: A punctuated equilibrium theory of international politics. *Policy Studies Journal*, 51, 265–282.

#### **Seminar 4 (h.10-13, 25 November 2024)**

##### *Actors, Beliefs and Subsystems: the Advocacy Coalition Framework*

- Sabatier P. and Jenkins-Smith H.C. (1993), *Policy change and Learning*, Westview Press, Boulder, cap. 2 e 3 (pp. 13-56).
- Jenkins-Smith H. et al. (2017) The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Overview of the Research Program. In C. Weible and P. Sabatier (eds), *Theories of the policy process*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sabatier, P. (1998) The advocacy coalition framework: revisions and relevance for Europe, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 5:1, 98-130.
- Haar, R.N, Pierce, J.J. (2021). Foreign Policy Change from an Advocacy Coalition Framework Perspective, *International Studies Review*, 23(4), 1771–1791.

#### **Seminar 5 (h. 9-12, 2 December 2024)**

##### *Policies and Politics as Storytelling: the Narrative Policy Framework*

- Gray, G. and Jones, M.D. 2016. A Qualitative Narrative Policy Framework? Examining the Policy Narratives of US Campaign Finance Regulatory Reform.” *Public Policy and Administration* 31(3): 193–220.
- McBeth, M.K., and Jones, M.D. 2010. A Narrative Policy Framework: Clear Enough to Be Wrong? *Policy Studies Journal* 38(2): 329–53.
- Shanahan E. et al. (2017) The Narrative Policy Framework. In C. Weible and P. Sabatier (eds), *Theories of the policy process*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Capano, G., Galanti, M.T. & Barbato, G. (2023) When the political leader is the narrator: the political and policy dimensions of narratives. *Policy Sciences* **56**, 233–263

### Seminar 6 (h. 10-13, 9 December 2024)

#### *The content of the policy and political battles; Policy Design, Policy instruments and their choice*

- Howlett, M., Mukherjee, I., and Woo, J.J (2015). From tools to toolkits in policy design studies: the new design orientation towards policy formulation research. *Policy & Politics* 43, 2, pp, 291-311.
- Capano G., and Engeli I., (2022) Using Instrument Typologies in Comparative Research: Conceptual and Methodological Trade-Offs, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 24(1), pp. 99 - 116
- Schaffrin, A, Sewerin, S., and Seubert, S. (2014). The Innovativeness of National Policy Portfolios – Climate Policy Change in Austria, Germany, and the UK. *Environmental Politics* 23, 5(3), 860–83.
- Capano, G., and A. Lippi. (2017) How Policy Instruments are Chosen: Patterns of Decision Makers' Choices. *Policy Sciences* 50 (2): 269–93
- Capano, G., Pritoni, A.e Vicentini, G. (2020). Do Policy Instruments Matter? Governments' choice of policy mix and higher education performance in Western Europe. *Journal of Public Policy*, 40(3), 375-401.

### Seminar 7 (h. 10-13, 16 December 2024)

#### *How Policies Change: between path dependence and agency*

- Capano, G. (2009), Policy change as epistemological and theoretical problem, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, n.1, pp. 7-31.
- Capano, G., Galanti, M. T. (2018), *Policy dynamics and types of agency: From individual to collective patterns of action*, *European Policy Analysis*, 4, pp. 23 – 47
- Mahoney, J. (2000). Path Dependence in Historical Sociology. *Theory and Society*. 29(4), 507-548.
- Howlett, M., and J. Rayner (2006) Understanding the Historical Turn in the Policy Sciences: A Critique of Stochastic, Narrative, Path Dependency and Process-Sequencing Models of Policy-Making over Time. *Policy Sciences* 39 (1):1-18.
- Carlsnaes, W. (1992). The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis. *International Studies Quarterly*, 36(3), 245–270.
- Haesebrouck, T., & Joly, J. (2021). Foreign Policy Change: From Policy Adjustments to Fundamental Reorientations. *Political Studies Review*, 19(3), 482-491

### **Course Requirements:**

- This is a Ph.D. seminar course, and students are expected to actively engage in class discussions.
- Students should come to each class having read all the assigned readings (the reading list is kept “relatively” short, but all requirements must be met).
- Each student will present the assigned readings for 1 or 2 meetings (depending on the final number of students). The presenter will provide a PowerPoint presentation (up to 10 slides; up to 20 minutes for the presentation) of the assigned readings, discussing:
  - The conceptual and empirical issues raised in the reading
  - An evaluation of the pros and the cons
  - Possible solutions for the cons
- Non-presenters are to write a 1-page memorandum (single-spaced) to be sent to the instructor the day before the related class
- A 5000-word paper on a topic selected in accordance with the instructor is due four weeks from the end of the term.