

973 267 4077

Page 1

Public Policy - Decision Making in the New Millennium

Instructor: James J. Florio

34:833:252:01

CSB Room 112

Mondays 9:50am to 12:30pm

Office Hours

By Appointment (primarily Monday), The Bloustein School, Civic Square, Room 388, Livingston Ave., New Brunswick (732) 932-2499.

Textbook

Politics and Public Policy, Van Horn, Baumcr and Gormley, 3rd edition, CQ Press, 2001. Politics and Public Policy will be at the RU Bookstore. Other assigned readings will be available on reserve in the program office on the 2nd Floor of the Bloustein Building.

Course Overview:

The development of public policy, like everything else, has changed significantly over the course of the last several decades, particularly during the last three decades. In the 1970s, policy decisions were based on a predetermined goal— clean air, a better transportation system, a reduction in poverty —with policies and programs designed and funded to achieve those goals. The 1980s represented a financial boom period. Our nation emerged from a recession and we entered a prolonged period of economic growth and spending. In the 1990s, we experienced a period of dramatic policy change. Policy decisions were based less on ideological goals and more on fiscal considerations. The impact of those decisions is now being analyzed. In the new millennium we have a republican president with Supreme Court appointments and a natural disaster to contend with on the federal level and an acting democratic governor and a democratic majority in the legislature facing a major budget deficit and gubernatorial election on the state level. Will this create the perfect study of policy gridlock?

This course is designed to review the changes in policy making over the last several decades, using specific issues as examples: the role of the media, environment and energy, and health care. There will be a review of the use of the budget as a policy making engine at both the federal and state levels.

Along with the instructor, students will hear from policy experts in these specific areas. Students are encouraged to interact at every opportunity. The goal is to have you better understand the interaction of the various actors and issues that affect the policy making process.

Course Requirements:

The final grade for the course will be based on the following:

- ◆ Class Participation/Critical Questions for Speakers - 33%
- ◆ Three Representation Papers - 67% (Media, Environment/Energy, Health Care)

It is important for each member of the class to read the assignments and participate in the discussions of the issues during class. The representation papers (3) are limited to no more than 7 typed pages. They should tell the policy issue, the players (legislators, media, interest groups, public), the interactions among the players, and the results or potential results. In each of the representation papers outline the problem or issue, development of the players and their positions, description of the interactions of those players with various decision-makers, discussion of the outcomes of the process and then an analysis of the outcome. Was this expected or unexpected? How might have the outcome been different and under what circumstances? The paper should *minimize* the discussion of the legislative history of a particular issue and concentrate on the analysis of the policy making process.