

Humboldt State University
PSCI 485; CRN 22896
Spring Semester 2000

Prof: John Meyer
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Hours: Wed., Thurs. 10-11; *or by
appointment*

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SENIOR SEMINAR: Ethics and Values in Policymaking

We will explore two distinct but related themes. The first focuses on some ethical dilemmas faced by policymakers as well as other citizens. We will discuss the question of 'dirty hands' -- should we ever do wrong in order to do right? -- as well as issues of corruption and whistleblowing, secrecy, accountability, and responsibility. The second theme focuses upon the values underlying public policy and policy analysis. We will look at the central role played by the value of 'economic efficiency,' and its often unacknowledged tension with other values such as liberty, equality, and social justice. In our effort to grapple with these big questions, we will consider examples from the U.S. and international contexts.

As a seminar, learning is dependent upon all of you. While I will have some prepared comments to make, the majority of our time each week will be spent in discussion. This requires that you keep up-to-date on the reading (reading carefully and reflecting upon the significant arguments *before* our meetings) and actively participate in our discussions (of course, attendance is necessary for this). The reading load averages 100+ pages per week, concentrated in the first three-quarters of the semester. During the last month or so, I expect that you will be immersed in your own research and writing.

As a senior seminar, one of your primary goals will be to research and write a major paper on a topic directly related to our subject *and* of real interest to you. You should begin thinking about this now; you may also find it helpful to look ahead at future readings. You may choose to research a topic that we touch on in class (i.e., secrecy, accountability, rationality, markets vs. politics); alternately you may choose to apply a framework drawn from course readings to a particular policy area that you have an interest in (i.e., educational policy, national security policy, environmental policy) or to a particular event or debate (i.e., conflict over the WTO, or transition in Eastern Europe). This is intended to be a culminating project that reflects well upon your abilities as a major in this department. I encourage you to meet with me early and often to discuss and refine your topic.

Required Books and Course Packet:

The following four required books are (or will be) available at the HSU Bookstore:

Glazer and Glazer, *The Whistleblowers*, Basic Books 1989

Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*, Beacon Books, 1999

Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, W.W. Norton, 1997.

Cass Sunstein, *Free Markets and Social Justice*, Oxford 1999.

There will also be several photocopied readings that will be available in the department

office (FH 180) or in class. These are marked with an asterisk (*) below.

Course Requirements

The primary written requirement is a research paper of approximately 20-30 pages due at the end of the semester. This will be worth 50% of your grade. Proper citation of sources is mandatory.

You also must turn in a prospectus (topic description and preliminary bibliography) and draft of your paper during the semester.

Additional requirements include participation (both discussion and presentation) in seminar (25%) and reading reaction papers (25%).

Reading reaction papers should be *two paragraphs* in length (no longer!). The first paragraph should concisely *explain* -- in your own words -- one specific argument made by the author of the week's reading that you found interesting or provocative. The second paragraph should present your own *analysis* either supporting, extending, or criticizing this argument. I will read these and record them on a '+', '✓' or '-' basis (papers receiving a '-' will not be credited). Reaction papers must be turned in by our class time. Turn in 7 to receive full credit for this assignment.

Plagiarism: Presenting the words or ideas of another as though they are your own is plagiarism. It is the most serious academic offense. You must *always* provide citations (including page number) for direct references to ideas or information provided by others. Copying distinctive phrases, sentences, paragraphs, whole pages, or more from the work of another (whether a classmate, newspaper, book, web-site, etc.) without proper citation will result in the harshest penalties. Changing a few words, while still copying the rest, is actually worse, *even if you cite it!* JUST DON'T DO IT. If you are at all unsure about this matter, please see me in advance of turning in your paper.

Outline and Reading Schedule

I. Introduction: January 19th

II. Some Ethical Dilemmas of Policymakers and other Citizens: January 26th - February 23rd

Jan. 26: 'Dirty Hands' and Severed Heads

*Arthur Applbaum, "Professional Detachment: The Executioner of Paris"

*Michael Walzer, "Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands"

*Dennis Thompson, "Democratic Dirty Hands"

Feb. 2: Corruption and Whistleblowing

Glazer and Glazer, *The Whistleblowers* [JMM1]

Feb. 9: Secrecy

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "Secrecy: A Brief Account of the American Experience" available on-line at:

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/commissions/secrecy/>

Feb. 16-23: Accountability and Responsibility

*Dennis Thompson, "The Moral Responsibility of Many Hands"

Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*

III. Values in Policymaking: March 8th - April 12th

Mar 1-29: Politics vs. 'The Rationality Project'

Mar. 1: Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Parts I, II

Mar. 8: **PROSPECTUS DUE MONDAY; to be discussed in class**

Mar. 15: SPRING BREAK

Mar. 22: Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Part III

Mar. 29: Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox*, Part IV and Conclusion

April 5-12: Markets, Law, and Justice

Apr. 5: Cass Sunstein, *Free Markets and Social Justice* (selections)

Apr.12: Cass Sunstein, *Free Markets and Social Justice* (selections)

IV. Research Presentations: April 19th - May 3rd

DRAFT OF PAPER DUE: FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 3p.m.

We will not meet on April 19th, but will schedule *additional meetings* during the following weeks.

PAPERS DUE: FRIDAY, MAY 12, 3 p.m.