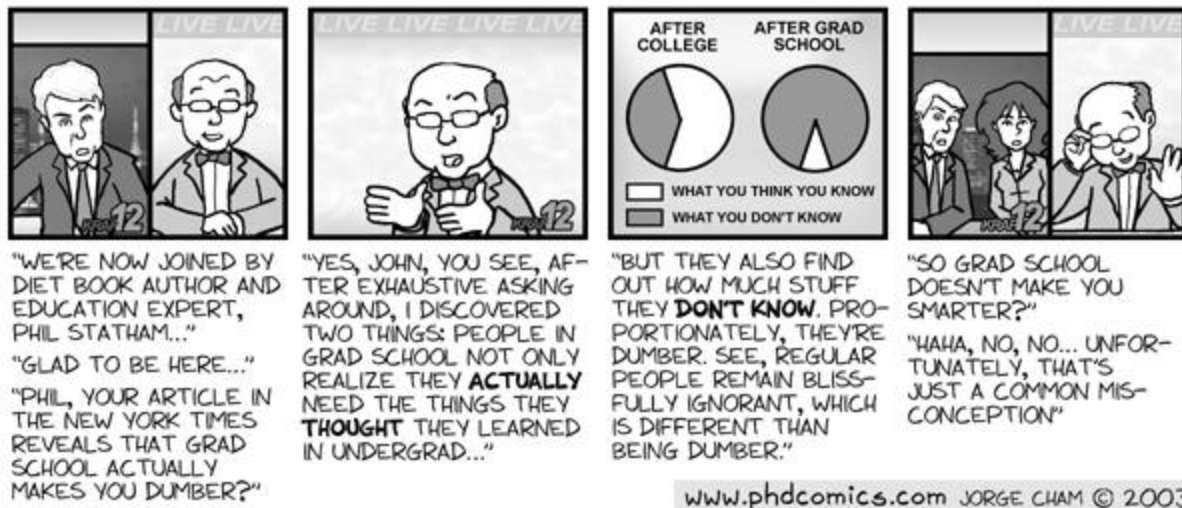


**Decision Process**  
**Syllabus for ENVS 5730/PSCI 5016**  
**University of Colorado – Spring 2004**

Roger A. Pielke, Jr.  
Thursdays 12:30-3:00 PM

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00-12:30 and by appointment  
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### **Purpose of the Course and Expectations**

The term “decision process” emphasizes that social, environmental, economic and other outcomes are the result of decisions made—and decisions not made—by the people in those processes, as opposed to explanations based on variables that abstract from or ignore context, motivations, perceptions, and cognitive limitations of those involved in making choices.

The course has two basic goals. First, to introduce you to conceptual tools which may be useful in thinking more effectively and responsibly about any problem of decision; and second, to develop and

practice skills using the tools to analyze the various dimensions of a decision process for the purpose of making recommendations about how to realize a set of preferred outcomes in practical settings. To meet these goals, the course focuses on three primary activities: (1) core readings and discussion on decision process and the policy sciences; (2) periodic individual and shared assignments; and (3) a semester-long term project on a topic of your choosing.

This course is designed to teach a systematic framework for analyzing processes of decision making. The framework for analysis of decisions was first proposed in 1956 and provides the basis for much of contemporary academic policy inquiry. From the perspective of the policy scientist, the larger challenge is explore alternative courses of action within particular decision processes in order to increase the chances that decision making outcomes will serve human dignity and common interests.

Decision processes are typically highly complex, variable, and uncertain. Complexity results in part from the characteristics of issues in areas such as environment, development, security, health, economics, and so on and on, but also because of the vast number of participants involved in decision making with differing perspectives about and stakes in particular outcomes. Participants have a multiplicity of conflicting understandings of “the problem at hand,” have conflicting interests, and consequently different time horizons and criteria by which alternative courses of action might be evaluated. For instance, in the United States because millions of participants are involved in any significant national decision, and a vast array of factors might affect outcomes, policymakers and analysts necessarily operate on the basis of simplified representations or maps of the policy process, whether they do so consciously or not. This course adopts the perspective, to use the words of John Dewey, that some ways of thinking are *better* than others. That is, that some ways of thinking are more apt to lead more reliably to choices resulting in desired outcomes.

What you will get out of this class is proportional to what you put into the class.

In order to get the most out of this course, you will need to complete all of the readings, come to class prepared, participate, and complete all of the assignments. I encourage you to use the office hours as an opportunity to discuss in more detail certain aspects of the course, share ideas on your project, and to provide feedback on the course and the readings. The remainder of this syllabus details some of the important aspects of this course.

### **What is a Decision Process?**

To better understand decision processes in their broader social context, the policy sciences propose a functional analysis of decision and social processes. The **decision process** is a conceptual model for mapping policy processes. The decision process can be used to help answer the following questions in any policy area:

How is the information that comes to the attention of decision makers gathered and processed?

How are recommendations made and promoted?

How are general rules prescribed?

How are general rules provisionally invoked in reference to conduct?

How are general rules applied?

How is the working of prescriptions appraised?

How are the prescriptions and arrangements entered into within the framework of such rules brought to termination?

The seven questions are reflected in the decision process model outlined below (and taken from Lasswell 1956). The decision process focuses on a decision (or policy), which it calls a prescription. In addition, there are five other phases of the decision process: intelligence, promotion, prescription, invocation/application, appraisal, and termination. Understanding and applying this framework is the focus of this course. (Note that the decision process is one part of a broader framework of the policy sciences)

### Decision process

The *intelligence* phase of the decision process includes the gathering, processing, and dissemination of information for decision making.

The *promotional* phase involves changes in support from various groups for competing policy alternatives.

The *prescription* phase involves a consensus on rules to be enforced. In other words, a prescription is a decision or a policy. A prescription is explicit about *Goals* to be achieved through the policy, *Rules* intended to achieve those goals, and *Circumstances* in which the rules apply.

The *invocation* and *application* phase involves the initial and final characterization of a particular case in terms of the prescription (policy) -- In other words, policy implementation.

The *appraisal* phase characterizes the flow of decisions with respect to goals stated in the prescription. Appraisal asks "How have we done?"

The *termination* phase involves the cancellation of a prescription.

A decision process is a component of a broader *social process*.

Although there is a logical sequence to these activities, in the real world they typically do not occur sequentially. Any of these activities can occur at any time in the temporal sequence of a policy debate. For the analyst, the decision process categories serve as guides for thinking about and understanding the actions of different actors in the policy process, for assessing what has been left out, and for identifying possible actions on behalf of the preferred policy alternatives. For any particular policy problem, the categories can be used to work back and forth between the decision process as a whole and the vast array of potentially critical details in any particular component. Systematic use of the decision process model will produce more reliable estimates of when, where, and how to intervene effectively, especially under real-world time and resource constraints. Failure to consciously analyze the policy process will frequently frustrate even well-intentioned efforts to promote good policy alternatives.

## **Requirements of the Course**

### Weekly One Pagers

Every week you are expected to turn in a one-page essay. The essay will be in the form of a “Last Minute Quiz,” due by 5PM every Wednesday to be submitted via the course email list-serv:

[envs5730@sciencepolicy.colorado.edu](mailto:envs5730@sciencepolicy.colorado.edu)

You should address the following two items in your submission:

1. The most important thing I learned from the class discussion and/or readings was . . .
2. The thing I still don't understand is . . .

You are of course free to discuss any topic related to the class beyond these two questions as well.

The purpose of this exercise is to allow you an opportunity to discuss aspects of the readings, integrate other material with the week's focus, or to raise questions about what was unclear or unanswered by the readings. A secondary purpose is to ensure that you have an opportunity to provide me with feedback on the readings and your progress/satisfaction in the course.

### Group assignments

There will be two types of group assignments (a) Guide to the Readings and (b) Group Case Study exercise.

For the “Guide to the Readings” I'd like you to work in small groups (to be determined during the first class meeting based on class size) to prepare for your classmates a guide to the week's required

readings. Ideally this will be a document that provides a short synopsis of the readings, discusses main themes, and, if desired, introduces other, relevant literature not required for the week. At the end of the term, based on the 13 weeks worth of guides, each of you will have a concise set of summaries of the entire semester's readings.

For the "Group Case Study exercise" I will ask you to work in small groups to prepare a discussion, exercise, game, role play, etc. during weeks 6-12 to illustrate the dynamics of that particular phase of the decision process in the context of the shared group project. Details on groups and the shared group project will be discussed during the first class meeting.

### Individual Term Projects

You will be responsible for completing a semester-long research paper on a topic of your choosing. The project will involve a paper and an oral presentation at the end of the semester. The project will involve at least one short assignment due during the semester that will comprise part of your project grade. The term project is described in detail in a separate hand out. Late papers will not be accepted.

### **Grading**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Weekly one pagers	20%	(no late submissions)
Group Projects	30%	(periodically)
Individual term project	50%	(oral and written parts – see handout)

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### **Tentative Schedule and Readings**

**15 January (1)**

**Introductions  
Overview of the Course  
Discussion of the Shared Case Study  
Discussion of the Individual Term Projects**

**22 January (2)**

**Why Policy Research?**

Lippmann, W. 1932. The scholar in a troubled world, *The Atlantic Monthly*, pp. 148-152.

Wildavsky, A. 1985. The once and future school of public policy, **79**:25-41.

Scaff, L. A. and H. M. Ingram, 1987. The influence of theory on what we see, pp. 235-248 in *The Political Context of Evaluation* (Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA).

R. Brunner, 2001. *Finding Common Ground: Governance and Natural Resources*, pp. 1-21.

H. Simon, Reason in Human Affairs, 10-29, 67-97.

J. Scott, 1998. Thin Simplifications and Practical Knowledge: Metis, Chapter 9 pp. 309-341 in *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*.

Pielke, Jr., R. A. 1999. Who Decides? Forecasts and Responsibilities in the 1997 Red River Floods, *Applied Behavioral Science Review*, 7:83-101.

For further reading:

Goedegebuure, L. and F. Van Vught, 1996. Comparative Higher Education Studies: The Perspective from the Policy Sciences, *Higher Education*, 32:371-394.

Kemmerer, D. L. 1948. Are the social scientists backward?, *American Association of University Professors Bulletin*, Autumn:477-492.

Kennedy, D. 1997. *Academic Duty* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA).

Simon, H. A. 1985. Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science, *American Political Science Review* 79:293-304.

Torgerson, D. 1986. Between Knowledge and Politics: Three Faces of Policy Analysis, *Policy Sciences* 19:33-59

## **JANUARY 29 DROP DEADLINE**

### **29 January (3)      The Big Picture – Social and Decision Process Mapping**

T. W. Clark, 2002. **The Policy Process: A practical guide for natural resource professionals**, Yale University Press.

H.D. Lasswell, *The Decision Process: Seven Categories of Functional Analysis*, Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Maryland, College Park, 1956.

H. Lasswell & M. McDougal, "The Social Process as a Whole", "The Maximization Postulate," "Contextual Analysis," *Jurisprudence for a Free Society* (1992), pp. 335-343, 368-371, 386-388.

For further reading:

R. Fenno, "Observation, Context, and Sequence in the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80, 1 (1986): 3-14.

M. Bovens and P. Hart, "Identifying Agents" and "Explaining Agents' Behavior," in *Understanding Policy Fiascoes* (1996).

## **5 February (4)            Discussion on the policy sciences**

Lasswell, H. D. 1970. The emerging conception of the policy sciences, *Policy Sciences* 1:3-14.

Ascher, W. 1987. The evolution of the policy sciences: understanding the rise and avoiding the fall, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 5:367-373

Brunner, R. D. 1991. The policy movement as a policy problem, *Policy Sciences* 24:65-98.

deLeon, P. and S. Overman, 1997. A history of the policy sciences, pp. 467-506, Chapter 13 in J. Rabin, W. B. Hildreth, and G. J. Miller (eds.) **Handbook of Public Administration** (Mareel Decker Publishing).

Pielke, Jr., R. A. 2004 (in press) A Third Generation Perspective on the Policy Sciences, *Policy Sciences*.

For further reading:

Brunner, R. D. 1997a. Introduction to the policy sciences, *Policy Sciences* 30:191-215.

Brunner, R. D. 1997b. Teaching the policy sciences: reflections on a graduate seminar, *Policy Sciences* 30:217-231.

DeLeon, P. 1995. Democratic values and the policy sciences, *American Journal of Political Science*, 39:886-905.

Eulau, H. 1969. The maddening methods of Harold D. Lasswell, (Chapter 5) pp.119-137 in *Micro-Macro Analysis: Accents of Inquiry* (Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing).

Lasswell, H. D. and M. S. McDougal, 1992. *Jurisprudence for a Free Society: Studies in Law, Science, and Policy, Volumes I and II* (New Haven, CT: New Haven Press).

Torgerson, D. 1985. Contextual Orientation in Policy Analysis: The Contribution of Harold D. Lasswell, *Policy Sciences* 18:241-261.

## **12 February (5)            Introduction to the study of the policy process**

Sabatier, P. 1999. **Theories of the Policy Process**, Westview Press.

L. Scaff and H. Ingram, *The Influence of Theory on What We See, Politics and Research Methods* (date).

Lasswell, H. D. 1956. *The decision process: seven categories of functional analysis*, Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Maryland, College Park.

For further reading:

Nakamura, R. T. and F. Smallwood, 1980. Changing perceptions of policy implementation, (Chapter 1) and Implementation and the policy process: a conceptual overview, (Chapter 2) pp. 7-28 in *The Politics of Policy Implementation* (New York: St. Martins).

Sabatier, P. A. 1991a. Political science and public policy, *PS: Political Science and Politics* **24**:144-147.

Sabatier, P. A. 1991b. Toward better theories of the policy process, *PS: Political Science and Politics* **24**:147-156.

## **19 February (6)      Decisions - Prescription**

H. Lasswell and M. McDougal, "The Prescribing Function," *Jurisprudence for a Free Society* (1992), pp. 1155-1174.

D. Stone, *Policy Paradox* (1997), ch. 12 "Rules" and ch. 11 "Incentives".

Hammond, J. S., R. L. Keeney, and H. Raiffa, 1998. The hidden traps in decision making, *Harvard Business Review*, September-October:47-58.

Forester, J. 1984. Bounded rationality and the politics of muddling through, *Public Administration Review* **44** (1):23-31.

For further reading:

Cohen, M. D., J. G. March, and J. P. Olsen, 1972. A garbage can model of organizational choice, *Administrative Science Quarterly* **22**:1-25.

Fuller, L. L. 1964. *The morality of law*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT).

Jones, C. O. 1995. A way of life and law, *American Political Science Review* **89**:1-9.

Hayes, M. T. 1992. *Incrementalism and Public Policy* (New York: Longman).

March, J. G. 1980. Theories of choice and making decisions, *Society* **10**:29-39.

N. Nicholson, 2002. Policy choices and the use of state power: The work of Theodore Lowi, *Policy Sciences* **35**:163-177.

Tversky, A. and D. Kahneman 1981. The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice, *Science*, **211**:453-458.

## **26 February (7)      Decision Processes**



Kerwin, 1994. The Substance of Rules and the Reasons for Rulemaking, **Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy**, 1-37.

E. Woodhouse and D. Collingridge, 1993. Incrementalism, Intelligent Trial-and-Error and the Future of Political Decision Theory, in H. Redner (ed.), **An heretical heir of the enlightenment: politics, policy, and science in the work of Charles E. Lindblom**

Riesman, W. M. 1981. Law from the policy perspective, pp. 1-14 in M. S. McDougal and W. M. Reisman (eds.) *International Law Essays* (Mineola, NY: Foundation Press).

Fenno, R. F. 1986. Observation, context, and sequence in the study of politics, *American Political Science Review* **80**:3-15.

March, J. 1978. Bounded rationality, ambiguity, and the engineering of choice, *The Bell Journal of Economics*, **9**:587-608.

### **5 March (8)                      Appraisal**

H. Lasswell and M. McDougal, "The Appraising Function," *Jurisprudence for a Free Society* (1992), pp. 1245-1262.

Wallace, M. G., H. J. Cortner, S. Burke, 1995. Review of policy evaluation in natural resources, *Society and Natural Resources*, **8**:35-47.

Schneider, A. L. 1986. The evolution of a policy orientation for evaluation research: a guide to practice, *Public Administration Review*, **46**:356-363.

Aberbach, J. D. 1990. Oversight and the American political system, Chapter 9, pp.187-213 in *Keeping a Watchful Eye: The Politics of Congressional Oversight* (Washington, DC: Brookings).

### **12 March (9)                      Intelligence**

H. Lasswell and M. McDougal, "The Intelligence Function," *Jurisprudence for a Free Society* (1992), pp. 1175-1192.

Rochefort, D. A. and R. W. Cobb 1994. Problem definition: an emerging perspective, pp. 1-31 in *The Politics of Problem Definition: Shaping the Policy Agenda* (University Press of Kansas: Lawrence, KS).

Feldman, M. S. and J. G. March, 1981. Information in organizations as symbol and sign, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **26**:171-186.

R. Betts, Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable, *World Politics* 61-89.

## **19 March (10)            Promotion**

H. Lasswell and M. McDougal, "The Promoting (Recommending) Function," *Jurisprudence for a Free Society* (1992), pp. 1193-1202.

Rocheftort, D. A. and R. W. Cobb 1994. Problem definition: an emerging perspective, pp. 1-31 in *The Politics of Problem Definition: Shaping the Policy Agenda* (University Press of Kansas: Lawrence, KS).

Snare, C. E. 1995. Windows of opportunity: When and how can the policy analyst influence the policy makers during the policy process? *14*:407-430.

Hilgartner, Stephen and C. Bosk, 1988. The rise and fall of social problems: a public arenas model, *American Journal of Sociology*, **94**:(1):53-78.

Kingdon, J. 1984. Wrapping things up, Chapter 9, pp. 205-218 in *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (New York: Harper Collins).

D. Balz and R. Marcus, "Selling Clinton's Economic Plan," *Washington Post Weekly*

For further reading:

Bell, W. 1993. H. D. Lasswell and the Futures Field: Facts, Predictions, Values and the Policy Sciences, *Futures* **25**:806-813.

Brown, G. E. 1992. The objectivity crisis. *American Journal of Physics*, **60**:779-781.

Downs, A. 1972. Up and Down with Ecology -- the "Issue-Attention Cycle," *The Public Interest* **28**:32-50.

Kurtz, H. 1998. Chapters 1 and 2 pp. 1-22, *Spin Cycle: Inside the Clinton propaganda machine* (Free Press: New York).

Majone, G. 1989. *Evidence, Argument and Persuasion in the Policy Process* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

Naftulin, D. H., J. E. Ware, and F. A. Donnelly, 1973. The Doctor Fox Lecture: A Paradigm of Educational Seduction, *Journal of Medical Education* **48**:630-635.

**26 March**                      Spring Break

**2 April (11)**                      **Invocation and Application**

H. Lasswell and M. McDougal, "The Invoking Function," and "The Applying Function," *Jurisprudence for a Free Society* (1992), pp. 1203-1216, 1217-1237.

C. Diver, "On the Optimal Precision of Administrative Rules,"

M. Sanger, "Using Old Stuff in New Ways: Innovation as a Case of Evolutionary Tinkering," *JPAM* 11, 1 (1992): 88-115.

Levi, E. H. 1949. pp. 1-8 in *An Introduction to Legal Reasoning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Pressman, J. L. and A. B. Wildavsky, 1974. The complexity of joint action, pp. 87-124 in *Implementation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press)

Pielke, Jr., R.A. and M.M. Betsill, 1997. Policy for Science for Policy: Ozone Depletion and Acid Rain Revisited. *Research Policy* 26:157-168.

**9 April (12)**                      **Termination**

H. Lasswell and M. McDougal, 1992. The Terminating Function, *Jurisprudence for a Free Society*, pp. 1239-1243.

Bardach, E. 1976. Policy termination as a political process, *Policy Sciences* 7:123-131.

Brewer, G. 1978. Termination: hard choices -- harder questions, *Public Administration Review*, 38:338-344.

R. Behn, "How to Terminate a Public Policy: A Dozen Hints for the Would-Be Terminator," *Policy Analysis* 4 (1978): 393-413.

J. Frantz, 1992. Reviving and revising a termination model, *Policy Sciences* 25:175-192.

R. Behn, 1985. Cutback Budgeting, *JPAM* 4, 2:155-177.

M. Daniels, 1995. Implementing Policy Termination: Health Care Reform in Tennessee, *Policy Studies Review* (Autumn/Winter 1995): 353-

For further reading:

Brunner, R. D. and T. Clark, 1997. A practice-based approach to ecosystem management, *Conservation Biology*, 11:48-58.

### **16 April (13)                    Normative Considerations: Common Interests**

Madison, J. 1788. *Federalist 10*.

Schattschneider, E. E. 1975. The semisovereign people, Chapter 8, pp. 126-138 in *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press).

Fraatz, J. M. B. 1982. Policy analysts as advocates. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 1:273-276.

Glendon, M. A. 1998. Knowing the universal declaration of human rights, *Notre Dame Law Journal*, May:1153-1181.

For further reading:

Lasswell, H. D. 1962. The Public Interest: Proposing Principles of Content and Procedure, pp. 54-87 in *Nomos V: The Public Interest*, Yearbook of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy (New York: Atherton Press).

### **23 April (14)                    Normative Considerations: Self-Orientation**

J.P. Dobel, 1999. The Ethics of Resigning, JPAM 18:245-263.

Benveniste, G. 1984. On a code of ethics for policy experts, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 3:561-572.

C. Metcalf, 1998. Presidential Address: Research Ownership, Communication of Results, and Threats to Objectivity in Client-Driven Research, JPAM 17:153-63.

Dewey, J. 1933. Chapters 1 and 2 of *How We Think*, pp. 113-139 in John Dewey: *The Later Works, 1925-1953*. (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press).

Jenkins-Smith, H. C. 1990. Analysis in practice: contexts and roles, Chapter 4 pp. 83-121 in *Democratic Politics and Policy Analysis* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole).

For further reading:

Fischhoff, B., S. Watson and P. Hope, 1984. Defining Risk, *Policy Sciences* **17**:123n140

Slovic, P. 1993. Perceived risk, trust, and democracy, *Risk Analysis*, **13**:675-682.

Snare, C. E. 1995. Windows of opportunity: When and how can the policy analyst influence the policy makers during the policy process? **14**:407-430.

**30 April (15) FINAL PRESENTATIONS – Papers Due!!**