

Syllabus: Institutions and Actors in the Policy Process

Course Convenor: Florian Weiler

Course Teaching Assistant: Ihor Moshenets

Florian is available for consultation with appointments via email at weilerf@ceu.edu.

Ihor is available at moshenets_igor@phd.ceu.edu

This course introduces students to how institutions and ideas interact with interests to structure policy making processes and influence actor behaviour, policy output, as well as prospects for participation and engagement. The course adopts a broad understanding of political institutions and takes a governance perspective. Rather than being just branches of government, political institutions – be they formal or informal – significantly frame and affect actor behaviour. Policy making does not happen in a vacuum but it is constrained by different institutional settings which enable or disempower particular actors, include or exclude them, encourage or discourage association or dispersion of actor groups.

In the first part of the course, we review some basic concepts of policy-making, and then build on them by discussing various theoretical ideas of which actors should be expected to be particularly influential in the policy process. With these competing ideas in mind, and also building on New Institutionalism, in the second part of the course we then investigate the specific role specific actors and institutions such as political parties, legislatures, governments, interest groups, etc. play in the policy process. Towards the end of the course, we look at the interplay of some of these actors in multi-level systems, networked interests, and iron triangles. Based on these considerations, at the end of the course we can revisit the initial question of who should be especially influential, and therefore which policy-making models are best able to explain the policy process.

The approach of the course is both comparative and inspired by multi-level governance. Students acquire core knowledge in analyzing the impact of institutional settings on the policy process, but also how different groups of actors try to influence this process. The course helps students to consider different actors and institutional environments when studying policy, or when investigating strategies for influence. To this end, we also explore different causal dynamics behind policy-making – when and how do institutions, interests and actors matter as driving forces behind policy.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course students will be able:

- to understand key patterns of how political institutions impact the policy process, and to identify the role of different types of actors and interests within this process;
- to develop a critical understanding of core concepts and approaches in the field including conceptual and empirical limitations;
- have acquired the necessary skills for engaging in team work and discussion when analyzing the causal dynamics of actors and institutions in policy processes;
- to engage in independent research in the field using multiple sources including scholarly contributions and empirical information also in areas which are new to them.

Course Texts:

There are no textbooks specifically assigned. Nevertheless, you may find the following useful sources to start your own research:

Béland, D. (2019). *How Ideas and Institutions Shape the Politics of Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Botterill, L.C. & Fenna, A. (2019). *Interrogating Public Policy Theory: A Political Values Perspective*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

John, P. (2012). *Analyzing Public Policy*. London: Routledge.

Levy-Faur, D. (2012). *Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peters, B.G. (2019). *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Course organization

The course will run weekly on Mondays:

Monday, 10.50 – 12.30 (room TBA)

Preparation – You are expected to check in regularly to the Moodle site for the course to check on any updates or additional readings. In other words, this is an evolving course document and changes in the form of additions are to be expected.

Absences – Please notify Jacopo in advance if you will be absent from class. Missed classes must be made up with an assignment, unless the absence occurred for medical reasons (sickness notification needs to be accompanied by a doctor's note). The make-up assignment for missed classes is a 500-word summary of the seminar readings to be sent within a week of the missed class and sent to Jacopo.

Adjustments – If you require any support or adjustments due to a disability to help you participate in class (e.g. handouts printed in advance, larger text, extra time for reading, scheduled absences) you can talk to Florian. You can also meet with the CEU Disability Services Officer Natalia Nyikes (nyikesn@ceu.edu) or consult the CEU Student Disability Policy (<https://documents.ceu.edu/node/508>).

Course Assessment:

Participation:	10%
Seminar presentation:	20%
Essay:	70%

Participation: 10%

You are expected to come prepared for the seminar discussion by reading in advance the required texts. Seminars will be a mix of, lectures, student presentations, group work, and also an institution game in weeks 3 and 4. However, general class discussion based on the readings is the foundation of the course, thus, understanding the key concepts is necessary for a fruitful class discussion. You are expected to participate by joining the conversation, asking questions (even if you think it is a dumb question) and engaging in a critique of the readings. There will be 2 to 3 required readings per week.

Each topic has some general questions as a guideline for initial discussion. However, you are encouraged to develop additional questions for discussion, to direct to the student presenters or to the course directors.

Mobile phones should be out of sight / turned off, and laptops closed.

Seminar presentation: 20%

In five of the twelve weeks, groups of four to five students are required to **prepare a 30 minute presentation**. In the six weeks with presentation there will first be short (general) intro to the topic by Florian, covering the main readings. **The task of the students is then to present how their selected actor (or group of actors) influences the specific policy process of environmental policy making!** This means doing your own research, finding paper on that topic, and summarizing what you find in a coherent and comprehensible way. This is what you will be assessed on.

Your presentation should be supported by PowerPoint slides (up to a maximum of 15) and a handout, both will be shared with the class. **The slides and handouts must be sent to Florian by Friday noon before the presentation.**

Grading follows the 100 point system (see table further below), from which the letter grades will be derived. Late submissions of supporting material earn a deduction of 5 points per day. Not including additional materials based on own research will result in subtraction of 10 points.

Date	Topic	Name
Week 6, Feb 12	Parties	1. 2. 3.
Week 7, Feb 19	Parliaments	1. 2. 3.
Week 8, Feb 26	Governments and Policy-Making	1. 2. 3.
Week 9, Mar 4	Interest groups: collective action, mobilization, and lobbying strategies	1. 2. 3.
Week 10, Mar 11	Advocacy Coalitions and Networked Interests	1. 2. 3.
Week 11, Mar 18	Multi-level governance: sub-national actors and the EU	1. 2. 3.

Essays: 70%

The main component of the final grade is a final essay, submitted individually by each student at the end of the term. Students can analyse a policy process of their choosing, then select a theoretical framework and/or one of the institutions or actors covered in class. This will be their analytical lense to discuss the involved actor(s) and/or institutions, and how they shape the policy process in question.

Essays should be 3,000 words in length. This word length is inclusive of everything (that means title, name, text, bibliography, footnotes, annexes, etc).

Essay due date: 5.00 pm Friday 5th April 2024.

Grading follows the 100 point system (see table below), from which the letter grades will be derived. Late submission will earn a deduction of 2 points per day. For instance, if the essay is graded at 90, but the essay was submitted two days late, the final score will be 86, and thus the letter grade will be a B+ (instead of A-).

Grade	Points (0-100 scale)
A	100-96
A-	95-88
B+	87-80
B	79-71
B-	70-63
C+	62-58

Course schedule

1. Introduction and review (8th January)

The aim of the first session is to introduce the course and to review some major concepts of the policy-making process, which we will need for the rest of the term. The main concepts for review are

- Policy cycle
- Systems theory
- Policy diffusion
- Multi-level governance

Questions for Discussion:

- Is the policy cycle theory useful, and how? Criticism?
- What is the role of actors and institutions in the policy cycle and systems theory?
- What is the difference between policy diffusion and multi-level governance?

Seminar Reading:

DeLeon, P. (1999). The Stages Approach to the policy process: What has it done? Where is it going?, in: Sabatier, P. (ed.): *Theories of the Policy Process. Theoretical Lenses on Public Policy*. Boulder: Westview Press, 19-33.

Easton, D. (1957). An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems. *World Politics* 9(3), 383-400.

Bache, I., Bartle, I. & Flinders, M. (2016). Multi-level Governance, in: Ansell, C., & Torfing, J. (eds.): *Handbook on Theories of Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 486-498.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Ansell, C. & Torfing, J. (2016). *Handbook on Theories of Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing

Bevir, M. (2010). *The SAGE Handbook of Governance*. London: Sage.

2. Theoretical foundations (15th January)

In this session, we will lay the main theoretical foundations for the rest of the course. We will build on the theories discussed in the first session, but now add ideas about the role of actors and institutions in this process. On the one hand, we will build on the ideas of Downs and Black on the interaction of voters and politicians, and discuss the rational choice approach as well as the median voter theorem. On the other hand, we will look at ideas of organized interests who fight about policy outcomes (instead of voters) in specific policy-terrains. We will then discuss the strength and weaknesses of the two approaches. Here, we will introduce the basics of these two different perspectives of comparative politics. Later classes will go into more detail.

Questions for Discussion:

- How is rational choice theory useful for understanding public policy?
- What is the MVT and what are its prediction in different party systems?
- What are the four traditions which Gilens and Page contrast with one another?
- What are the authors' conclusions? Do these findings travel to other countries, in your opinion?

Seminar Reading:

Hinich, M.J. & Munger, M.C. (1997). *Analytical Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1 and 2.

Gilens, M. & Page, B.I. (2014). Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens. *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3), 564-581.

Holcombe, R.G. (1989). The Median Voter model in Public Choice Theory. *Public Choice* 61(2), 115-125.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Hinich, M.J. & Munger, M.C. (1997). *Analytical Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 3 to 9.

Bechtel, M.M. & Hainmueller, J. (2011). How Lasting is Voter Gratitude? An Analysis of the Short- and Long-term Electoral Returns to Beneficial Policy. *American Journal of Political Science* 55(4), 852-868.

3. Institutionalism (22nd January)

Starting with the observations from the previous class by Gilens and Page, we will again ask ourselves whether their findings can be exported to other countries. We will think about this in terms of the different institutions, and how different sets of institutions might change the outcome of the findings. We will then discuss what institutions are and introduce the three new institutionalisms (historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, discursive institutionalism), how they differ, and their strength and weaknesses.

Questions for Discussion:

- Which of the new institutionalisms is most convincing to you and why?
- Can you find examples of institutions which are best explained by the three new institutionalisms?

Seminar Reading:

Hall, P.A. & Taylor, R.C. (1996). Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms. *Political Studies* 44(5), 936-957.

Peters, B.G., Jordan A. & Tosun J. (2017). Over-reaction and Under-reaction in Climate Policy: An Institutional Analysis. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* 19(6), 612-624.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Eckersley, P. (2017). Cities and Climate Change: How Historical Legacies Shape Policy-making in English and German Municipalities, *Politics* 37(2), 151–166.

Peters, B.G. (2019). *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The new institutionalism*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. Chapter 4.

Abrutyn, S. & Turner, J.H. (2011). The Old Institutionalism Meets the New Institutionalism. *Sociological Perspectives* 54(3), 283–306.

Araral, E. (2008). The Strategic Games that Donors and Bureaucrats Play: An Institutional Rational Choice Analysis. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19(4), 853-871.

4. Institutions game (29st January)

Once we have an idea of institutionalism, we will start preparing for a game to see the effect of institutions in action. Each student will play the role of MP (member of parliament). You will be divided into four party groupings with preferences and set rules of the game (or institutions), your goal will be to negotiate a bill, i.e. a proposed legal text, which can obtain a majority in our parliament when we vote on it in the end. The bill will be on legislation regarding university funding.

You will find the general rules and principles of the games on Moodle. In addition, I will share a document with strategic consideration and a bill with your preferences with your group only.

Group assignment and the first round of the game (where you try to understand your preferences and prepare a negotiation strategy) will already take place in the final 30 minutes of week 3. Please do take time during the week in preparation for the game to meet and to further discuss your options!

Important: For class 4, when we play the game, there are no readings. But you are required to meet with your team (party) and prepare for the game!

5. Institutionalism in Non-Western Contexts (5th February)

Discussion session!

Now we have an understanding of what institutionalism is, both from a theoretical point of view, but we also experienced this first-hand through our institutions game. Now the question arises, are these ideas how institutions shape politics only relevant within the Western setting for which they were originally designed, or can we apply them to other countries (developing countries, non-democratic countries, etc.) as well?

Questions for Discussion:

- How can institutionalism be transferred to non-Western settings? Is this useful?
- Institution building in non-Western settings: can and should this be based on Western examples? Why, or why not?
- What about already existing (traditional?) institutions? Which role can (and should?) they play for institution building?

Seminar Reading:

Channell, W. (2006). *Lessons Not Learned: Problems with Western Aid for Law Reform in Post-Communist Countries*. Carnegie Papers, Rule of Law Series 57.

Gebeye, B. A. (2021), *A Theory of African Constitutionalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 73-101.

Ghai, Y. and Galli, G. (2006). Constitution Building Processes and Democratization, International IDEA, Stockholm, 9-16.

Further Readings:

Mowo, J., Adimassu, Z., Catacutan, D., Tanui, J., Masuki, K., & Lyamchai, C. (2013). The importance of local traditional institutions in the management of natural resources in the highlands of East Africa. *Human Organization* 72(2), 154-163.

Elgie, R. (2012). Exogenous political institutions? Constitutional choice in postindependence francophone sub-Saharan Africa. *Political Research Quarterly* 65(4), 771-783.

6. Political Parties and Party Systems (12th February)

Political parties are central actors in a democratic systems. Thus, this session is devoted to political parties and their the defining characteristics in a political system. To better understand political parties and their behaviour, we will look at party systems and how party systems developed over time. A focus will be given to new party formation and hence, the future of parties.

Questions for Discussion:

- What roles do parties fulfil in a democratic regime?
- How did party systems emerge?
- Are political parties in keeping with the times?

Seminar Reading:

Katz, R.S. (2017). Political Parties, in: Caramani, D (ed.): *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 207-223.

Tavits, M. (2006). Party System Change: Testing a Model of New Party Entry. *Party Politics* 12(1), 99-119.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Caramani, D. (2017). Party systems, in: Caramani, D. (ed.): *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 224-244.

Clark, W.R., Golder, M. & Golder S. (2013). *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 2nd edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 535-602 (Elections and Electoral Systems).

Bormann, N.C. & Matt, G. (2013). Democratic Electoral Systems around the World, 1946-2011. *Electoral Studies* 32(2), 360-369.

Clark, W.R., Golder, M. & Golder S. (2013). *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 2nd edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 603-672 (Social Cleavages and Party Systems).

7. Parliaments: Structure, Composition and Power (19th February)

Legislatures are political assemblies that fulfill some kind of policy-making functions. This broad definition – proposed by Kreppel (2017) – already highlights the variety of legislatures installed in democratic systems. In this session, we will delve deeper into the structure, composition and powers of legislatures in order to understand their position in policy processes. We will pay special attention to descriptive representation and its effect on policy outcome based on the example of female politicians.

Questions for Discussion:

- What roles do legislatures fulfil in a democratic system?
- How do strong parties affect political representation?
- Do we need descriptive representation – i.e. have women to represent women?

Seminar Reading:

Kreppel, A. (2017). Legislatures, in: Caramani, D. (ed.). *Comparative Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 117-135.

Clayton, A. (2021). How Do Electoral Gender Quotas Affect Policy? *Annual Review of Political Science* 24, 235-252.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Chernykh, S., Doyle, D. & Power T.J. (2017). Measuring Legislative Power: An Expert Reweighting of the Fish-Kroenig Parliamentary Powers Index. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 42(2), 295-320.

Fish, M.S. & Kroenig M. (2009). *The Handbook of National Legislatures: A Global Survey*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wängnerud, L. (2009). Women in Parliaments: Descriptive and Substantive Representation, *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, 51-69.

8. Governments & Policy-Making (27th February)

This session's focus is on governments and bureaucracies in democratic systems. In comparison to our discussion on legislatures, we will examine the role of the executive. First, we will look at its structure, composition and powers. Second, we will look at policy processes based on the fulfillment of electoral promises. The Comparative Party Pledge Group provides the empirical basis to assess the amount of fulfilled pledges during a legislative period. This will lead us to the discussion of "good representation".

Questions for Discussion:

- What roles do governments fulfill in a democratic system?
- Which factors explain pledge fulfillment?
- What is good representation?

Seminar Reading:

Müller, W.C. (2020). Governments and Bureaucracies, in: Caramani D. (ed.): *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 139-158.

Thomson, R., Royed, T., Naurin, E., Artés, J., Costello, R., Ennser-Jedenastik, L., Ferguson, M., Kostadinova, P., Moury, C., Pétry, F. & Praprotnik, K. (2017). The Fulfillment of Parties' Election Pledges: A Comparative Study on the Impact of Power Sharing. *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3), 527-542.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Clark, W.R., Golder, M. & Golder S. (2013). *Principles of Comparative Politics*, 2nd edition. Los Angeles: Sage, 457-534.

9. Interest groups: collective action, mobilization, and lobbying strategies (4th March)

The aim of the session is to introduce students to the principles of collective action and interest group politics. Building on Olson's seminal work (*Logic of Collective action*), we will first discuss theoretically which types of interests are most likely to organize, and then test these ideas by looking at empirical research. We will then think about lobbying strategies, and how the interest group type, but also institutional framework, influences the lobbying behavior. We build on the underlying idea that governments today lack many resources to draft and implement policies. Thus, they include interest associations in policymaking arenas, effectively trading access to policymaking against access to resources and information.

Questions for Discussion:

- How far do financial resources sway decision-making in the policy process?
- What are the sources of legitimacy of interest groups in policy-making?
- Does lobbying have a legitimate role in making public policy?
- What is insider and outsider lobbying?

Seminar Reading:

Olson, M. (1965). *Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter I.

Baumgartner, F.R. & Leech, B.L. (2001). Interest Niches and Policy Bandwagons: Patterns of Interest Group Involvement in National Politics. *The Journal of Politics* 63(4), 1191-1213.

Weiler, F. & Brändli, M. (2015). Inside vs. Outside Lobbying: How the Institutional Framework Shapes the Lobbying Behaviour of Interest Groups. *European Journal of Political Research* 54(4), 745-766.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Berkhout, J., Carroll, B.J., Braun, C., Chalmers, A.W., Destrooper, T., Lowery, D., Otjes, S. & Rasmussen, A. (2015). Interest Organizations across Economic Sectors: Explaining Interest Group Density in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy* 22(4): 462-480.

Dür, A., Bernhagen P. & Marshall D. (2015). Interest Group Success in the European Union: When (and Why) Does Business Lose? *Comparative Political Studies* 48(8), 951–83.

10. Advocacy Coalitions and Networked Interests (11th March)

A very comprehensive theory of policymaking is the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). It focuses on broadly defined coalitions of actors who form coalitions to influence policies on the basis of shared beliefs. We will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this approach on the basis of empirical analyses. We will also look at how this can be related to the idea of lobbying coalitions and interest group networks.

Questions for Discussion:

- What is your understanding of the ACF? Is it a useful concept, or is it maybe too broad?
- Is the ACF even a theory? Can we derive testable hypotheses from it?
- How is ACF related to lobbying coalitions? Is it the same, or is it different?

Seminar Reading:

Klüver, H. (2013). *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.

Sabatier, P.A. & Weible C.M. (2007). The Advocacy Coalitions Framework: Innovations and Clarifications, in: Sabatier, P.A. (ed.): *Theories of the Policy Process*. Boulder: Westview Press, 189-222.

Bunea, A., Ibenskas, R. & Weiler, F. (2021). Interest Group Networks in the European Union. *European Journal of Political Research*. (in press)

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Sabatier, P.A. & Jenkins-Smith, H.C. (2007). The Advocacy Coalitions Framework: An Assessment. In: Sabatier, P.A. (ed.): *Theories of the Policy Process*. Boulder: Westview Press, 117-166.

Parrish, R. (2003). The Politics of Sports Regulation in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy* 10(2): 246-246.

Radaelli, C.M. (1999). Harmful Tax Competition in the EU: Policy Narratives and Advocacy Coalitions. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37(4): 661-682.

11. Multi-level governance: Sub-national actors and the EU (18th March)

Research on institutions and actors in the policy process is still centered on the national level. Sub-national actors, as well as international actors received much less scholarly attention. To fully understand policy processes, however, it is important to go beyond the nation state and to look at sub-national – i.e. regional and local – actors. A focus is given to mapping and measuring regional actors.

Multi-level governance not only subsumes sub-national actors, but also refers to policy-making at the international level. Looking at Europe, we will discuss the EU as a political actor as well as policy processes at the EU level. A focus of this week's class is on the European Parliament – an institution that experienced many transformation processes throughout the history of the European Union.

Questions for Discussion:

- How are federalist countries structured?
- How do regional actors affect policy-making?
- What is the institutional structure of the European Union?
- How powerful is the European Parliament?

Seminar Reading:

Loughlin, J. (2017). Federal and Local Government Institutions, in: Caramani, D. (ed.). *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 188-204.

Marks, G., Hooghe, L. & Schakel A.H. (2008). Patterns of Regional Authority, *Regional & Federal Studies* 18(2-3), 167-181.

Roederer-Rynning C. & Greenwood J. (2017). The European Parliament as a Developing Legislature: Coming of Age in Trilogues? *Journal of European Public Policy* 24(5), 735-754.

Hix, S. (2020). The EU as a New Political System, in: Caramani, D. (ed.): *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 419-438.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Hooghe, L., Marks, G. & Schakel A.H. (2008). Operationalizing Regional Authority: A Coding Scheme for 42 Countries, 1950-2006, *Regional & Federal Studies* 18(2-3), 123-142.

Hooghe, L., Marks, G. & Schakel A.H. (2020). Multilevel Governance, in: Caramani, D. (ed.): *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 193-210.

Bressanelli E. & Chelotti N. (2018). The European Parliament and Economic Governance: Explaining a Case of Limited Influence. *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 24(1), 72-89.

12. Conclusion: What Drives Policy? (25th March)

In this session, we will briefly discuss the idea of Iron Triangles and Networked Interests, two theoretical models that bring the various actors discussed throughout the course together. Based on this intro, as well as the readings and ideas from the previous weeks, we will then have a final general class discussion about the policy process, the various actors, and who is more or less influential, and why. In this discussion, we will also consider the role of institutions again.

Seminar Reading:

Previously listed readings.

Kriesi, H., Adam, S. & Jochum, M. (2006). Comparative Analysis of Policy Networks in Western Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(3), 341-361.

Maclachlan, P. L. (2004). Post office politics in modern Japan: The postmasters, iron triangles, and the limits of reform. *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 281-313.

Further Reading for Essays and Presentations:

Cerny, P. (2001). From “Iron Triangles” to “Golden Pentangles”? Globalizing the Policy Process. *Global Governance* 7(4), 397-410.

Gais, T.L., Peterson, M.A. & Walker, J.L. (1984). Interest Groups, Iron Triangles and Representative Institutions in American National Government. *British Journal of Political Science* 14(2), 161-185