

Public Policy 330
Distributive Politics
Winter 2007
Professor Boris Shor
Tuesdays, 3-5:50
Version: January 21, 2007

Office: Room 185

Email: bshor@uchicago.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 3-5 pm

Description The federal government in the United States spends several trillions of dollars per year. These dollars—a highly visible aggregation of public policy—are accompanied by innumerable decisions about how the money is spent. Distributive politics is the study of those decisions: who gets what resources, where, how, and why—as allocated by any level of government. This course focuses on the activities of democratic institutions in the United States, including elections, interest groups, geographic constituencies, parties, bicameralism, committees, and the presidency in structuring how government resources are allocated and distributed. The course introduces theoretical concepts and applies them to specific examples. By the end of the course, students should be able to understand why government resources flow as they do to particular constituencies.

While the primary application of concepts in course is the US federal government, depending on the particular interests of the class, I may assign articles addressing issues of distributive politics in other countries or US states.

Texts There are 3 required books for the class, which may be purchased from the Seminary Co-op Bookstore at 5757 South University (773-752-4381).

- Arnold, R. Douglas. 1979. *Congress and the bureaucracy: A theory of influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Evans, Diana. 2004. *Greasing the Wheels*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stein, Robert M. and Kenneth N. Bickers. 1995. *Perpetuating the pork barrel: policy subsystems and American democracy*. Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press.

All other assigned readings (articles and portions of books) are available electronically on the course web site, which is located at chalk.uchicago.edu.

Requirements

1. **Active Participation.** Since this class is being taught as a seminar, your attendance, preparation, and participation are crucial. Do not be afraid of saying something “wrong,” and do not be afraid of asking questions. Most of the other students are probably thinking along similar lines as you. Constructive critiques of readings and lecture material are not only welcome, they are practically required.
2. **Reaction Papers.** Write five 1 page papers (1” margins, double-spaced, and 12-point serif font, like Times New Roman) reacting to a week’s reading of your choosing. You should address a single issue brought up by the readings, and your critique of it as handled by the author. Papers are due no later 1pm on the day of the class in electronic form through Chalk, using the “Digital Dropbox” function (make sure to “send file,” not “add file”).
3. **Policy Discussion.** For a single week’s readings (to be assigned), do research on an example of that week’s theoretical arguments in a contemporary public policy area. Use journalistic sources to flesh out the impact on the ground of those arguments. Present your findings for that week orally to the class for about 10-15 minutes, followed by a short discussion that you lead with a few prepared questions.
4. **Research Paper.** You will write a 15-20 page paper due at the end of the quarter (1” margins, double-spaced, and 12-point serif font, like Times New Roman) due by Friday, March 16 (approval needed along with a meeting to discuss the topic of the paper). PhD and advanced MPP students should write an empirical paper with data provided by me.

Policies

- **Lateness.** Is frowned upon. Each day an assignment is late without a substantial excuse, a full letter grade is deducted from the paper.
- **Incompletes.** Will be granted rarely.
- **Plagiarism.** Will result in a failing grade for the course.

Grading

- Participation = 20%

- Reaction papers = 10%
- Policy discussion = 10%
- Paper = 60%

I Jan 4. Introduction, Part 1

Discussion of pre-course readings located on Chalk [Assignments section].

2 Jan 11. Introduction, Part 2

[Book Readings]

Mayhew (1974) 13-77

Stein and Bickers (1995) 3-5, 15-29

Evans (2004) 1-28

[eChalk Readings]

Lowi (1964)

Recommended

Wildavsky and Caiden (2003) 1-24

Fiorina (1977) 38-49

3 Jan 18. Geography and Coalition Strategy

[Book Readings]

Arnold (1979) 3-54

Stein and Bickers (1995) 30-89

Evans (2004) ch 2

[eChalk Readings]

Shepsle and Weingast (1981)

Recommended

Fenno (1978) 1-29

Arnold (1990) 88-118

4 Jan 25. Interest Groups

[Book Readings]

Stein and Bickers (1995) 90-117

[eChalk Readings]

Mitchell and Munger (1991)
Ambrosius (1989)
Evans (1996)
Gray et al. (2004)
Recommended
Ansolabehere, de Figueiredo and Jr. (2003)
Jack L. Walker (1991) 19-57
Hardin (1982) ch 1-2
Sandler (1992) ch 2

5 Feb 1. Elections

[Book Readings]
Stein and Bickers (1995) 118-136
[eChalk Readings]
Cox and McCubbins (1986)
Dixit and Londregan (1996)
Levitt and Snyder (1997)
Lindstadt (2005)
Recommended
Finan (2004)

6 Feb 8. Committees

[Book Readings]
Evans (2004) 57-89
[eChalk Readings]
Weingast and Marshall (1988)
Roberts (1990)
Alvarez and Saving (1997)
Savage (1991)
Recommended
Gilligan and Krehbiel (1990)

7 Feb 15. House and Senate

[Book Readings]
Evans (2004) 162-209

[eChalk Readings]

Lee (2003)

Milligan (2003)

8 Feb 22. Party

[eChalk Readings]

Levitt and Snyder (1995)

Balla et al. (2002)

Bickers and Stein (2000)

Cox and McCubbins (1993)

9 Mar 1. President

[Book Readings]

Evans (2004) 131-161

[eChalk Readings]

Canes-Wrone (2001)

McCarty (2000)

Shor (2006a)

Recommended

Mebane and Wawro (2002)

10 Mar 8. Defense

[Book Readings]

Arnold 1979, ch 6

[eChalk Readings]

Carsey and Rundquist (1999)

Derouen and Heo (2000)

?

Shor (2006b)

11 Mar 16 - Paper Due Date

References

- Alvarez, R. Michael and Jason L. Saving. 1997. "Congressional Committees and the Political Economy of Federal Outlays." *Public Choice* 92(1-2):55-73.
- Ambrosius, Margery Marzahn. 1989. "The Role of Occupational Interests in State Economic Development Policy-Making." *The Western Political Quarterly* 42(1):53-68. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-4078E2.o.CO>
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. de Figueiredo and James M. Snyder Jr. 2003. "Why Is There so Little Money in US Politics." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1):105-130.
- Arnold, R. Douglas. 1979. *Congress and the bureaucracy: A theory of influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Arnold, R. Douglas. 1990. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Balla, Steven J., Eric D. Lawrence, Forrest Maltzman and Lee Sigelman. 2002. "Partisanship, Blame Avoidance, and the Distribution of Legislative Pork." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(3):515-525.
- Bickers, Kenneth N. and Robert M. Stein. 2000. "The Congressional Pork Barrel in a Republican Era." *Journal of Politics* 62(4):1070-1086.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2001. "The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2):313-329.
- Carsey, Thomas M. and Barry Rundquist. 1999. "Party and Committee in Distributive Politics: Evidence from Defense Spending." *Journal of Politics* 61(4):1156-1169.
- Cox, Gary W. and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1986. "Electoral Politics as a Redistributive Game." *Journal of Politics* 48(2):370-389.
- Cox, Gary W. and Mathew McCubbins. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Derouen, Karl, Jr. and Uk Heo. 2000. "Defense Contracting and Domestic Politics." *Political Research Quarterly* 53(4):753-769.
- Dixit, Avinash and John Londregan. 1996. "The Determinants of Success of Special Interests in Redistributive Politics." *The Journal of Politics* 58(4):1132-1155.
- Evans, Diana. 1996. "Before the Roll Call: Interest Group Lobbying and Public Policy Outcomes in House Committees." *Political Research Quarterly* 49(2):287-304. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1065-91293E2.o.CO>
- Evans, Diana. 2004. *Greasing the Wheels*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fenno, Richard F. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Finan, Frederico. 2004. "Political Patronage and Local Development: A Brazilian Case Study."

- Fiorina, Morris P. 1977. *Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gilligan, Thomas W. and Keith Krehbiel. 1990. "Organization of Informative Committees by a Rational Legislature." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(2):531-564.
- Gray, Virginia, David Lowery, Matthew Fellowes and Andrea McAtee. 2004. "Public Opinion, Public Policy, and Organized Interests in the American States." *Political Research Quarterly* 57(3):411-420. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1065-91293E2.o.CO>
- Hardin, Russell. 1982. *Collective Action*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jack L. Walker, Jr. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. University of Michigan Press.
- Lee, Frances E. 2003. "Geographic Politics in the U.S. House of Representatives: Coalition Building and Distribution of Benefits." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4):714-728.
- Levitt, Steven D. and James M. Snyder. 1995. "Political parties and the distribution of federal outlays." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(4):958-80.
- Levitt, Steven D. and James M. Snyder. 1997. "The Impact of Federal Spending on House Election Outcomes." *The Journal of Political Economy* 105(1):30-53.
- Lindstadt, Rene. 2005. "Core Supporters or Swing Voters? The Geo-Politics of New Deal Spending."
- Lowi, Theodore. 1964. "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies, and Political Theory." *World Politics* 16:677-715.
- Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- McCarty, Nolan. 2000. "Presidential Pork: Executive Veto Power and Distributive Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94(1):117-129.
- Mebane, Walter and Gregory Wawro. 2002. "Presidential Pork Barrel Politics."
- Milligan, Kevin. 2003. "Do inter-district spillovers affect pork-barrel expenditures? Theory and evidence."
- Mitchell, William C. and Michael C. Munger. 1991. "Economic Models of Interest Groups: An Introductory Survey." *American Journal of Political Science* 35(2):512-546. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-58533E2.o.CO>
- Roberts, Brian E. 1990. "A dead Senator tells no lies: seniority and the distribution of federal benefits." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(1):31-58.
- Sandler, Todd. 1992. *Collective Action: Theory and Applications*. University of Michigan Press.
- Savage, James D. 1991. "Saints and Cardinals in Appropriations Committees and the Fight against Distributive Politics." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 16(3):329-347.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Barry R. Weingast. 1981. "Political Preferences for the Pork Barrel: A Generalization." *American Journal of Political Science* 25(1):96-111.

- Shor, Boris. 2006a. "A Bayesian Multilevel Model of Federal Spending, 1983-2001." Working paper.
- Shor, Boris. 2006b. "The Weak Leviathan? Testing Partisan Theories of Political Influence on Defense Procurement in Congressional Districts: 98th-102nd Congress."
- Stein, Robert M. and Kenneth N. Bickers. 1995. *Perpetuating the pork barrel: policy subsystems and American democracy*. Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Weingast, Barry R. and William J. Marshall. 1988. "The Industrial Organization of Congress; or, Why Legislatures, Like Firms, Are Not Organized as Markets." *The Journal of Political Economy* 96(1):132-163.
- Wildavsky, Aaron and Naomi Caiden. 2003. *The New Politics of the Budgetary Process*. Fifth ed. Longman.