

## **Domestic Politics**

Political Science 217

Amherst College

Fall 2011

Professor Kristin Bumiller

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:15-6:15 and via appointment scheduler at:

<http://www.flashappointments.com/client/launch.cfm?busId=4127>

### Course Description

This course will explore the domestic sphere as a site of politics. We will define the domestic sphere broadly, including politics in the home, private life, and of state and local governments. The principle questions to be addressed will include: How does the conception of public and private shift over time and what are the forces driving these changes? How is the private sphere seen as a site of safety versus danger? What are the consequences of the intervention of state power and policing into the private sphere? How are power relations within the private interconnected with privilege and status in the public domain? Our attention will be focused on the social construction of gender, race and ethnic identities. A wide range of issues will be covered including the role of bureaucracies, the social organization of families, regulation of health and safety, domestic violence, local/urban politics, the deinstitutionalization of people with disabilities, homelessness, economic and racial inequality, policing, and incarceration. The course will examine these issues primarily in the context of American politics and society.

### Course Requirements:

Students are required to attend and be prepared for every class (please email the professor if you will miss a class). Informed class participation is essential to the success of the course—the discussion and in-class activities will be based upon the assumption that all of the students have completed the assigned readings.

There will be out-of-class midterm and final examinations. These examinations will be short answer and essay format and will test the student's comprehensive knowledge of the course readings.

During the semester there will be practicum sessions that will enable groups of students to apply the readings from the previous sessions of the course, explore policy questions, and conduct research. Every student will be assigned to one practicum. As a group, the students will prepare a presentation and design a class activity that addresses the practicum question. In addition, each student will write a short paper addressing the question (due four days before the practicum session). The practicum is an important part of the learning experience for the course (as reflected in its percent of the grade). It is an opportunity for students to develop their abilities to work in groups and achieve excellence in making presentations and designing class activities.

Students will be evaluated as follows:

10% Class participation

40% Practicum (including paper and class presentation)

25% Midterm

25% Final Exam

Books for Purchase:

Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*

Lisa Dodson, *The Moral Underground: How Ordinary Americans Subvert an Unfair Economy*

Erving Goffman, *Asylums*

Jeannie Suk, *At Home in the Law*, Yale University Press, 2009

Weekly Reading Assignments (all are available on electronic reserves unless otherwise noted):

Tuesday September 6

**Introduction to the Course**

Thursday September 8

**Obfuscating Cost: Taxation and Budget**

Donald B. Marrow, "Spending in Disguise," *National Affairs*, Summer 2011, pp. 20-34.

Tuesday September 13

**Obfuscating Risk: Domestic Accidents**

Charles Perrow, *Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 62-71, 304-352

Charles Perrow, "Disasters Evermore," at

[www.lse.ac.uk/collections/.../newsAndEvents/2006events/Perrow.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/.../newsAndEvents/2006events/Perrow.pdf)

"Accident expert weighs in on Gulf oil spill," *Grist*, May 10, 2010 at

<http://www.grist.org/article/2010-05-07-accident-expert-weighs-in-on-gulf-oil-spill>

"Charles Perrow on Fukushima,"

<https://sites.google.com/site/alanrudy/charlesperrowonfukushimareactors>

Thursday September 15

### **The Politics of Administration**

Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964  
(entire)

Tuesday September 20

### **Regulating Food and Drugs**

Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed: What You Don't Know about Orange Juice*, New Haven: Yale  
University Press, 2010, pp. 31-61.

Whittington, Keith E. "The Conquering Bureaucracy." *Reason* 42, no. 7 (December 2010):  
62-65.

Benson, Peter, "Good Clean Tobacco," *American Ethnologist* 35, no. 3:2008. 357-379.

Thursday September 22

### **PRACTICUM #1**

**How do we structure a regulatory system to protect the public's health and safety  
that is appropriate to the technical and environmental conditions of the twenty-first  
century?**

Carpenter, Daniel P. "The Political Economy Of FDA Drug Review: Processing, Politics,  
And Lessons For Policy." *Health Affairs* 23, no. 1 (January 2004): 52-63.

Tuesday September 27

### **Interest Groups**

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Cambridge:  
Harvard University Press, 1971 (entire)

Thursday September 29

### **Federalism**

Lisa L. Miller, *The Perils of Federalism*, Chapter 5 and 7, pp. 120-146, 167-188 and "The  
Representational Biases of Federalism: Scope and Bias in the Political Process,  
Revisited." *Perspectives on Politics*, 2007 5:2: 305-321.

Tuesday October 4

## **PRACTICUM #2**

**What are the politically viable options for the regulation of firearms and what are their impact on urban governance and public education?**

Kristin A. Goss, *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, Chapters 1, 6, 7; pp. 1-30, 176-200

Thursday October 6

## **Women and the State**

Gretchen Ritter, *The Constitution as Social Design*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, pp. 66-99, 263-295

Tamara Metz, *Untying the Knot: Marriage, the State and the Case for Their Divorce* (Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. Chapter 1, pp. 1-18

Thursday October 13

## **Privacy**

Jeannie Suk, *At Home in the Law*, Yale University Press, 2009 (entire)

Tuesday, October 18

## **PRACTICUM #3**

**How should the state respond to domestic violence while recognizing concerns related to privacy, racial and ethnic discrimination, and poverty?**

Priya Kandaswamy, "You Trade in a Man for the Man: Domestic Violence and the U.S. Welfare State," *American Quarterly* Volume 62, Number 2, June 2010

Thursday October 20

## **Politics and the Economy**

Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, New York: Free Press, 1947, pp. 324-341 and *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Chapter 5

Tuesday October 25

### **Inequality**

Lisa Dodson, *The Moral Underground: How Ordinary Americans Subvert an Unfair Economy*, New York: New Press, 2009 (entire)

Thursday October 27

### **Representation**

Larry M. Bartels, "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the Public Mind." *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 0101 (2005): 15-31 and "The Irrational Electorate," *Wilson Quarterly*, Autumn 2008, Vol. 32 Issue 4, pp. 44-50

Tuesday November 1

### **Social Security**

Michele L. Landis, "Fate, Responsibility, and "Natural" Disaster Relief: Narrating the American Welfare State," *Law & Society Review*, June 1999, Vol. 33 Issue 2, pp. 257-319.

Mettler, Suzanne and Jeffrey M. Stonecash, "Government Program Usage and Political Voice." *Social Science Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (June 2008): 273-293

Thursday November 3

### **PRACTICUM #4**

**What policies have contributed to the great recession and how do we move toward economic recovery and the creation of jobs?**

Taunya Lovell Banks, "A Few Random Thoughts About Socio-Economic "Rights" in the United States in Light of the 2008 Financial Meltdown" 24 *Maryland Journal of International Law* 163, 2009

Tuesday November 8

### **Street-Level Bureaucracies**

James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974, pp. 1-12

Michael Lipsky, *Street Level Bureaucracy*, New York, NY: Russell Sage, 1980, pp. 3-12, 13-25, 159-179.

Thursday November 10

### **The Welfare State**

Celeste Watkins-Hayes, *The New Welfare Bureaucrats: Entanglements of Race, Class, and Policy Reform*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, pp. 1-48.

Tuesday November 15

### **Regulating the City**

Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporary Yours, Intimacy Authenticity and the Commerce of Sex*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, pp. 22-69.

Thursday November 17

### **PRACTICUM #5**

**What policies should be adopted to address the problem of housing insecurity and homelessness in the United States?**

Kim Hopper, *Reckoning with Homelessness*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003, pp. 175-203.

Tuesday November 29

### **Racially Divided Society**

Douglas S. Massey, *Categorically Unequal*, pp. 51-157

Thursday December 1

### **PRACTICUM #6:**

**How should we revitalize America's cities without furthering inequality and social exclusion?**

Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitcs: The New Suburban Reality Sprawl, First Suburbs, U.S. Economy, Jobs and the Economy*, Brookings Institution Press 2002, Chapter 9, 173-187

Tuesday December 6

### **Institutionalization**

Erving Goffman. *Asylums*, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961

Thursday December 8

#### **PRACTICUM #7**

**How should the state provide for the needs of the disabled in the midst of a fiscal crisis?**

Jim Mansell, Deinstitutionalisation and Community Living: Progress, Problems and Priorities. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*; June 2006, Vol. 31 Issue 2, pp. 65-76.

Tuesday December 13

#### **PRACTICUM #8**

**What threats does the dramatic growth in incarceration pose for democratic governance and how should the prison system in the United States be transformed?**

Nicola Lacey "American Imprisonment in Comparative Perspective," *Daedalus* 2010 139:3, 102-114