

LSHV-509: Value Issues in Public Policy
Spring 2008: January 10 – April 24

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COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course engages students in inferential analyses of policy issues and their respective values. The scope and content are designed to provide a longitudinal and interdisciplinary appreciation of values informing selected policy debates and actions in American society and to increase awareness of values and conflicts embedded in policy choices. The overall intent is to enhance students' critical thinking about value tensions underpinning public policy issues and to provide a better understanding of the nexus between their convictions, underlying assumptions, and values and public policy issues.

CLASS TIME AND DATES

6:00 – 8:30 pm: Thursdays: January 10, 17, 24; February 7, 21, 28; March 6, 27; April 3, 17, 24

FORMAT

Students are expected to engage in critical analyses of federally enacted policies and their respective policy issues through discussions of required readings within a seminar setting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING WEIGHTS

Attendance and Participation in seminar discussions: 25% of grade
Abstract of Values across Assigned Readings: 25% of grade
20-page Research Paper: 50% of grade

The **Research Paper** should:

- 1) Focus on a selected legislative policy at the national level, i.e. health, education, environment, national security
- 2) Describe and analyze the legislative intent, the issues that the legislation is attempting to address, the means by which the issues are to be addressed, and the values driving these interventions
- 3) Describe and analyze positions taken by legislators who approve and those who disapprove of the act, being attentive to the implied values of their positions
- 4) Examine the legislative hearings toward identifying invitees and the values implied by their positions and denote those who have not been invited and the values that would have informed their positions
- 5) Describe and analyze “think tank” stances and implied values, being careful not to bias the selection, i.e. include Heritage Foundation and the Brooking Institute

The paper should not exceed 20 typed, double-spaced pages (excluding footnotes and appendices). Please give me your proposed topic as soon as possible, and no later than March 6.

Students will make a ten minute oral presentation of their papers on April 24. The paper is due on the last class, April 24. Please send an electronic version of your paper and bring a hard copy with you to class on April 24 or (or earlier).

REQUIRED READINGS ACROSS SEMINARS: ONE-NINE

The Pew Research Center Pewresearch.org	Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes: 1987-2007	
St Martin’s Press New York	Neil Baldwin The American Revelation Ten Ideals That Shaped Our Country from the Puritans to the Cold War	2005/Hard 0-312-32543-6
Alfred A. Knopf	Stephen Breyer Active Liberty Interpreting Our Democratic Constitution	2005/Hard 0-307-26313-4
University of Washington	Eric Redman The Dance of Legislation	2001/Paper 0-295-98023-0
Brookings Institute www.brookings.edu	Thomas Loveless: The Peculiar Politics of No Child Left Behind	
Pew Research Center Pewresearch.org	“No Child Left Behind Gets Mixed Reviews”	
Oxford University Press	Jill Quadagno One Nation Uninsured Why the US Has No Health Insurance	2005/Hard 0-19-516039-8
Random House	Azar Nafisi Reading Lolita in Tehran	2004/Paper 0-8129-7106-X

SCHEDULED READINGS AND SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS

I. A Framework for Analyzing American Values: Consistencies, Tensions, Changes

January 10 **The Pew Research Center Report**
Trends in Political Values and
Core Attitudes: 1987-2007

II. Historical Rootings

January 17 **The American Revelation: Baldwin**
Ideals: One through Five

January 24 **The American Revelation: Baldwin**
Ideals: Six through Ten

III. Analyzing Policy Issues and Underpinning Values

Legal Framings

February 7 Judicial Decree: Bryer

February 21 Legislative Process: Redman

Legislative Prescriptives

February 28 Reforming Public Education: No Child Left Behind
Loveless: The Peculiar Politics of No Child Left Behind
Pew Research Center: “No Child Left Behind Gets Mixed
Reviews”

Sociological Perspective

March 6 and Health Insurance: The American Way: Quadagno
March 27

Literary Insights

April 3 and The Iran Regime: Toward Understanding the Limits of
April 17 Transporting American Democracy: Nafisi

Summary Overview of Research Papers

April 24 Ten Minute Presentations of Research Papers
Policy Issues and Underpinning Values

Final Paper: April 24

DISABILITIES STATEMENT

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.