

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

Terms and concepts to know:

Public policy	Tradeoffs / unintended consequences
Developmental policy	Redistributive policy
Allocation policy	Policy process stages
Problem recognition	Issue attention and actors
Agenda setting / actors and biases	Decision making models
Rational-comprehensive	Incrementalism
Elitism / Pluralism	Actors in decision making
Implementation	Program evaluation

Study and discussion questions:

1. Discuss the concept of public policy and give some examples of what could be called “active” and “passive” public policy making on the part of government.
2. Discuss the concepts of “tradeoffs” and “unintended consequences” and think of as many examples as you can from our own day and current policy dilemmas.
3. The philosopher Tibor Machan asks a question not often discussed in modern politics. Can there even be such a thing as “public interest”? We often see this phrase used among politicians and political scientists alike, in arguments for or against specific policies. What are some of the interesting points of his argument and do you agree that the what is in the “public interest” might be more complex than people realize?
4. What does Anderson mean by “public policy”?
5. Explain how Peppe believes economic and social rights have disappeared. Would you agree or disagree that the Occupy Movement might be able to reverse some of the policies that have brought us to this stage?
6. Throughout his address Nader speaks of a “democracy gap” in the United States. What does Nader mean by this term? How is the democracy gap related to the political power of corporate business?
7. Pick two of the ten aspects pointed out by Chomsky that promote the deepening concentration of wealth and power that you feel are the most egregious and need to have public policies that would reverse their trend.

Readings:

Heineman. *American Government*, Chapter 12.
WEB – Readings from “The Public Policy Process” links.

Video:

Requiem for the American Dream.