



SW 671 - Social Policy Development and Enactment

SS2012
Instructor: John Tropman

Monday 8-12
Classroom: TBA

Course Description

This course will review the overall design of human service systems, how to plan for and design such systems, how to develop the legislative mandates and regulations that operationalize these designs, and how to facilitate their formal enactment. Students will learn both the analytic and interactional skills associated with the development and enactment of policies that give specification to human service systems.

Course Content

Human service systems include a variety of separate programs, driven by differing policy (legislative and other) mandates. These programs involve extremely complicated implementation procedures and processes. This course will present the beginning level skills associated with the policy design and implementation of complex human service systems. "System design" involves networks of services, agencies, and clients. Therefore, this course will move beyond the individual agency and the single program and in the direction of complex multi-program and multi-service systems. Since one important "stock-in-trade" of policy professionals engaged in most design and enactment tasks is the written policy document, this course will place a heavy emphasis on the skills associated with the preparation of documents, such as memos, briefing papers, policy specification papers, legislative drafts, and program regulations and guidelines. Another important "stock in trade" is "the meeting" and hence, emphasis will be placed on meeting skills as well. Special emphasis will be placed on systems that serve special populations.

Course topics may include areas such as the following:

1. policy concepts and terms;
2. cycles for developing policies;
3. diagnosing policy environments (e.g. bureaucratic, fiscal, legislative, community)
4. advocacy roles (e.g. political, scientific, and ideological);
5. professional standards and ethics that impact on the selection of advocacy roles;
6. analyzing complex systems (e.g. issue identification and option generation);
7. preparing and enhancing utilization of policy documents;
8. use of quantitative and qualitative data in policy documents;
9. developing policy (e.g. drafting legislation, writing guidelines and administrative regulations, and developing feedback mechanisms);

10. selling policy (e.g. “issue selling, lobbying, testifying, and building coalitions of support).

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply beginning level skills in the use of the major analytic tools most commonly used to assess and evaluate complex (policy) systems of human and social services.
2. Apply beginning level skills in the use of interactional tools and techniques for facilitating group process and decision making.
3. Design a procedure for reviewing and assessing a social service (policy) system that encompasses a wide variety of separately mandated programs.
4. Develop and evaluate a reasonable set of options (and policy recommendations) for changing a particular service system.
5. Design and implement (or discuss implementation for) a preliminary political strategy for facilitating enactment of the preferred option.
6. Organize and prepare different types of policy documents or policy recommendations.
7. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to social policy development and enactment.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

1. *Behavioral and Social Science Research* is a foundational element that suffuses every aspect of the course. All policy analysis and implementation begins with an assessment of “where we are. “ New policy will be addressed will be addressed through review of studies and academic literature on, for example, the changing demographics that affect demand for services, and comparative legal and administrative policies and services and their impacts on families. Finally, program evaluations that can inform child and family welfare policies and service delivery are discussed.
2. *Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed through, for example, discussion of the client populations served by the service systems discussed in the course; the design of programs so that they will be responsive to the special cultural and ethnic circumstances of their clients; and the special child and family policies related to issues of ethnicity (e.g., the Indian Child Welfare Act, and international and transracial adoption).
3. *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed by considering the differential impact of policies and programs on the poor and minorities.
4. *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation* will be addressed by examining the continuum of care present in the programs and services provided

to children, youth, and families. Thus, neighborhood based or community-based programs will be contrasted with approaches that target families at risk or services recommended for families once they are referred to protective services, services that are court-ordered, or other services that are available only once the state has intervened into the life of families.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

This course covers the complexities of ethical dilemmas as they relate to social policy development and enactment strategies and the ways in which the NASW Code of Ethics may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues. In particular, the course will review the ethics and values related to confidentiality, self-determination, respect for cultural and religious differences, and social justice. The course includes consideration of the social worker's responsibility to promote the general welfare of society (e.g., the prevention and elimination of discrimination, equal access to resources, services, and opportunities, and advocacy for changes in policy) commonly confronted in social policy development and enactment.

PODS

Suffuse a focus on Privilege, Oppression, Discrimination, and Social Justice throughout the course.

Course Focus

The focus of the course is several policy roles

The Analyst as we approach it seeks to create intellectual clarity and options availability and alternatives.

- The Advocate “sells” particular policy perspectives from some position/organization.
 - Also known as the policy entrepreneur
- The Manager works for a Policy Maker (legislative or executive) and seeks to keep solutions moving, groups in touch, engages in constant clarification and redrafting.
- The Policy Evaluator – assessing policy impact (before or after)
- The Policy Bystander – those observing and potentially influencing policy activity

DATE	#	SESSION	Topics	The mes	Ethics/ Values	PODS
May 7 th	1	Policy Knowledge: Perspectives on Policy Management Policy Analysis, Policy Advocacy/Policy Management "Policy and "Administration" No Policy is Neutral, or Fair" or "Right" <i>The Grade Tax Discussion</i>	1,4,10	1,2,3,4	Me v We? Eye of the Beholder? thermos story	PODS
May 14 th	2	Policy Knowledge: Understanding Values and Policy; <i>Health of Human Services Workforce Discussion</i>	5	3	The Deserving Poor?	S
May 21 st	3	Policy Knowledge: Understanding Stages , Levels, Contexts and Settings for Policy Management, Machinery, Policy Committees <i>Parents License Discussion</i>	2,3,9	1,2	Was I just following orders?	P,D
May 28 th		MEMORIAL DAY/NO CLASS				
June 4 th	4	Policy Competency: Managing A Policy Meeting <i>Group Memo Discussion</i> <i>Crummy Community Meeting Discussion</i>		1	The Toxic Meeting?	O
June 4 th	5	Policy Competency: Managing a Policy Decision		1	The Abilene Paradox?	P,O
June 11 th	6	Policy Competency: Playing the Roles of the Policy Manager Doing Policy Writing <i>Paul Bunyan OR Restorative Justice League Discussion</i>	4,5,6,7	2,4	How much does the staffer spin The text?	
June 11 th	7	Policy Competency: Using Ideas to Lead Policy Change in Organizations, Communities and Polities	4,5	2,3,4	Presenting the opposition's case?	D
June 18 th	8	Policy Competency: Overcoming Resistance to Change	10	3	Do means justify ends?	PODS
June 18 th	9	Policy Competency : Discovering and Managing Personal Style; Encouraging the Idea-Driven Self; Interpersonal and Intellectual Attitudes <i>Pitcher Beer OR Policy Advocate v Analyst Discussion</i>	4,5	1	Who am I, really?	PODS
June 25 th	10	Policy Competency – Implementation	4,5	1	What is the disciplined use of self, in relationship?	
July 2 nd		Prepare reports/No Class				
July 9 th	11	Policy Competency/ Reports				all
July 16	12	Reports				all

Class Requirements

Class Participation:

Student attendance is a part of class participation.. Your participation grade will be based upon class attendance, bringing an article from a current newspaper or newsmagazine (see the following paragraph) as expected, and participation in classroom discussion and projects. "Showing up" is just the beginning of "class participation."

As a part of your student participation, you are expected to bring to class an article from a newspaper (e.g., *The New York Times*, *WSJ*), or a news magazine (e.g. *Time*, *US News & World Report*) which relate to policy issues..

Suggested

Harvard Business Review Cases (select 2 or 3)

Buchanan/O'Connell, "A Brief History of Decision Making"(R0601b)

Morse, "Decisions and Desire" (R0601c)

Rogers/Blenko, "Who Has the D" (On Point, 3021)

Pfeffer/Sutton, "Evidence Based Management" (On Point 298x))

Mankins/Steele, "Stop Making Plans; Start Making Decisions" (On Point 2971)

Bazerman/Chugh ""Decisions Without Blinders" (On Point 2998)

Charan "Conquering a Culture of Indecision" (R0601j)

Ctools

1. New Nonprofit Almanac
2. Philanthropy and the Welfare State by Peter Dobkin Hall
3. 2005/6 Trend Report .. Alliance for Children and Families
4. Social Security Report
5. The Health of the Human Services Workforce.. by Paul Light
6. The Human Services Workforce Initiative
7. Professionalizing Social Work at the National Level – Women Social Work Leaders – 1912-1982 by Rebecca Stotzer and John Tropman
8. Ownership v Trusteeship Doing What You Have a Right to Do?
9. Love, Dogs, and Child Welfare
10. Bears, Fisherman and Child Welfare
11. New Laws on Paul Bunyans
12. Writing Advice

Especially Recommended Readings:

- Jannson, Bruce S. (2002). **Becoming an Effective Policy Advocate: From Policy Practice to Social Justice 4th**. Thompson
 Tropman/Erlich/Rothman,(2001) **Tactics and Techniques of Community Intervention 4th** Itasca, Peacock
 Tropman, John, **Making Meetings Work 2nd**. Thousand Oaks CA, Sage
 Rossi, Alice, Ed, **Caring and Doing for Others : Social Responsibility in the Domains of Family, Work, and Community**

Patricia Kennett, A Handbook of Comparative Social Policy

Recommended :

- Tice, Carolyn and Kathleen Perkins, (2002) **The Faces of Social Policy: A Strengths Perspective**
- Rae, Ann and Wanda Nicholas-Wolosuk, (2003) **Changing Agency Policy** Allyn and Bacon
- Blau, J. **The Faces of Social Policy** (2004) Oxford

Journals:

<i>Administration in Social Work</i>	<i>Nonprofit Management and Leadership</i>
<i>Affilia</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>
<i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>	<i>Policy Sciences</i>
<i>American Journal of Political Science</i>	<i>Political Science Quarterly</i>
<i>Child Welfare</i>	<i>Politics and Society</i>
<i>Chronicle of Philanthropy</i>	<i>Policy Studies Journal</i>
<i>Families in Society</i>	<i>Public Welfare</i>
<i>Harvard Business Review</i>	<i>Social Policy</i>
<i>Journal of Applied Social Sciences</i>	<i>Social Problems</i>
<i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i>	<i>Social Security Bulletin</i>
<i>Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare</i>	<i>Social Service Review</i>
	<i>Social Work</i>

4. Written Assignments:

All written assignments need to have your name, sources and (print and electronic).

Memo Assignments

For some of these assignments, I would like you to imagine that you are working for the Elmer J. Tropman Nonprofit Management Institute, a "think and do" tank located in Pittsburgh, PA.

<http://www.forbesfund.org/tropman/reports.cfm>

It does policy analysis, development and implementation for Pittsburgh and the nation. Its mission is to provide analysis and strategic/tactical suggestions around matters of policy to both the non profit, but also the public and corporate sector in matters of public and social policy. It is, specifically, a "cross boundary" organization. Many kinds of requests come to his to the Institute. EJTI believes that it is necessary to respond to many of these because it is a way to build credibility and "clout", assisting in getting the recommendations implemented.

Take a look at the website and skim some of the reports.

Following are some of the issues that your boss there has asked you to prepare a two page briefing memo highlighting policy issues, policy pitfalls, possible policy process, and your own recommendations for immediate and longer term next steps for EJTI on for him and his top team. Relevant ones will mention "EJTI has been asked to comment." Use Memo Format. (From, To, Re.) Place sources on an extra page. Pay attention to format as well as content. Remember, policy documents, of which this work is one kind, need to be intellectually and visually appealing. Hence, avoid the standard academic no break type of text¹ Complete 5 memos @10 pts each. I will count the top three.

¹ Memo Writing – look up memo writing on Google


- You might also find the following site useful:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4538138>

- It is an NPR feature called: *This I believe*, where people have to compress their deepest value into 500 words. Take a skim; it is interesting and we will refer to it in the values section as well. Here it is for writing tips.

- Also: http://www.dsmccabe.com/David_S._McCabe/Education_30_files/2.%20Op%20Ed%20Submission%20Links.pdf

	SESSION
May 7 th	<p>1] <i>Policy Knowledge- Perspective on Policy; Policy as Politics</i></p> <p>The Grade Tax A Professor at CMU is proposed "taxing" grades of high achieving students in order to collect "points" which he can use to award points to those who need them. (A question of privilege; How much are we really willing to share? And when?) Handouts. FOR CLASS DISCUSSION ONLY</p>
May 14 th	<p>2] <i>Policy Knowledge- Understanding Values and Policy</i></p> <p>Read "The Health of the Human Services Workforce" (#5) Prepare a 2-3 pp evaluation of the work, including strong and weak points, as well as your own conclusion. (This document is on Ctools) This is required, but does not count, though I will give you a grade as if I were grading it.</p>
May 21 st	<p>Group memo now due on the 4th</p> <p>3] <i>Policy Knowledge - Understanding Stages , Levels, Contexts and Settings for Policy Management Policy Machinery/Policy Committees</i></p> <p>Increasing numbers of people in the Pittsburgh area believe that in Pittsburgh, and nation wide, adolescent pregnancy is a social problem of important and understressed proportions. A Citizens group "Preparation for Parenthood" is proposing that Pittsburgh enact a "parents license." Arguing that being a parent is as important as driving a car, they propose that we set similar restrictions on parenthood that we do for driving – minimum age, parent training classes, and parent insurance. They point to articles and books which have surfaced this idea. Others feel is disgusting. "What are you going to do," they ask, "take kids away from young moms?" We take kids away already for state sponsored reasons they argue. EJTI has been asked to comment.</p>

June 4 th	<p>Prepare a group memo on the Project you are selecting for this class.</p> <p>4] Policy Skills: Managing A Policy Meeting You have been asked to be a member of a community wide task force on homelessness. It meets for three hours weekly. However very little seems to be happening, the meetings drift into a range of related and unrelated subjects, and, really, nothing is accomplished. You tell your boss that it is a complete waste of time. She says that we “need to have a presence” there. In talking with others in the office you find that this has been going on for a while, that no one really wants to attend this “dog”, and that usually the youngest person on the block gets to do it. You ask for time to discuss it again, and send a note about some options.) (A Question of oppression, organizational ethics, discrimination)</p> 
June 4 th	<p>5] Policy Skills: Managing A Policy Decision</p> <p>A huge issue has come up with respect to child endangerment. One is that there is a San Francisco case involving a dog (#9) and the other involves fishing with bears on Bird Creek in Anchorage ((#10). You are asked to prepare a position paper on this issue.</p>
June 11 th	<p>7] Policy Skills: Playing the Role of Policy Manager; Doing Policy Writing An issue of where individual rights end and collective rights begin has arisen. In San Francisco, “New Laws Crack Down on Urban Paul Bunyans” (see article #11 and also from the NYT at the end of the CO). In Ann Arbor, two issues like this have arisen – one along the Osborn Mill Trail, and another involving “clear cutting” along Huron River Drive (see slide show #8)). How should social policy approach issue like these?</p>
Or June 11 th	<p>8] Policy Competency: Using Ideas to Lead Policy Change in Organizations</p> <p>The Restorative Justice League objects to the current system of criminal “justice” that pays for “criminals” to sit in cells while their victims often struggle. They want a) prisoners to pay for their own incarceration [see NYT, 8/13/04, p. A1: “Many Local Officials Now Make Inmates Pay Their Own Way] as well as contribute to their victims. EJTI has been asked for comment. (A question of oppression, Social Justice [for whom?])</p>

June 18 th	<p>9] Policy Competency: Overcoming Resistance to New Ideas Pitcher Beer? Around the campus area in Pittsburgh there have been several really bad alcohol related incidents involving Pitt and CMU students. In all cases, the students have been out at bars drinking pitchers of beer with friends. The Oakland Alcohol Coalition (in consultation with Pitchers Inhibit Serious Scholarship) wants to propose that bars may not be allowed to serve beer in pitchers any more, only bottle, cans, and glasses. Bar owners are up in arms. They argue that it is their constitutional right to serve beer in pitchers. (The constitutional issue is interesting here; alcohol has been the subjects of two constitutional amendments.) Proponents argue that it encourages heavy drinking and people lose sight of how much they are actually drinking. EJTI has been asked for comment.</p>
OR	
June 18 th	<p>10] Policy Competency: Discovering and Managing Personal Style; Encouraging the Idea-Driven Self; Your boss at EJTI asks you for a note specifying the differences between a policy advocate and a policy analysts, asking as well how a balance might be achieved for the person and the organization. 12] Policy Competency: Implementation</p> <p><i>Book Review Due</i></p>
June 25 th	Implementation
July 2 nd	Prepare Reports – NO CLASS
July 9 th	Policy Implementation - Reports
July 16 th	Reports

Book Review

Pick any Book of policy relevance and prepare a review of it. Books reviews typically consist of a brief summary, analysis of strong and weak points, audience(s) utility, and your own personal take. 900 words.

Xtra Credit Book Review by June 25th

Pick a book from the discussion below. Prepare a review of it for a policy journal you select. Select the journal early in the term, so that you can read some of the book reviews in it as a guide. Take a look to see if the book has been reviewed by anyone else so that you can incorporate what they say. In general, reviews have the following

parts: Introduction; Summary; Strengths and Weaknesses which are pretty clear and objective; Your own personal take; Who might find the book useful; Conclusion. Three pp 5 points. . In Choosing the Right Pond: Human Behavior and the Quest for Status (New York, Oxford, 1985) Frank looks at a “status market” as one possible explanation for the finding that the wage disparities in American firms are a good bit less than would be predicted if everyone were paid according to his/her contribution. He joins Phillip Cook in The Winner Take All Society (New York: Penguin, 1995) in trying to answer the question “Why the Few at the Top Get So Much More than The Rest of Us?”. In Luxury Fever (New York: The Free Press, 1999) He addresses the question of “Why money fails to satisfy in an era of excess.” Frank wrote the introduction to Tibor Scitovsky’s The Joyless Economy ((New York, Oxford, 1992.) First published in 1976, this reissue is, now, an idea whose time has perhaps come.

Policy Issue Interview, Analysis and Report (Group/Individual Project)

Pick a Policy Issue of interest to you or your agency but one where you can observe some discussion of the issue (say, in a board meeting) and where you can interview some of the participants about it. By session three you will need to submit a group memo about the project selection.

In session 13, a written policy analysis of the issue , and recommended policy changes and implementation strategies will be due.

In Sessions 11 be prepared to present an “abstract” of the report in PowerPoint presentation format to the class (and, perhaps, others.) Please bring copies of the PowerPoint (3 per page) for other groups. Report: 30; Presentation, 20

Class participation is worth 10 points.

5. Grading

a. Grading criteria for all written assignments:

All papers will be graded on the basis of:

- a) The **quality of the analysis and depth of understanding** of the concepts, ideas, and information presented. We will be looking for objective documentation in support of stated opinions or conclusions.
- b) The **clarity of expression and organization of the paper** - is there a logical order to the presentation of your thoughts.
- c) The **appropriate use of references and resources**, and the variety of resources referenced.
- d) The use of **proper grammar and the over-all professional presentation** of the paper.

b. Grading criteria for the course:

The student's final grade for the course will be based upon the points above.

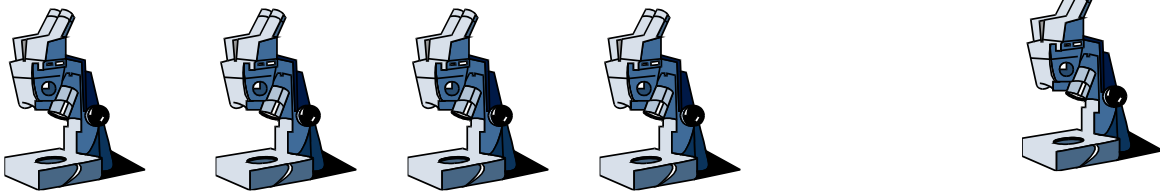
Grades will be assigned in accordance to the following scale:

97 - 100 points = A+	87 - 89 points = B+	77 - 79 points = C+
94 - 96 points = A	84 - 86 points = B	73 - 76 points = C
90 - 93 points = A-	80 - 83 points = B-	70 - 72 points = C-

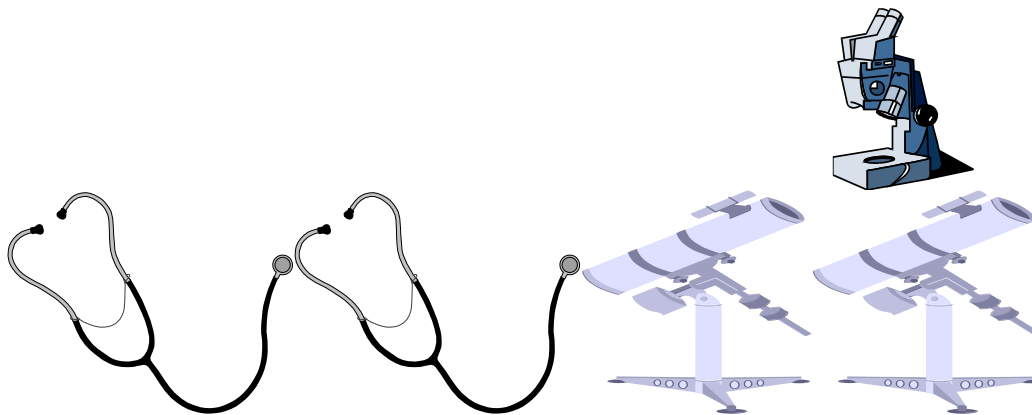
Grading Summary: 3memos@10=30;book review@ =10;presentation= 20;report =30
cp=10;Xtra Book Review= 5

6. Communications with Instructor:

Please feel free to get in touch with me – phone, email are great. As needed we can meet.

Session 1: Policy Knowledge: Policy Knowledge: Perspectives on Policy

Management



Readings

Dear, R., (1995) "Social Welfare Policy" in Edwards, Encyclopedia of Social Work, 19th p2226ff.

Tropman, "Policy Management in the Social Agency" in Tactics, p410ff

Tropman, "Policy Analysis: Methods and Techniques," in A. Minihan, ed., *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, 18 (Silver Spring: NASW, 1987).

Jansson, Ch 1,2

Other Readings

Jean Hardy, Values in Social Policy - Nine Contradictions (London: RKP, 1981).

D. Gil., Unraveling Social Policy, (Rochester, Shenkman, 1990).

Alvin Toffier, Power Shift: Knowledge. Wealth. and Violence at the End of the 21st Century (New York: Bantam, 1990). The Third Wave (New York: Bantam 1981)

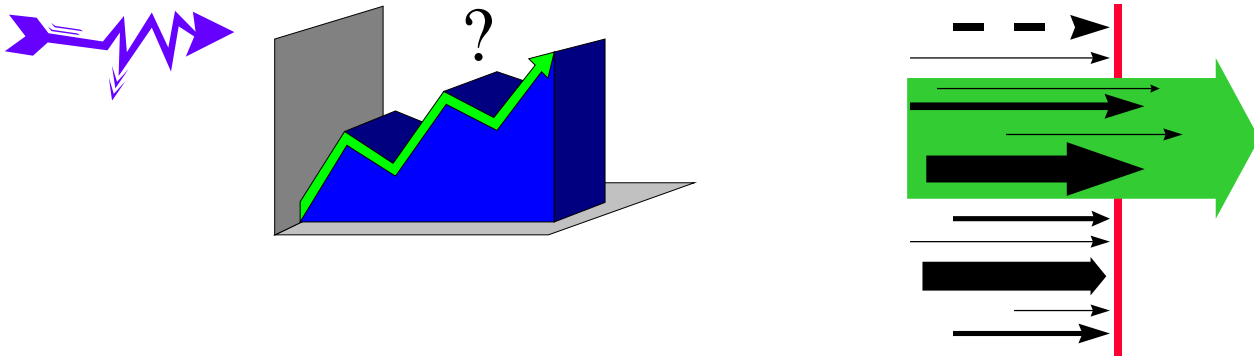
J. Pressman, Implementations: How Great Expectations in Washington are Dashed in Oakland" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Session 2: Policy Knowledge: Understanding Values and Policy

Readings

Tropman, "Value Conflicts and Decision Making" in Tactics, pp161-169.

Child Welfare Workforce Document



<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4538138>. This is the NPR site I mentioned before which asks people to express their most fundamental value in a short 2-pager.

Other Readings

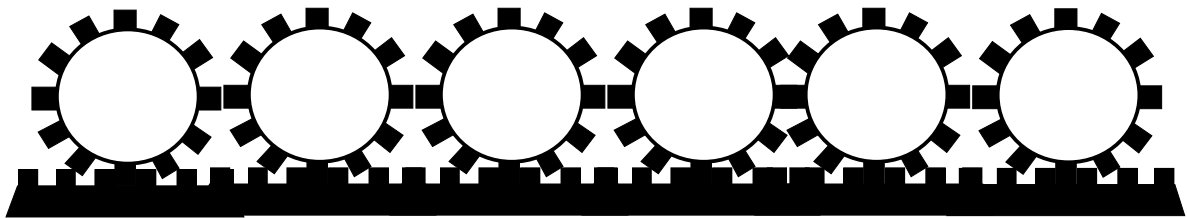
Rossi, Ch 1 "Contemporary Dialogue on Civil Society and Social Responsibility

Rossi, Ch 9 Themes and Variations in American Understandings of Responsibility

Rossi, Ch. 11, "Social Responsibility and Paid Work in Contemporary American Life

Tropman, American Values and Social Welfare;
Tropman, The Catholic Ethic in American Society

Session 3: Policy Knowledge: Understanding Policy Components/Policy Machinery/Policy Committees /Stages, Levels, Settings and Contexts of Policy



Readings

Tropman and Richards-Schuester. "the Concept of Levels and Systems in Social Work" Chapter 4 in
Allen Meares and Garvin , The Handbook of Social Work Direct Practice pp. 65-84.

Other Readings

Rossi, Ch. 2 "Judgments of One's Own Global Contributions to the Welfare of Others..."

Rossi, Ch3. Domains and Dimensions of Social Responsibility.....

Jansson, , Chapter 4 "Policy "

Sessions 4 & 5: Policy Competencies -Managing the Policy Meeting ; Managing A Policy Decision

Tropman, Making Meetings Work 2nd

Harvard Business Review Cases (select 2 or 3)

Buchanan/O'Connell, "A Brief History of Decision Making"(R0601b)

Morse, "Decisions and Desire" (R0601c)
 Rogers/Blenko, "Who Has the D" (On Point, 3021)
 Pfeffer/Sutton, "Evidence Based Management" (On Point 298x))
 Mankins/Steele, "Stop Making Plans; Start Making Decisions" (On Point 2971)
 Bazerman/Chugh ""Decisions Without Blinders" (On Point 2998)
 Charan "Conquering a Culture of Indecision" (R0601j)

D. Kahneman, P. Slovic and A. Tversky, Judgment Under Uncertainty (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

S. Johnson, Yes or No: The Guide to Better Decisions (New York: Harper Collins, 1992)

Helen B. Schwartzman,(1989) The Meeting: Gatherings in Organizations and Communities New York: Plenum (An anthropologist studies the "Midwest Community Mental Health Center."

Session 6: Policy Competencies: Playing the Roles of Policy Manager/Policy Writing

Jansson, Chapter 7



Other Readings

Patricia Westheimer, Power Writing for Executive Women (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1989)

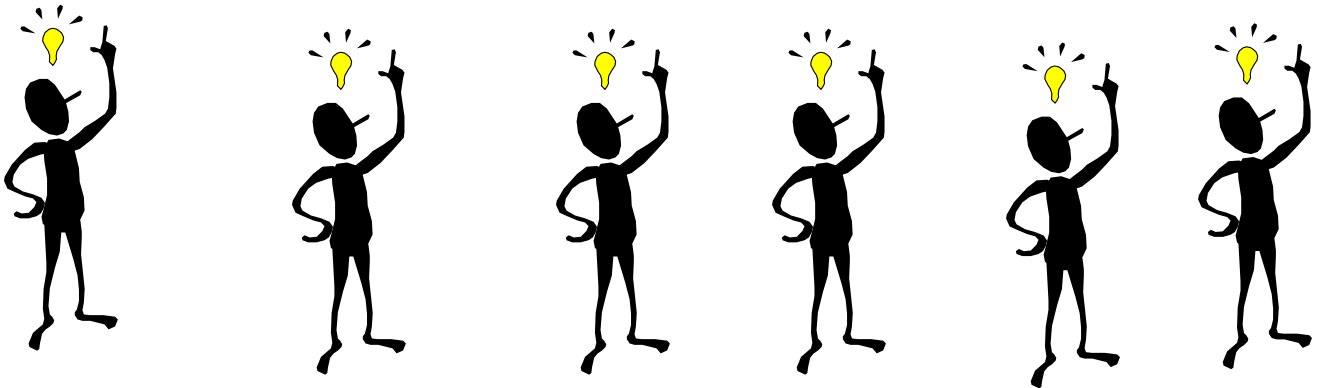
Diana Booker, Send Me a Memo (New York: Facts on File, 1984)

Myra Holcombe, Writing For Decisionmakers (Belmont: Lifetime Learning, 1981)

J. F. Sussams, How to Write Effective Reports (Aldershoot, Nichols, 1983)

David Peoples, Presentation Plus (New York: Wiley, 1989)

Session 7: Policy Competencies: Using Ideas to Lead Policy Change in Organizations, Communities, Polities



Jansson, Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8

Rossi, Ch.4 Temporal Patterns in Social Responsibility

Rossi, Ch. 5 Local Caring. Social Capital and Social Responsibility in New York's Minority Neighborhoods

Rossi, Ch. 6 Cultural and Contextual Correlates of Obligation of Community and Family among Urban Black and Latino Adults

Session 8: Policy Competencies : Overcoming Resistance to New Ideas – Creativity and Power

Jansson, Ch 9,10

E. DeBono, Six Thinking Hats Boston, Little Brown, (1985)



A. Whetten and K. Cameron,(2001) Developing Management Skills .New York: Harper-Collins, Ch. 3, Solving Problems Creatively.

Session 9: Policy Competencies – Discovering and Managing Personal Style; Encouraging the and the Idea-Driven Self; Interpersonal/Intellectual Attitudes;

Tropman, Tactics, Chapter 10, Know Yourself;

Tiegher and Barron-Tiegher, Do What You Are 3rd (check Amazon.com)

Take an MBTI

Session 10: Policy Competencies – Policy Implementation

Program Management for Dummies (check Amazon.com)

Sessions 11 & 12: Reports

New Laws Crack Down on Urban Paul Bunyans

By [PATRICIA LEIGH BROWN](#)

Published: January 30, 2006 New York Times p. a14

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 29 — As trees go, the pair of scraggly-looking Monterey cypresses sitting on a crest on Telegraph Hill are somewhat pitiful, even downright forlorn. But in a city where some movie stars bear wings, even ordinary trees can be transformed into a cause célèbre.

[Enlarge This Image](#)



Eros Hoagland for The New York Times

Parrots roosting on a cypress tree on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco, where a city ordinance was amended to allow the landmarking of significant trees.

The trees are a favorite feeding spot and hawk lookout point for the now-famous wild parrots of Telegraph Hill (see the movie, read the book). In recent weeks, the removal of three adjoining trees by an absentee property owner and the resulting brouhaha — including the spectacle of the parrot author Mark Bittner throwing himself in front of a chain saw — prompted San Francisco officials to amend the city's Urban Forestry Ordinance to allow significant trees to be designated landmarks, including those on private property.

The amendment, which takes effect in February, treats trees much like historic buildings. It would place San Francisco squarely in a growing movement, from

suburban Washington to Los Angeles, to protect mature urban trees — and in some communities, make it a crime to chop them down.

Once a cause for genteel women's clubs bent on beautification, the new get-tough stance on trees is largely a result of real estate. A study of three dozen cities using satellite imagery by the nonprofit group American Forests, completed two years ago, found that over the past 25 years, cities have lost up to 30 percent of their tree canopy to development.

San Francisco's tree canopy hovers at a slim 11.9 percent of the city's surface area, compared with New York's 21 percent and Washington's 28.6.

The loss of the so-called urban forest, said Deborah Gangloff, the group's executive director, is the result of sprawl, budget cuts and street widening, among other factors. The average city street tree lives 7 years compared with 60 years in a park and 150 years in a forest, the group's research shows.

"They're stuck in a concrete box, get bikes chained to them, with dogs relieving themselves and cars hitting them," Ms. Gangloff said. "They don't have room to grow because of power lines and sewer pipes. It's a hard life."

The avian drama in San Francisco follows a tree war that unfolded along the Potomac River in Montgomery County, Md. Last month, the Montgomery County planning board reached a settlement with the Washington Redskins' owner, Daniel M. Snyder, and his wife, Tanya, for clear-cutting some 130 view-obstructing dogwoods and other trees on their verdant riverfront estate.

The couple's neo-Georgian palazzo sits on land bounded by the C Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park, which is run by the National Park Service. The county fined Mr. Snyder \$37,000 for clear-cutting without a permit and ordered him to plant some 600 saplings. A spokesman for Mr. Snyder declined to comment.

Inspired by Mr. Snyder's Paul Bunyan move, the Montgomery County Council voted to triple the penalties for willfully violating the county's Forest Conservation Law and make it a criminal offense punishable by up to six months in jail.

"This problem is enormous and growing," said Howard A. Denis, a Republican Council member. "It's a quality of life issue. No one has the right to desecrate property and leave the county with a net loss of trees."

The tear-down phenomenon, in which trophy homes subsume suburban lots, has put new pressure on large "patriarch" trees, said Dave Docter, the managing arborist for Palo Alto, Calif. "Communities are scrambling to enact laws to mandate proper review," he said.

Named for a 1,000-year-old redwood, Palo Alto is a microcosm: in 1992, the demolition of a beloved Queen Anne Victorian and its surrounding oaks, planted in the 1920's on then-dirt streets, prompted an emergency oak-tree-cutting moratorium; six years later, spurred by the unprecedented demolition of older homes, the city expanded its tree ordinance to include private property.

The concerns are not just aesthetic: over the last decade, a host of studies have underscored the role of trees — especially mature ones — as "green infrastructure" that help reduce air-conditioning and energy costs, intercept storm water runoff, capture dust and other pollutants, curb the effect of greenhouse gases and increase property values. A study by the University of Washington even found that people shopped longer and more often in tree-lined retail areas and spent about 12 percent more money.

"Cities are beginning to recognize trees as capital assets just like roads, bridges and schools," said James R. Lyons, executive director of the Casey Trees Endowment Fund, a tree canopy restoration advocacy group based in Washington, and an under secretary of agriculture in the Clinton administration. "They're a significant investment that provides value to the city and residents. People don't think about them until they're gone."

A result, said Buck Abbey, an associate professor of landscape architecture at Louisiana State University, is "a kind of tree socialism" — a growing recognition "that a community's interest does not stop at the property line."

Professor Abbey has surveyed tree loss from Hurricane Katrina and written extensively on municipal tree ordinances. He said: "It's part of the recognition of community. The line between public and private property is not visible if a massive live oak is gone."

The tree wars seem likely to escalate along with stricter tree laws. In Los Angeles, for instance, the City Council is about to consider an amendment to the city's oak tree ordinance, which protects native oaks at least eight inches in diameter. The expanded ordinance would include three other species — black walnuts, California sycamores and bay laurels — and protect more trees by reducing the diameter of a landmark tree to four inches.

Most notably, violators could be charged with a misdemeanor and, in extreme cases, have their building permit withheld for up to 10 years. The ordinance, moreover, would require developers to get a permit to knock down protected trees and replace them with new trees at a ratio of at least 2 to 1.

Paula Bagasao, co-founder of Proh-LA, a group dedicated to protecting property rights on hillsides, especially vacant lots, called the ordinance "a backyard building moratorium" that would delay projects and add unnecessary costs. She finds the inclusion of black walnut trees particularly irksome.

"These nuts fall all over East L.A., sending up all this black stuff and giving birth to little walnut trees," she said. "The nuts fall on peoples' heads at parties. The walnut tree is not an endangered species."

The City of Charlotte, N.C., requires developers to preserve 10 percent of a subdivision's area in trees and also save all "heritage trees" approaching the size of those in the North Carolina state list of "champion trees." The state lost 1.2 million acres of urban forest between 1990 and 2002, nearly three-quarters of it because of urbanization, according to American Forests.

Mark Baldwin, executive vice president of the Home Builders' Association of Charlotte, said the policy "creates an inconvenience for the developer as far as density, but it certainly pays off in the price of the homes." The extra costs of "tree saves," he added, are passed on to the homeowner.

Here on Telegraph Hill, the ruckus over the parrots' cypress trees — leafy equivalents of the mansions of the stars — has underscored the somewhat precarious status of the city's trees. Despite its green, tree-hugger reputation, San Francisco, built partly on windswept sand dunes and deforested during the Gold Rush, has never been lush with trees. In contrast to New York, the majority of street trees here are not maintained or even planted by the city; it is up to individual property owners to plant trees.

The new ordinance would allow the Board of Supervisors to designate landmark trees anywhere in San Francisco, including those harboring significant wildlife. John Cowen, the property owner who cut the three cypress trees, said he felled them for safety and liability reasons.

"Everyone is freaked out about the urban canopy producing oxygen and habitat for this and that," Mr. Cowen said. "But these trees are rotten."

The skirmish between Mr. Cowen and Mr. Bittner, the author, and Judy Irving, the maker of the parrots film, became so fraught that Mayor Gavin Newsom sent his director of city greening, Marshall Foster, in as an intermediary.

Mr. Foster said that he had worked out a five-year plan to eventually replace the cypress trees with new ones, and that a community group had offered to subsidize pruning in the meantime. He conceded that the soap opera among the cypresses was a human one. "The parrots are oblivious," he said.