

PO 141: Introduction to Public Policy
Prof. Claire Leavitt
4 June 2015
Midterm Exam (Take-Home)

Instructions: You will have until **the beginning of class (1:00 PM) on Tuesday, 9 June 2015**, to complete the exam. You may turn in the exam typed or hand-written (though I would prefer a typed version). Each student will select an example of a public policy from a hat at the end of class on Thursday, 4 June 2015. Each policy will be one we have mentioned in class (some in greater depth, some only obliquely).

Please write a 3-4 page analysis (that means *at least three full pages*, double-spaced, one-inch margins) of **at least three** problems that might arise during the conception and/or implementation of the policy/law you selected. The three problems can be anything related to the material discussed in class or in Charles Wheelan's textbook, but I expect that you will focus on a) philosophical problems (why might policymakers disagree on whether the law actually makes society better off?) b) political problems (why might this policy have trouble getting through the legislative process?) and c) compliance problems (will people actually comply with this law? Can this law be enforced? What are the unintended consequences of this law?)

For instance, if you selected a scenario in which you are a United States lawmaker who wants to implement universal health-insurance coverage, you might discuss a) philosophical disagreements over different schemes for ensuring universal coverage and particularly the content of the Affordable Care Act, e.g., libertarian policymakers might not believe the government should play a regulatory role in the private health care market while socialists might believe the state itself should be the provider of health care; b) problems with getting your policy approved by Congress, thanks to the political ideologies of legislators and various obstruction tactics; and c) problems related to compliance with and enforcement of your policy—will individuals who are young and healthy comply with the law and actually buy a private health insurance plan rather than opting to pay the fine for noncompliance, which in many cases will be *less* than monthly insurance-premium payments?

Most of the policies I have assigned may be applied, in theory, to *any political system*; however, some of the policies I have assigned are system-specific (e.g., related specifically to the United States or to the international arena). For those of you who *do not* select a system-specific policy, I expect that many of you will choose to focus on the United States, but this is by no means required—you may choose to focus on the policy process in a different country. If you do analyze a different country/political system, please provide along with your analysis a brief description of how the political process works in the system you've selected.

You may—though you are not required to—do independent research; remember to cite any outside sources you consult. Also, remember to cite Wheelan (and corresponding page numbers) when you rely on the textbook. You may use in-text citations or footnotes, whichever you prefer, and MLA/AP/APA style. Please email the exams to me (cleavitt@bu.edu) at *any time before 1 PM on Tuesday, 9 June 2015*.

Note: If you do choose to hand-write your exam, you should write *at least 6 full pages* (standard 8½-by-11 looseleaf paper).