

**Introduction & Curriculum**

**Open Policy Course in Public Policy for**

**Advocates and Activists - 2017**

**Year Eight**

Conducted by

John Stapleton & Guest Speakers

January -December 2017

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# Open Policy Course in Public Policy for Advocates and Activists - 2017

The Open Policy Course in public policy is the seventh class on public policy conducted by John Stapleton. John taught policy at the Maytree Public Policy Training Institute, the Non Profit course at the Schulich School and he delivered a policy development lecture series for the Metcalf Foundation. John spent 28 years as a public servant in Ontario, half of it in policy development.

Hello! This is the seventh time out.

I will conduct a 29 part course in Toronto starting January 6, 2017.

## ***What is it?***

A policy course for neophytes, a refresher for the experienced, and a confirmation for the seasoned ..... that gets right down to everything you need to know to engage policy in Ontario at all levels.

## ***When will it be held?***

The course will start in January 2017 and will run half-days every Friday (or agreed upon dates) for 14 weeks in the winter and spring followed by 14 weeks in the autumn of 2017. See tentative dates below. The time is 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. unless we change it.

## ***Where will it be conducted?***

The policy course will take place at meeting rooms at WoodGreen Community Services.

WoodGreen Community Services is located at 815 Danforth Ave, just west of Jones Avenue, equidistant between the Pape and Donlands subway station. Local on-street parking and Green parking is available. Do not park directly in front of the building during business hours. This is a bus-loading zone. Reception is on the first floor.

Google Maps:

[http://maps.google.ca/maps?f=q&source=s\\_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=815+Danforth+ave&sl=43.679745,-79.340791&sspn=0.008613,0.014892&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=815+Danforth+Ave,+Toronto,+Toronto+Division,+Ontario&ll=43.680629,-79.340472&spn=0.008551,0.014892&t=h&z=16&iwloc=A](http://maps.google.ca/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=815+Danforth+ave&sl=43.679745,-79.340791&sspn=0.008613,0.014892&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=815+Danforth+Ave,+Toronto,+Toronto+Division,+Ontario&ll=43.680629,-79.340472&spn=0.008551,0.014892&t=h&z=16&iwloc=A)

Google Street View:

<http://maps.google.ca/maps?hl=en&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=815+Danforth+Ave,+Toronto,+Toronto+Division,+Ontario&ll=43.679713,-79.340923&spn=0,359.985108&t=h&z=16&layer=c&cbll=43.679745,-79.340791&panoid=JNB7ogcWb6RBUJbnFS4QuQ&cbp=12,167.78,,0,-7.06>

### *How many students?*

The class will be capped at (approximately) 15 persons

### *What is the tuition?*

\$500 for all 28 modules (less than 20 dollars per module!) - To be paid by the first class on January 8, 2017 (or by private arrangement)

### *What do I get for my money?*

- 29 lecture/ seminars
- all course materials
- one on one critique of a policy/advocacy paper written by the participant
- guest lecturers to be determined

### *What are the downsides?*

The course will teach you more **about** policy than how to become a public policy practitioner.

### *Why this, why now?*

Why not? It has been going for seven years now and the classes are going well. I update most PowerPoints each year.

Many people have approached me to reprise various courses - which I do from time to time.

### *What biases will I be exposed to?*

Most of my examples will come from government, social security, public policy, legal issues and the economy. Although I try to cover the arts, the criminal justice system and the environment as well as health issues, my expertise lies in the areas in which I have experience.

### ***Will I get a diploma or recognition?***

The course is not accredited in any way. Recognition will come slowly through alumni who do well (and they are doing very well!). I provide a very interesting diploma to those who attend 2/3 of the classes. It is called the Bluenose stamp award. Some alumni display it proudly. I encourage graduates not to sell the real stamp that they obtain.

### ***Are there ways I can help?***

Students will be invited to participate in improvements to the course. For example, a module may be too long or too short.

### ***What if I don't attend? Can I get my money back?***

If the course is not started, money will be refunded. If one starts the course and cannot continue, other arrangements will be made.

### ***Are there scholarships available?***

No! I do make one space available each year for a person with lived experience of poverty. Payment for that one person is optional. In recent years, there has been more than one member with lived experience of poverty. Identification as such with the class is also optional.

# The 29 Modules

## 1. Introduction to Public Policy

- What policy is and is not
- Small 'p' vs. big 'P' policy
- Coors 'Policy' (from their policy commercial)
- Insurance Policies
- Why taking policy is NOT just a better articulation of your own opinion
- The best ever policy 'songs' (*Wannabe*, *No Money Down*, *Against the Wind & the Boxer*)

Key Reading: Sherri Torjman, What is Policy?

## 2. My role in policy as an advocate (now that we know what policy is)

- Is policy development right for me?
- Am I a heretic if I do policy?
- Are policy and activism opposed to each other?
- Why not leave policy to other people?

## 3. Starting the Vertical Conversation...

- Who talks to whom?
- Why can't we get everyone into a room?
- Why most conversations are too horizontal
- How do I cultivate the people I never talk to?
- Why is it important?
- Does anyone else do it?
- What would success look like?
- Why should I care?

#### 4. Policy Boot Camp!

- Developing strategies for campaigns in which you have no interest (Aggravating but necessary)
- How knowing 'almost nothing' can help
- How passion helps and hinders policy making
- Why don't decision-makers get it?

#### 5. Good and Bad Policy-making

- What is good and bad policy?
- Does anyone set out to make bad policy?
- Why do governments make bad policy?
- Is bad policy avoidable?
- How do I get the research right?

#### 6. Policy-making at the federal government level

- What happens in Ottawa anyways?
- Throne speeches
- Cabinet submissions and Cabinet

Key Reading: Breaking the Bargain, Ruling from the Centre, Donald Savoie

#### 7. Policy-making at the Provincial Level

- Another Westminster model.... what does that mean?
- Throne Speeches
- Cabinet Submissions and Cabinet again but a different view from the meat in the sandwich between federal and municipal and the highest % of GDP expenditures - we will discuss!

## 8. Policy at the Municipal Level

- Not a Westminster model
- Conducting senior management meetings in Public - does that make a difference?
- The most frustrating level of government?
- Closest to the people and least able to effect change?

## 9. Policy Analysis and Policy Development

- Is this the difference between studying and building (or something else)?
- Thinking about options - least to most
- From nothing to something
- Ask for the stars and you'll get the moon? (or nothing)
- Getting things right..... Or does anyone care in the age of spin?

## 10. Writing good Policy.....

- The hardest skill of all?
- A lost art?
- It doesn't matter.....?
- Ok then - how do you do it?

## 11. Advanced Framing and reframing (and reframing again.....)

- No this is not about taking your poster to a gallery....
- It's about placing in context to connect with the public
- Making what is old new again
- Playing against the tide of prejudice
- Appealing to values of people that are unlikely to change just because you came along to save the world.....

Key Readings: John Kenneth Galbraith: The Affluent Society; Jonathan Haidt: The Righteous Mind

## **12. Finding and Explaining Bread Mold on a Yak!**

- Why good ideas don't bubble to the surface
- Why whole societies and cultures reject discoveries that actually work
- Why we fail to discover that which stares us in the face
- What we can do about it

## **13. The Important role of important people.... (And rock stars)**

- Why we want them to champion our causes...
- The 'l'Oreal' question: Are they worth it?
- How they get to where they get and why we care
- The market share of the stars
- A dream endorsement ..... now what?

## **14. The Media**

- The Spice Girls' question: what you and the media 'really really want'!
- Lots of specifics about media - the nuts and bolts that most people ignore
- How to do it right - very hard
- How to do it wrong - very easy
- Thinking through the news release

## **15. Public Servants (not the political ones) and Political staff (not civil servants)**

- What and who is the civil service?
- How are they different?
- Do you want to know them?
- Learning their culture
- What they think about you!
- Who are considered to be political staff
- Who they work for
- How they are different from civil servants
- What they think of the bureaucracy
- What everyone else thinks of them



## 16. Cost Benefit Analysis

- Why it isn't just about saving money
- How it's easy to get wrong
- The one stakeholder that shouldn't be considered

## 17. Funders and Philanthropies

- Who are the funders and what do they want?
- How are they different from government and the private sector?
- Why they turned down your great idea
- Where they fit in the grand scheme of things

## 18. Stakeholders and why they matter

- Why we ignore people who are against us
- Why this is unwise
- Why there is no point in converting them
- Why connecting with them is everything
- What others think of stakeholders
- How they are used and the perils that lie within....
- Common mistakes.....

## 19. The History of almost anything.....

- Why does history matter and when is it useful?
- Was Santayana right? Those that do not learn the lessons of history are bound to repeat them
- What are our biases and prejudices about the past?
- ..... And does everyone share them?

## 20. Branding and naming things

- Does it really matter what we call ourselves?
- Do titles of papers and books really matter?
- Is Malcolm Gladwell on to something with five bestsellers with 12 (less than 15) title words in total (The, Tipping, Point, Blink, Outliers, What, the, Dog Saw, David & Goliath)?
- Do we need to see ourselves in every title? We explore why the answer is yes.....

Key Reading: Any one chapter of all five of Gladwell's books

## 21. Making Policy a habit.....

- Stephen Covey said the most important word in the 7 habits of highly successful people is 'habit'
- Should policy thinking be a habit for advocates?
- Does it mean they have gone to the dark side?
- Is policy essentially a conservative discipline?

Key Reading: Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People (The part about habits)

## 22. Policy and Timing.... Is there a policy time of year?

- You will be surprised by the real answer.....
- You probably won't like it (it might be when you want to take a vacation)
- Why policy timing matters

## 23. When Prophecy Fails and 'Who killed the last tree'?

- Finding the **good** of every strategy and why some strategies do not have a 'good'
- Why it's just not good enough to be right or just and why it takes more than that
- Why policy 'currency' counts
- Being precise: Who killed the last tree? ( why 'no one' is the right answer)

Key Reading: When Prophecy Fails

#### **24. How we know when we got it right?**

- 'Success has many fathers but failure is an orphan'
- I'm on TV and in the papers - my issue is everywhere - did I win?
- Sustaining the campaign once we've arrived

#### **25. Switching Gears: The nuts and bolts of evaluation and implementation**

- Why is implementable policy important?
- Isn't that the job of government and others?
- Is an examination 'a happy recollection of work well done?'
- ..... Or something else?
- Is consultation intended to elicit "a favourable opinion on a course already decided?"
- Is evaluation inconvenient when we like a policy and a necessity when we don't?

#### **26. Policy musings on inequality: why is inequality so hard to fix?**

- A negative abstraction- too hard to deal with?
- Do today's seniors not care or know enough?
- Is GDP happier than indices of well-being?
- Do values matter? We will discover why they do....
- Why do both defaults and taxes matter?

#### **27. Labour markets and labour market development?**

- Why the mismatch between people and jobs?
- Do cashiers need a university degree?
- What work needs to get done vs. the work that gets done?
- How things are way different from the 1950's and why this matters

## 28. Taking Stock: Where have we come?

- A retrospective on the curriculum
- Next steps
- Other ideas
- Alumni ideas
- Helping others

## 29. Statistics and Social Policy

- How to lie with statistics and who does it
- How advertisers are more honest than governments
- Why Simpson's paradox is important in policymaking
- Percentages and percentage points (are they different?)
  - Why descriptions matter ("whopping, shocking and astonishing")

**Dates: The 29 Modules (not in order of above)**

Module	Date: 2017
<b>Part One</b>	
1. Introduction to Public Policy	January 6
2. My role in policy as an advocate (now that we know what policy is)	January 13
3. Starting the Vertical Conversation...	January 20
4. Policy Boot Camp!	January 27
5. Good and Bad Policy-making	February 3
6. Finding and Explaining Bread Mold on a Yak!	February 10
7. The Important role of important people.... (and rock stars)	February 17
8. Poverty at the Crossroads	February 24
9. Policy-making at the Provincial Level Policy Analysis and Policy Development	March 3
10. Statistics and Policymaking	Tentative date: March 10 (Guest: Richard Shillington)
11. Cost Benefit Analysis	March 24
12. Writing good Policy.....	March 31
13. The Media	Tentative date: April 7: (Guest Laurie: Monsebraaten)
14. Good Friday	April 14
15. Policy-making at the federal level	Tentative date: April 21 (Guest: Havi Echenberg)
16. Advanced Framing and reframing (and reframing again.....)	Tentative Date: April 28 (Guest: Trish Hennessy)

<b>Module</b>	<b>Date: 2017</b>
<b>17. Policy at the Municipal Level</b>	<b>May 12 (Guests: Tobias Novogrodsky and Joe Manion)</b>
<b>Part Two</b>	
<b>18. Labour Markets and Workforce Development (Guest: Tom Zizys)</b>	<b>September 8</b>
<b>19. Policy Musings on Inequality</b>	<b>September 15</b>
<b>20. Public Servants (not the political ones) &amp; Political Staff</b>	<b>September 22</b>
<b>21. Policy Development in perspective Armine Yalnizyan (tent.)</b>	<b>September 29</b>
<b>22. Funders and Philanthropies</b>	<b>October 6</b>
<b>23. Stakeholders and why they matter</b>	<b>October 13</b>
<b>24. The History of almost anything</b>	<b>October 20</b>
<b>25. Branding and Naming things</b>	<b>October 27</b>
<b>26. Making Policy a habit.....</b>	<b>November 3</b>
<b>27. Policy and Timing.... Is there a policy time of year?</b>	<b>November 10</b> <b>(Nov 11 is remembrance day)</b>
<b>27. When Prophecy fail and Who killed the last tree?</b>	<b>November 17</b>
<b>28. How we know when we got it right?</b>	<b>November 24</b>
<b>29. Switching Gears: The nuts and bolts of evaluation and implementation</b>	<b>December 1</b>
<b>30. Taking Stock: Where have we come?</b>	<b>December 8</b>