

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE  
THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

**Terms and concepts to know:**

Public policy	Tradeoffs / unintended consequences
Developmental policy	Redistributive policy
Allocational 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. As a group project, break off and for groups of 3 – 4 and choose a current policy issue. Then use the “rational-comprehensive” process model of decision making up to the implementation stage to deal with the problem. What problems do you come up against in the process of using this model?
4. Why does Foster believe that appealing generally to individual morality, or specifically to the ethics of business leaders, is an inadequate response to the global ecological crisis? Reflecting on this article, how might you be inspired to rethink the concept of “progress”?
5. What parallels does Miller draw between the problems encountered by an individual with dyslexia and the collective disorder the U.S. public faces today? How does the mass media contribute to this collective form of dyslexia?
6. Explain why Martin Luther King may have come to the conclusion that the white moderate’s devotion to order has been “the Negro’s great stumbling block” rather than the persecutions of the White Citizen’s Council or the Ku Klux Klan.
7. 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?

**Readings:**

Heineman. *American Government*, chapter 12.  
Grover/Peschek. *Voices of Dissent*, chapters 1.4, 4.15, 10.37, 10.40.

**Video:**

*I.O.U.S.A.*