Compliance and Behavior Change
An inter-disciplinary PhD course at Stockholm University, Spring 2015

Instructor: Kent Weaver, 2014 Olof Palme Professor at Stockholm University*

Time: 15 March, 13-14 April, 15 May (sessions in March and May can be followed on Skype)

Location: Department of Political Science, Stockholm University

Number of credits: 7.5 ECTS (högskolepoäng)

Registration: via e-mail to Karin Sundström karin.sundstrom@statsvet.su.se

Registration deadline: 15 February

Eligibility: The course is open for doctoral students and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis while privileging the target groups specified below

Contact information: email: Karin Sundström, karin.sundstrom@statsvet.su.se

Course description
Why did active choice of fund managers in the Swedish Premium Pension system fall from 67 percent in the first round to less than two percent in recent rounds? Why do people in Chile pay their taxes more than those in Argentina? Why did some people obey the mandatory evacuation order to leave New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina hit while others did not? Why do parents in many developing countries often fail to send their children to school, even when there is no charge for school attendance? Why are smoking bans in bars and restaurants obeyed in New Zealand more than in Greece? Why do people continue to begin to smoke, even in countries where there are well-organized anti-smoking programs, including ghastly pictures on cigarette packages prominently displaying the ill effects of smoking? And why do truck drivers speed more than auto drivers? And does increasing safety equipment in cars (e.g., airbags and anti-lock brakes) cause drivers to drive in a more reckless manner?

What all of these questions have in common is that they concern why normally law-abiding citizens and businesses fail to comply with requests or demands made by government for specific behaviors. This workshop will draw upon social psychology, behavioral economics, law and political science to understand barriers to compliance and investigate strategies that policy designers and implementers can use to change behavior and increase compliance. We will also consider a variety of strategies to change behavior, including social marketing campaigns, incentive approaches, and efforts to address
resource barriers to compliance. Political constraints on the choice of strategies will also be addressed. In addition to theoretically focused books and articles, the course will draw on scholarly literatures to examine specific cases of compliance problems from a variety of policy sectors and countries, including choice of pension funds in Sweden, efforts to eradicate guinea worm in West Africa, and tobacco control initiatives in a variety of countries. Students will develop projects on topics of their own choosing to understand reasons for non-compliance and consider alternative strategies to address these problems.

TARGET AUDIENCE: The course is appropriate for Ph.D. students in political science, sociology, economics, psychology, public administration, organizational behavior and business administration who want to get an interdisciplinary understanding of compliance and behavior change issues.

SCHEDULING: To facilitate participation by graduate students from throughout Sweden and Scandinavia, the course will be offered in a concentrated format: an introductory session will be held in person for students based in the Stockholm/Uppsala area on March 15th. Other students registered for the course will be able to join via Skype. Students will then have four weeks to complete the readings for the course before two day-long workshop (9:00 to 17:00) sessions on April 13th and 14th in Stockholm. Each day will include five 75 minute sessions. All students who are registered for the course are expected to attend all sessions on both of these days. Students will then have five weeks to complete their research papers. Research papers will be presented at a course session in Stockholm on May 15th. Students who are not based in the Stockholm/Uppsala area will be able to present their research via Skype.

**Intended Learning Outcomes**
After the completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Provide an overview of the main theoretical perspectives relevant to understanding compliance and behavior change, including prospect theory, behavioral economics, and theories of co-production.
- Understand major barriers to compliance with government policy, and behavior change.
- Develop and implement a research strategy to investigate barriers to compliance, including quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method strategies.
- Assess the advantages and disadvantages of specific strategies to address compliance problems

**Course schedule and readings**
Course readings average around 120 pages per class session, although there will be significant variation. (The numbers at the left-hand side of the margins in the reading assignments are page estimates). The following books are strongly recommended for purchase: Richard H. Thaler and Cass Sunstein. 2008. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain copies of the books.

**Course requirements**

Student assessments will be based on the following criteria:

- Students will write five brief (no more than 1.5-spaced pages) reaction memos to one or more of the readings assigned for a specific class session. These memos will be due on April 10th.

- Students will write a 10-15 page paper on a policy compliance topic that they select after consultation with the instructor. They will make a brief (5-8 minute) Powerpoint presentation on their topic in the May 15th session. This memo or paper may take one of four forms:

  1. An analysis of a current program or policy, and problems of inadequate compliance or negative unintended consequences that flow from that policy or program. Examples might include the effect of China’s one-child policy on “Asia’s missing girls”, or the effects of conditional cash transfers on policy on school attendance, health outcomes, and other targeted behaviors.

  2. A comparison and explanation of why compliance levels differed in two situations (e.g., over time or across political jurisdictions). For example, why is compliance with smoking bans and seat belt usage requirements higher in some countries than others? Why did individual choice in the Swedish individual account pension system decline over time?

  3. A policy memo that proposes a new or revised policy/program, and analyzes potential problems of non-compliance or unintended consequences that may be associated with that proposal.

  4. An analysis of the politics of problem definition, targeting, and/or monitoring and enforcement problems that arise in a particular sector and discussion of why those problems have been resolved in a particular way.

The final version of the memo or paper will be due on Monday, May 8th at 9 a.m.

- Because this course is primarily a discussion class, it is imperative that all students prepare for and participate in class discussions. Students are encouraged to work together in study
groups to prepare before class, but this is not required. Quality of contributions to class discussions is more important than quantity, but quantity is also important.

**Student assessments be based on the following percentages**

Long policy paper………………………………………………. 45%

Short Memos and Powerpoint presentation (at 6% each)… 30%

Class participation………………………………………………25%

Upon completion of the course, participants will receive a course certificate indicating the grade (Pass or Fail) and the number of course credits (7.5).

**MARCH 15th SESSION**

**Session 1**

Theme: Introduction to Key Concepts in the Course

**APRIL 13th SESSIONS**

**Session 2: 9:00-10:15**

Theme: Prospect Theory, Decision Overload and Policy Defaults

Case Material: Retirement Savings

**Required Readings**

Case: Retirement Savings


**CASE MATERIAL ON INCREASING RETIREMENT SAVINGS:**

Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, *Nudge*, chapter 9

**Break 10:15-10:30**

**Session 3: 10:30-11:45**  
**Theme: Behavioural Economics, Choice Architecture, Target Heterogeneity, and Strategies for Compelling Compliance**

110  


**Suggested Readings**


**Lunch Break 11:45-12:45**

**Session 4: 12:45-14:00**  
**Theme: Incentives, Monitoring, Enforcing, and Measuring Compliance**

25  


50  

30  

**CASE MATERIAL: OFFSETTING BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY REGULATION**


**Break 14:00-14:15**

**Session 5: 14:15-15:30**

**Themes: Information Barriers to Compliance; Framing & Social Marketing**


**Suggested Further Readings:**


**Break 15:30-15:45**
Session 6: 15:45-17:00
Theme: Beliefs, Norms and Peer Effects


CASE MATERIAL : “BROKEN WINDOWS,” CRIME AND DEVIANCE

Section on Crime and punishment in Shafir, ed., The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy


APRIL 14th SESSIONS

Session 7: 9:00-10:15
Theme: Resources and Target Autonomy


**Break 10:15-10:30**

**Session 8: 10:30-11:45**

**Themes: Special Problems of Business Compliance**


Tim Bartley, “Transnational Private Regulation in Practice: The Limits of Forest and Labor Standards Certification in Indonesia,” *Business and Politics*, vol. 12, no. 3 (October 2010)


**Lunch Break 11:45-12:45**

**Session 9: 12:45-14:00**

**Themes: Complex Roots of Non-Compliance**


**Break 14:00-14:15**

**Session 10: 14:15-15:30**

**Theme: Integrating Multiple Strategies to Improve Compliance**

**Case: Tobacco Control Policy**
CASE MATERIAL ON TOBACCO CONTROL:


Break 15:30-15:45

**Session 11: 15:45-17:00**
Theme: Constructing and Choosing Policy Targets
Incentive, Sanctions and Deviance


MAY 15th, 2015

**Session 12: 9:00 to noon approximately (depending on number of students in class)**
Student Presentations

* Kent Weaver is Professor of Public Policy and Government at Georgetown and the 2014 Olof Palme Visiting Professor at Stockholm University. Weaver’s major fields of interest are comparative social policy, comparative public management, and policy implementation. His recent research focuses on understanding how political institutions, feedbacks from past policy choices and strategic behavior of politicians interact to shape public policy choices. He is also interested in understanding the determinants of individual and business compliance and non-compliance with public policy across a variety of policy sectors. Weaver is the author of several books including *Ending Welfare As We Know It* and editor or co-editor of many others, including (with Bert Rockman) *Do Institutions Matter?* He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University.