

GOVT S-1505. Building the Activist State: US Public Policy since 1960 (CRN: 31597)

Paul Pierson PhD, Professor of Government, Harvard University

The role of the federal government in American society is now highly controversial. These contemporary conflicts over domestic policy play out against the backdrop of a dramatic expansion of government activity that occurred over the past four decades. This course examines the causes and consequences of the gradual growth of activist government, focusing on three domains: the expansion of social spending programs such as Medicare and Social Security, the emergence of "new" social regulation in areas such as the environment and consumer protection, and the expansion of protections for particular groups (often termed the "rights revolution").