



## Agendas and Objectives: What, why and how

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9:00am – 4:30pm

### Summary

Especially during elections, governments are brought to task on the promises that they have made throughout their tenure and the degree to which they have managed to deliver on those promises. Some governments take on more than others. Sometimes they may even fail to meet important objectives set forth in their own agendas or fall short in addressing fundamental issues of public good.

In order to ensure that the outputs of the system, in the form of public goods and services, are delivered to all citizens, a healthy yet delicate balance must be struck between the public, private, and not-for profit sectors. To achieve this balance, well-functioning democracies require the leadership and expertise of an effective and efficient government.

So how do governments know what issues or policies are most pressing? Why do some issues get on the agenda while others are left off? How does the government decide when it is their responsibility to intervene? In this workshop, Mel Cappe, former Clerk of the Privy Council, will explore the rationales for government intervention, the criteria for instrument choice, as well as the limits of government intervention and what types of issues are best left to the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Mr. Cappe, with years of experience at the head of the public service, is uniquely positioned to provide this inside view on how issues make it onto the government's agenda and how those governments can and should go about fulfilling their ultimate objective: service to the public. Throughout the session, Cappe will draw on important lessons learned from his experience and explore important public policy issues, how current and past governments have handled those issues, and how future governments can ensure the most effective and efficient delivery of the public good.

Workshops on Social Science Research (WSSR)

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# WSSR WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

●●● DELIBERATING A PUBLIC AGENDA ●●  
●●● FOR FEDERAL ELECTION 2019 ●●●



## Outline

1. Setting the Agenda: what is it and how does it work?
2. Objectives: how are they defined?
3. Rationales for Government Intervention
4. Instrument Choice
5. Current Issues:
  - The afternoon will focus on public policy issues in the media the week of the workshop. Students are required to review news websites, watch the news, read newspapers and/or keep up with current events in the fashion of their choice that week. They must come prepared to discuss these issues in light of what they have learned.

## Required Readings\*

- Friedman, Thomas L. 2016. "What the hell happened in 2007?" In *Thank you for Being Late*, New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, pp. 15-35. <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll?Action=10&Type=14&Value=14EF21F9>
- Soroka, Stuart. "Introduction" In *Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada*, Vancouver: UBC Press, pp. 3-14. <https://www.ubcpres.ca/asset/12470/1/9780774809580.pdf>
- Stokey, Edith and Richard Zeckhauser. 1978. "Part III – Ends and Means." In *A Primer for Policy Analysis*, New York: Norton, pp. 257-320. <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF21CA>
- Thaler, Richard, and Cass Sunstein. 2009. "Part I: Humans and Econs." In *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, New York: Penguin, pp. 18-100. Available at Webster Course Reserve Room (3 hour loan)

\*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at [wssr@concordia.ca](mailto:wssr@concordia.ca)

