I. Policies are key elements in the scheme we want to use for understanding human service institutions. What are they and where do they come from?
   A. Let’s list policies, discuss what they are, and how various examples are different or similar. Here are some examples:
      1. No Child Left Behind—what is it?
      2. Obama’s health care plan
      3. Central PA freeway
      4. Nutritional school lunches
      5. Special education policies
   B. Why are policies important and what do they do?
      1. Once in place, they specify what a program will do so they provide the formal rules and guidelines
         a. Medicaid eligibility
         b. Block grants for community planning
      2. We distinguish between policy discussion and discussions about operating issues—basic framework vs. ongoing practical issues
         a. Discussion in FAPC this morning about the nature and role of CCA
         b. Review and evaluation of ongoing programs which may or may not raise policy issues.
      3. They may state a goal, value, or ideal that we would like to put into practice—nutritional school lunches
         a. Where the task seems pragmatic and the challenge is to straighten out seemingly silly impediments
         b. Where the task seems to call for technical or scientific understanding of issues—a call for clear analysis
         c. Where there may be clear alternative approaches and we would like to know which works best—a call for research
      4. They may represent a partisan political position for which there is a need for research to inform the legislative process
         a. White papers and think tanks in the U.K.
         b. Countdown to Zero film shown at the Campus Theater recently
   C. Need for social policy comes from a sense that there are important, unresolved social problems—but what is a problem?
      1. “Normal science” approach—in ongoing operations it becomes clear that something has not been thought through and a perspective needs to be developed—Intellectual Property Rights at Bucknell.
      2. Unexpected crisis disrupts a seemingly orderly service or program—9/11 and the “discovery” of terrorism
      3. Social construction of new social problems
a. Troublesome events that are “nonproblems”
   i. Mere “troubles” are not problems—C. Wright Mills—must be structural rather than personal
   ii. Reframing of familiar issues—previously there was no “reality” of the problem; battering of women
   iii. Acceptance of a problem means agencies must do something and this means resources must be shared with resistance to sharing.

b. Political process of “promoting” a problem which requires political movements and political support
   i. Often related to identity and political movements
   ii. Issues need to fit into a framework of what is an effective action framework—important problems can’t be crafted into a movement.

D. The framing of a policy issue then requires a decision process to enact and implement the policy
   1. A lot of Lindblom’s discussion involves rationally understanding the issues related to a policy, and how it is that rational analysis rarely directs the policy process
   2. The last election seemed irrational in terms of policy but “rational” in terms of symbolic politics.
   3. Lindblom make the important point that policies usually involve incremental processes
      a. We may have a period of years as Obama’s health care policy is gradually moved to full funding
      b. Often policies are revised and added to as experience and political acceptability build up