

Pol 195: Policy Analysis in California

University of California Center Sacramento

Summer 2020

Zoom Video: Friday 10am - 12 pm

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Office Hours: Wed. 9-10 am, 11-12 pm (and by appointment)* Subject to change

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Office Hours: Monday 12-2 pm (and by appointment)* Subject to change

Course Objectives:

California is a special place. It is the most populous, most prosperous state in the Union. But, of course, with those superlatives come other, less positive ones. This course will cover how policies that address these issues get made. We will study everything from identifying issues to prescribing solutions to evaluating outcomes. Along the way, we will learn the ins and outs of a variety of tools that researchers use to analyze policy and policymaking

Required Textbook:

There is one assigned textbook for this course. We may also have assigned readings during various weeks of the course. These readings will be made available on Canvas. All assigned readings, for each week, should be completed before coming to class.

* Readings are interesting and informative. Assigning them does not mean I agree with them.

- Wheelan, Charles. 2015. *Introduction to Public Policy* (I use the hardcopy, but if hardcopy books do not spark joy, obtain whichever version makes you most excited.)

Course Policies:

Attendance, Participation, and Weekly Readings: Class attendance and the corresponding weekly **Wednesday Speaker Series Lectures are mandatory.**

Students should register for the class's Zoom video sessions beforehand. On Zoom, students should register using both their first and last name and turn both their audio and video on.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Students that constructively contribute to class discussion most regularly and fully participate in other in-class activities will receive a boost to their attendance and participation grade. Students that do not contribute to in-class discussion or fully participate in other in-class activities will receive a lower grade. **Any student that has three or more absences will not be**

able to receive a passing grade for the class. Arriving 10 minutes late to class will count as an absence.

The course's Zoom Meeting link is <https://ucdavisdss.zoom.us/j/98417286596> (also linked above).

Academic Honesty:

It goes without saying that all of your graded work must be done by you without assistance from others. You are encouraged to discuss the class and materials with others, but your answers to exam questions and your written essays must be yours and yours alone, with proper attribution for sources you wish to cite. If you are unfamiliar with the University's policy on academic dishonesty and associated penalties, see Code of Academic Conduct.

Reporting Duties:

Please be advised that UC Center Sacramento professors, instructors, teaching assistants, and administrators are mandatory reporters under Title IX. This means that we are required to pass on reports from students, whether communicated verbally during class discussion or office hours or as part of a written assignment or exercise, to the UC Davis Title IX officer and other relevant UC Davis officials. If you wish to seek out help or resources with a non-mandated reporter, please see Confidential and Non-Confidential Support Services.

Students with Disabilities:

Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet any of the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation for individual learning needs. UC Davis will make every attempt to accommodate all qualified students with disabilities.

Grading Policy:

- Attendance and Participation 10%
- Speaker Series Analysis (x2) 10%
- Research Paper Proposal 10%
- Research Paper Background & Outline 10%
- Research Paper 30%
- Final Exam 30%
- Complete 5 one-page policy critiques, explained below, in order to pass the class.

During the course of the quarter students will complete **two Speaker Series Analysis papers** (1-1.5 pages) based on the Wednesday Speakers Series presentations. The analysis papers will not only encourage attendance at the Speakers Series but will also give students a chance to develop their analytical skills. The objective of these papers is to critically analyze and not just summarize the presentations. For example, analysis papers may discuss potential alternative explanations for findings or ways to approach the topic of research; relate to other readings from the current or previous weeks; evaluate the conception, operationalization, and measurement of important variables; suggest hypotheses for future research; and discuss potential implications for these findings for California and the United States, among others. Analyses are due on Canvas one week after the presentation. Late assignments will be penalized 5% for each day they are late, including weekends. Attendance is required at all of the Wednesday Speaker Series events (private lunches and public talks).

Students will complete a **Research Paper** (15-20 pages). This research paper will examine an important public policy issue in California politics. Students will be required to submit a **Research Proposal** in the third week of the course and a **Research Paper Background and Outline** in the sixth week of the course. Details on the Research Paper, Proposal, and Background and Outline will be provided. The Research Paper will be due during the last week of the course. Late papers will be penalized 5% for each day they are late, including weekends. Papers that are more than three days late will not be accepted. All written work must reflect your own scholarship, in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct. For guidelines on avoiding plagiarism see the SJA at <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/>. You are expected to be aware of these guidelines; ignorance of guidelines does not excuse a violation.

The **Final Exam** will take place during the last week of the quarter. The Final Exam will be held virtually. The exam will cover the weekly readings and the material discussed in class. A study guide for the exam will be provided at least a week before the scheduled exam time. Some of the material on the exam will be discussed in the class but not in the reading, and some of it will be discussed in the reading but not covered in depth in class. It is important that students do all of the reading and attend all class meetings.

Extra Credit may be earned in two ways. First, as an added bonus for attending the speaker series, students who only miss one speaker series event will receive a 1 percentage point boost to their final grade. And students who attend every single speaker series event will receive a 2 percentage point boost to their final grade. Second, students can receive 1 extra credit point on their final grade if they attend two out of three optional talks (those which do not occur on Wednesday).

Finally, students must complete **5 one-page policy critiques** in order to pass the class. These assignments make up for lost class time that would normally consist of student meetings with our weekly guest speakers. Since these meetings cannot take place this term, students will complete 5 short assignments. Go to the Public Policy Institute of

California's website at <https://www.ppic.org/topics>. Choose a research article from Climate Change/Energy, Criminal Justice, Economy, Fiscal/Governance Reform, Health & Human Services, K-12 Education, Political Landscape, and Population. In one page, double-spaced and standard margins, summarize and critique this article in the same manner as you complete the speaker series analyses. During the course of the term, you must complete 5 of these assignments, each one addressing a different topic from the list above. Grading will be on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis.

Tentative Course Schedule:

- Week 1 (**June 19th**): What is Public Policy?
 - Chapter 1, Wheelan
- Week 2 (**June 26th**): Understanding Individual Behavior
 - Chapter 3, Wheelan
 - In-Class Activity: Hypotheses and Research Designs
- Week 3 (**July 3rd**): NO CLASS
 - **Paper Proposals Due Anyway**
- Week 4 (**July 10th**): Understanding Group Behavior
 - Chapter 4, Wheelan
 - Case Study: Public Schools in Los Angeles
- Week 5 (**July 17th**): Evaluating Social Welfare
 - Chapter 5, Wheelan
- Week 6 (**July 24th**): The Political Process I
 - Chapter 6, Wheelan
 - Guest Speaker: TBA
 - **Background & Outline Due**
- Week 7 (**July 31st**): The Role of Government
 - Chapter 8, Wheelan
 - Case Study: California's Water Crisis
- Week 8 (**August 7th**): The Role of Institutions
 - Chapter 14, Wheelan
- Week 9 (**August 14th**): Review
- Week 10 (**August 18th**): **Final Exam**
 - **Research Paper Due**