

Political Science 195: The California Policy Seminar
Fall 2014
TH 12:00-3:00PM
UC Center Sacramento

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Course Objectives

This course provides students with a set of analytical tools for understanding California politics and public policy. The California setting is unique in many respects, but its politics and policy outcomes can be studied fruitfully using a few basic models and theories of individual decision-making and group behavior.

Substantively, this course addresses major political processes, institutions, and policy challenges facing the state of California. While our focus is on the contemporary period, these topics and issues have historical roots, and they can only be understood relative to the political development of the state. Challenges and resources of the present are, in short, rooted in choices and events of the past, and this seminar will give attention to the social and political development of politics and public policy in the state.

Requirements

Your course grade is based on the following components:

Health policy discussion questions (5%)

To better prepare for the two classes devoted to health policy we will give you questions to answer that are due at the beginning of the classes for which they are assigned. You may work with other students on this but you must turn in your own answers written in your own words. Late answers will not be accepted.

Attendance and participation in lunches with speakers (10%)

On many class days (we will give you the schedule in advance) there will be a lecture on some aspect of public policy at the Center from 12-1:30. Many of the speakers have agreed to have lunch with the POL195 students beforehand, from 11-11:50. Students are expected to attend the lunches and participate in the lunchtime discussions. Attendance and participation will be recorded and count for 10% of your final grade. (Each unexcused absence will result in a two percentage point reduction in your grade.)

Three short research reports (25%)

In addition to attendance and participation in the talks, you will write 3 short research reports (2 double-spaced pages each) based on the talks. The papers should identify and clearly explain at least one of the significant research questions that the speaker addresses. In addition, the paper should describe some of the key findings. Finally, students should identify one other publicly available source of information about the topic covered and describe it along with providing some useful information found there. Reports are due one week after the date of the talk and will be graded on a ten point scale. A late paper will result in a two point reduction per week that it is late.

Group project (30%)

The group project is designed to encourage you to work with others and apply your understanding of the topics in the course to a particular problem. In groups of 3-5 students, you will study a public policy issue of your group's choice. Each group will write a policy brief of approximately 8-10 pages and deliver a 10-minute oral presentation with visual aids in class. Details about the project will be discussed in class. The timeline for the project is as follows:

10/9:	Group project handed out
10/23:	Group members finalized and 1-2 page proposal due
10/30 & 11/6:	Group meetings with TA (each group has one meeting with the TA)
11/13:	1-2 page project update memo due
12/4:	Final paper due
12/11:	Final presentations

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will take place on **Monday, December 15 at 3:30 p.m.** at UCCS. The exam will be based on both the readings and the materials discussed in class. We will discuss the format of the exam and how to prepare for it in class.

Course Policies

Attendance, Participation, and Class Readings

Attendance and readings are mandatory. All readings for a given date should be done before the beginning of class. You are expected to participate in class discussions.

Late Policy

There will be penalties for late and missing work except in the case of a sufficiently documented medical or family emergency. With adequate documentation we will devise a suitable plan to make up late or missed work.

Grade Appeals

You have one week from when the exams and papers are returned to appeal the grade. All appeals must be made to your TA. You must submit a typed, double-spaced statement

explaining why you are requesting a grade appeal and justify it with evidence from your paper, exam, readings, and lectures. If you choose to appeal your grade, your TA will review your work and regrade it, which could result in a higher or lower grade. If you remain unsatisfied with the TA's grading, then you should schedule an appointment to discuss it with one of the instructors.

Tardiness to Exams

It is expected that you will arrive to the final exam on time. Arriving late to exams is a disruption for your classmates and increases the probability that exam information has been shared. Students who arrive more than 20 minutes late will not be allowed to sit for the final.

Academic Honesty

Cheating and other violations of academic honesty are serious offenses. Except for the group assignment, graded assignments are not collaborative efforts in this class. If you have any questions about proper academic conduct, please discuss it with the TA or one of the instructors. For some guidelines see the Student Judicial Affairs website at <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/>. Ignorance does not excuse a violation of these guidelines. If you are caught cheating in this course, you will receive an F.

Materials

There is one book to purchase for the course. The rest of the readings will be made available in electronic format through SmartSite. The book is called *Governing California: Politics, Government, and Public Policy in the Golden State* (3rd edition, edited by Ethan Rarick, Berkeley Public Policy Press, 2013). **Make sure you acquire the 3rd (NOT the 2nd or 1st) edition of this book.** The book is available for purchase at the UC Davis Bookstore and various on-line bookstores.

In addition to the assigned readings, students are encouraged to keep up with current events in California. The Rough & Tumble website (www.rumble.com) provides a daily snapshot of California politics and public policy based on reporting from publications across the state.

Readings

As you do the readings, you might find it useful to keep the following questions in mind:

1. TYPE: What type of reading is this? Is it a theoretical piece? Is it a literature review? Is it an empirical piece?
2. PROPOSITIONS/HYPOTHESES: What are the propositions, or hypotheses, advanced by the author?
3. EVIDENCE: If it is a theoretical piece, what are the justifications? If it is a literature review, what are the sources? If it is an empirical piece, what data are analyzed?
4. CONCLUSIONS: What are the conclusions that the author reaches? Are they justified given the evidence presented?
5. REMARKS: What are your reactions to this piece? What questions does it answer? What does it leave unanswered? If you have criticisms, how would you improve upon the piece?

POL 195: The California Policy Seminar
Course Topics and Assigned Readings

Class 1: Thursday, 10/2: The Logic of California Politics: Representative Institutions, Rational Politicians and Collective Action Dilemmas

Readings: all available on SmartSite

- On SmartSite: Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, and Thad Kousser, "The Logic of American Politics," Ch. 1, in *Logic of American Politics*.
- On SmartSite: Kenneth A. Shepsle, Ch. 2-3, 8 in *Analyzing Politics*.
- On SmartSite: Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," in *Science*, Dec. 3, 1968.

Class 2: Thursday, 10/9: California Electoral History

Readings:

- On SmartSite: Jacobson, "Partisan and Ideological Polarization in the California Electorate." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*. 2004.
- On SmartSite: DiCamillo, "The Growing Political Might of Ethnic Voters in California and its Political Ramifications." *California Journal of Politics and Policy*. 2014.

Class 3: Thursday, 10/16: Governing by Plebiscite: The Initiative, Referendum and Recall

Readings:

- On SmartSite: Kenneth A. Shepsle, Ch. 4 (pp. 53-76), Ch. 5 (pp. 111-123), and Ch. 6 (pp. 156-170, 174-179), in *Analyzing Politics*.
- In *Governing California*: Miller, "Direct Democracy: The Initiative, Referendum, and Recall." Ch. 5.
- On SmartSite: William M. Chandler and Thad Kousser, "Governors, Geography, and Direct Democracy," in *The New Political Geography of California*.

Class 4: Thursday, 10/23: New Electoral Institutions in California

Readings:

- On SmartSite: Cain, Hui, and Mac Donald, "Sorting or Self-Sorting: Competition and Redistricting in California." In *The New Political Geography of California*. 2008
- In *Governing California*: Kogan and McGhee, "Redistricting: Did Radical Reform Produce Different Results.," Ch. 6.
- In *Governing California*: Masket, "Polarization Interrupted? California's Experiment with the Top-Two Primary," Ch. 7.

Class 5: Thursday, 10/30: Health Policy I

Readings: all available on SmartSite.

Class 6: Thursday, 11/6: Education Policy and the California Economy

Readings:

In *Governing California*: David N. Plank and Susanna Loeb, “Education: Back from the Brink,” Ch. 14.

On SmartSite: Peter Dreier, “The Battle over School Funding: The View from Pasadena,” in *California Journal of Politics and Policy*, Vol. 2, Issue 2.

Hans Johnson, “Higher Education in California: New Goals for the Master Plan.”

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_410HJR.pdf.

Class 7: Thursday, 11/13: Governing in an Era of Term Limits

Readings:

In *Governing California*: Rarick, “Governors and the Executive Branch,” Ch. 9.

In *Governing California*: Kousser et al., “The Legislature: Life Under Term Limits,” Ch. 10.

Class 8: Thursday, 11/20: Health Policy II

Readings: all available on SmartSite.

NOTE: There will be no class on Thursday 11/27 (Thanksgiving)

Class 9: Thursday, 12/4: Water and the Environment

Readings:

In *Governing California*: Megan Mullin, “Water in California: A Case Study in Federalism,” Ch. 15.

On SmartSite: Kenneth A. Shepsle, “Public Goods, Externalities, and the Commons,” Ch. 10 in *Analyzing Politics*.

Ellen Hanak, Jay Lund, Ariel Dinar, Brian Gray, Richard Howitt, Jeffrey Mount, Peter Moyle, and Barton Thompson, “California Water Myths.”

http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_1209EHR.pdf.

Class 10: Thursday, 12/11: Group presentations