

**POL 195: Special Studies in American Politics, UC Davis Political Science**  
**Thurs 9:00 - 11:00 AM, at UCCS**

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**Visiting Assistant Professor:** Kristina Victor, Ph.D.

**Office:** UC Center Sacramento

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**Office Hours:** Thursdays 1:00-2:00, and by appointment

**Required Textbooks:**

*Introduction to Public Policy*, Charles Wheelan

*A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to more Effective Problem Solving* (4th Edition), Eugene Bardach

**Additional Readings**

*Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (Third Edition), Deborah Stone

Additional readings will be assigned during each week of the course. These readings will be available on Smartsite, listed by author's last name, students may download or print the articles. All of the assigned readings, for a given week, should be completed prior to coming to class.

**Course Objectives**

California offers many unique opportunities for examining politics and public policy. To understand current public policy issues in California this course will focus on: individual decision-making, group behaviors, and the social and political development of politics and public policy in California. This course provides students with a variety of analytical tools for understanding politics and public policy. Substantively this course will address major political processes, institutions, and policy challenges facing the state of California.

## Course Outline:\*

Thursday, 9/24 What is Public Policy?  
Thursday, 10/1 Understanding Behavior  
Thursday, 10/8 Understanding Behavior, Collective Action  
Thursday, 10/15 Evaluating Social Welfare  
Thursday, 10/22 The Political Process  
Thursday, 10/29 The Role of Government  
Thursday, 11/5 Role of Institutions  
Thursday, 11/12 Policy Design  
Thursday, 11/19 Capstone Research Project due, Policy focus  
Thursday, 12/3 Research Proposals due, Policy focus  
Thursday, 12/10 Final exam

## Grading

Course grades are based on the following five components:

Attendance and participation [5%]  
Three summary reports [10%]  
Research proposal [25%]  
Capstone research project [30%]  
Final exam [30%]

*Attendance and participation:* Students are expected to attend all classes, Thursday Speaker Series lunch and lecture. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Students should come to Thursday Speaker Series lunches with questions for the invited speaker.

*Summary reports:* During the course of the quarter students will complete three summary reports [1 page] based on the Thursday Speakers Series presentations. The summary reports will not only encourage attendance at the Speakers Series but will also give students a chance to develop their analytical skills as they write about the main points of each speaker. Summary reports are due in-class one week after the presentation. Late summary reports will be penalized 5% for each day they are late, including weekends. Attendance is required at all of the Thursday Speaker Series events [private lunches and public talks]. If you have an unavoidable absence, you must watch the video of the presentation and write an *additional* summary report based on the talk.

*Research proposal:* This course requires a written research proposal [10-12 pages]. The research proposal will examine an important public policy issue in California politics. Late proposals will be accepted up to three days after the due date. Late proposals will be penalized 5% for each day they are late, including weekends. All written work must reflect your own scholarship, in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct. For guidelines 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. Please see the Appendix for more details on the Research Proposal, additional information on the proposal will be provided on Smartsite in the second week and discussed in class.

Additional information on the research proposal will be posted on Smartsite prior to the second week of class and discussed in detail in class. The research proposals will be due on the last day of the course.

*Capstone research project:* This course requires a capstone research project consisting of two parts: (1) a policy brief [1-2 pages], and (2) a public policy poster. The capstone research project is designed to provide students with a critical learning experience as well as an opportunity to engage in active research. The capstone research project will require students to gather, analyze and report on an important public policy issue in California. Please see Appendix for more details on the Capstone research project, additional information on the policy brief, and the poster will be provided on Smartsite in the second week and discussed in class.

The three components of the capstone research project will be due, in-class, during week nine of the course. All work must be in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct.

*Final exam:* The final exam will take place during finals week at our assigned class period. The final exam will be held at the UC Center Sacramento. The exam will cover the weekly readings *and* the material discussed in class.

### **Course Policies**

*Attendance, Participation, and Weekly Readings:* Class attendance and the corresponding weekly readings are mandatory. All students should come to class prepared to participate in class discussion and to participate with the Thursday Speaker Series lunches.

*Late Policy and Make-Up Exams:* Make-up exams and extensions will be allowed only in the event of a medical or family emergency. The emergency must be documented [doctor's note] in order to be able to take a make-up exam or to have an extension. If documentation is provided, then a decision will be made regarding whether you will be granted a make-up exam or receive an extension. Any requests for an incomplete must be accompanied by a written medical report. Arriving late to exams is a disruption to your classmates, students who arrive more than 20 minutes late for a final exam will not be allowed to sit for the final.

*Grade Appeals:* Students will have one week from when grades are posted to appeal their grade. All appeals must include a typed, double spaced statement explaining why you are requesting a grade appeal, and you must justify with evidence from your exam, paper, or summaries. If you choose to appeal your grade, the instructor reserves the right to increase or decrease the existing grade.

### **Academic Honesty**

As a University of California student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy. Cheating and other violations of academic honesty are serious offenses. Students are expected to work independently on all graded assignments. Please refer to the UC Davis policy on integrity of scholarship for further details. Students who engage in cheating will earn an F grade.

### **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.

**Laptops and tablets are permitted in-class for note-taking only. Please do not disrupt your classmates by surfing the web or engaging in other activities**

**Assigned Readings**  
(additional readings available on Smartsite)

- **9/24 What is Public Policy**  
Chapter 1; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **10/1 Understanding Behavior**  
Chapter 3; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **10/8 Understanding Behavior: Collective Action**  
Chapter 4; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **10/15 Evaluating Social Welfare**  
Chapter 5; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **10/22 The Political Process**  
Chapter 6; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **10/29 The Role of Government**  
Chapter 8; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **11/5 Role of Institutions**  
Chapter 14; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **11/12 Policy Design**  
Chapter 15; Wheelan, Smartsite
  
- **11/19 Capstone Research Project due, Policy focus**  
See Smartsite
  
- **12/3 Research Proposals due, Policy focus**  
See Smartsite
  
- **12/10 Final exam**