

Pol 193: Special Studies in American Politics

University of California Center Sacramento

Zoom Video: Friday 9 am - 9:50 am

Instructor: Dr. Ross Butters

Email: rbutters@ucdavis.edu

Class: Zoom Video with Meeting ID 992 7939 7958

Office Hours: Thursday 12-2 pm (and by appointment) *Subject to Change
Meeting ID 937 1182 7883

Course Objectives: POL 193 is a course designed to complement courses on public policy and research design, as well as your internship experience. The focus of this class is providing students with knowledge and skills that will help them to better understand and affect the state legislative process. In this class, students will learn about the structure of government and public policy in California and the United States, the roles of policy stakeholders, and the ways they can more effectively affect the policy process. Through assignments such as letter writing, opinion editorials (OpEds), and elevator speeches, students will also develop written and oral skills that will help them more effectively communicate their ideas in a policy setting.

Your work in this class is part of a larger initiative to engage undergraduate students with public policy in state legislatures. ENACT, The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation, provides an online network for students across the country to connect on legislative issues.¹

Course Policies:

Attendance, Participation, and Assignments: Class attendance is 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. Attendance at class will be automatically recorded.

Students should come to class properly attired, prepared to discuss any assigned readings, and having completed any out-of-class assignments. Grades will be based off attendance and participation in class. Students may be given time in class to work on assignments. This time is to be used only for coursework. 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.

Students are allowed one excused absence for family emergencies, medical emergencies (accompanied by a note), or internship-related activity. Students must email

¹This course is adapted from Professor Melissa Stimell's Advocacy for Policy Change (LGLS 161b) at Brandeis University.

uccsabsences@ucdavis.edu and complete a make-up assignment (assigned by the instructor) to receive an excused absence. After one excused absence, absences are only excused for extenuating circumstances.

The course's Zoom Meeting ID is 992 7939 7958.

Late Policy: Late assignments will be penalized 5% for each day they are late, including weekends. 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 have an extension. If documentation is provided, then a decision will be made regarding whether you will be granted an extension. Any requests for an incomplete must be accompanied by a written medical report.

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:

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, Participation, and In-Class Assignments 40%

- Bill Summary and Map of Coalitional Field 20%
- Letter to the Legislator 20%
- OpEd 20%

Bill Summary and Map of Coalitional Field: For this class, students are required to summarize a current piece of legislation in California. Students will also map the policy stakeholders relevant to that legislation. Additional information on this assignment will be provided during the quarter.

Letter to the Legislator: Students will compose a letter to their sitting state legislator regarding a piece of legislation. You do NOT have to send your letter to a legislator. Additional information on this assignment will be provided during the quarter.

Letter to the Editor: Students will write a newspaper opinion editorial on a piece of legislation that interests them. You do NOT have to submit your OpEd to a newspaper. Additional information on this assignment will be provided during the quarter. All work must be in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct.

Course Schedule:²

- Week 1 (1/8): Syllabus and Introduction
- Week 2 (1/15): Structure of Government/Public Policy Part I
- Week 3 (1/22): Structure of Government/Public Policy Part II
- Week 4 (1/29): Legislation and Coalitional Landscape
- Week 5 (2/5): Contacting Legislators
- Week 6 (2/12): OpEds
- Week 7 (2/19): Elevator Speeches
- Remaining Weeks: TBD

²Course schedule subject to change/adjustment.