

**Pol 195: Policy Analysis in California**  
University of California Center Sacramento  
Fall 2021

Zoom Video: Friday 10am - 12 pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Ross Butters

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**Office:** Zoom Video with Meeting ID 989 5400 8784

**Office Hours:** Thursday 12-2 pm (and by appointment) \*Subject to Change

**Teaching Assistant:** Sharif Amlani

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**Office:** Zoom Video with Meeting ID 929 3688 6370

**Office Hours:** Friday 4-6 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 no required textbook for this course. Readings will be assigned 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 necessarily mean I agree with them.

- Recommended reading: Wheelan, Charles. 2015. *Introduction to Public Policy* (I use the hardcopy, but if hardcopy books do not spark joy, optionally 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. Attendance at the weekly Wednesday Speaker Series Lectures and class will be automatically recorded.

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.

Students are allowed one excused absence for family emergencies, medical emergencies (accompanied by a note), or internship-related activity. Students must email [uccsabsences@ucdavis.edu](mailto: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 989 1116 5627

*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.

*Pass/No Pass Grading:* If you opt to take this course P/NP, in order to receive a P (Pass), you must turn in all required assignments. Failure to do so will result in you not being able to receive a P (Pass).

### **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.

**Student Resources:**

See <https://resources.ucdavis.edu/> for a list of UC Davis resources available to students, including health and wellness, academic, and counseling services.

**Grading Policy:**

- Attendance and Participation 10%
- Reading Quizzes 10%
- Podcast Summaries 10%
- Policy Research Paper Proposal 10%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Policy Research Paper Background & Outline 10%
- Final Policy Research Paper 30%

*Reading Quizzes:* To encourage reading and foster productive discussions, there will be weekly quizzes due before the start of class on Fridays on that week's assigned reading. Quizzes will be posted on Canvas ( 5 multiple choice questions, 15 minutes) at the end of the week and will be due any time before class on Friday.

*Podcast Summaries:* There are many important policy issues affecting California that we will not have time to cover in lecture. In order to become more familiar with the wide array of policies that impact California, students will listen to five different policy-related programs. A list of podcasts will be posted on Canvas, but students can also choose their own podcasts. After listening, students will complete a one-page double-spaced critical synopsis of the program that addresses the following: 1) title of the podcast and names of hosts and guests; 2) short summary that identifies questions or controversies addressed in the program; 3) why the policy issue is important to California, and 4) one policy argument you found compelling and why and one policy argument you found less-than-compelling and why. Summaries will be due every other week (except weeks 4 and 5).

*Midterm Exam:* The midterm exam will take place during the sixth week of the quarter and will cover lecture and reading material covered up to that point. A study guide for the exam will be provided at least a week before the scheduled exam time. The exam will be turned in on Canvas.

*Policy Research Paper:* Students will complete a **Policy Research Paper** (15-20 pages). This policy research paper will examine an important public policy issue in California politics. Students will be required to submit a **Policy Research Proposal** in the third week of the course and a **Policy Research Paper Background and Outline** in the sixth week of the course. Details on the Policy Research Paper, Proposal, and Background and Outline will be provided. The Policy 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.

*Extra Credit* As an added bonus for attending the Wednesday 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.

#### **Tentative Course Schedule:**

- Week 1 (**September 24th**): What is Public Policy?
- Week 2 (**October 1st**): Understanding Individual Behavior. Case Study: SB 277
  - **Due before class:**
    - \* Chapter 3, Wheelan
    - \* Reading Quiz
  - **Due after class:**
    - \* Podcast Summary 1 (by 11:59 pm)
- Week 3 (**October 8th**): Understanding Group Behavior. Case Study: California's Housing Crisis
  - **Due before class:**
    - \* Chapter 4, Wheelan
    - \* Reading Quiz
  - **Due after class:**
    - \* Policy Research Paper Proposal (by 11:59 pm)
- Week 4 (**October 15th**): Evaluating Social Welfare. Case Study: California's Three Strikes Sentencing Law
  - **Due before class:**
    - \* Shue

- \* Reading Quiz
  - **Due *after* class:**
    - \* Podcast Summary 2 (by 11:59 pm)
- **Week 5 (October 22nd): The Political Process I. Case Study: Prop 187**
  - **Due *before* class:**
    - \* Bowler, Nicholson, and Segura
    - \* Reading Quiz
  - **Due *after* class:**
    - \* Podcast Summary 3 (by 11:59 pm)
- **Week 6 (October 29th): Midterm Exam**
- **Week 7 (November 5th): The Political Process II. Case Study: AB 540**
  - **Due *before* class:**
    - \* Rich
    - \* Reading Quiz
  - **Due *after* class:**
    - \* Policy Research Paper Background and Outline (by 11:59 pm)
- **Week 8 (November 12th): The Role of Government. Case Study: California's Water Crisis**
  - **Due *before* class:**
    - \* Sefton
    - \* Reading Quiz
  - **Due *after* class:**
    - \* Podcast Summary 4 (by 11:59 pm)
- **Week 9 (November 19th): The Role of Institutions**
  - **Due *before* class:**
    - \* Chapter 14, Wheelan
    - \* Reading Quiz
  - **Due *after* class:**
    - \* Nothing!
- **NO CLASS NOVEMBER 26th**
- **Week 10 (December 3rd): Program Evaluation. Case Study: Innovations in Healthcare Policy**

- **Due *before* class:**
  - \* Cha
  - \* Reading Quiz
- **Due *after* class:**
  - \* Podcast Summary 5 (by 11:59 pm)
- Finals Week: Policy Research Paper due (by 11:59 pm)