

POL 195: Policy Analysis in California, UC Davis
Fall 2018
Dr. Travis Baker

Class Times: Wednesday 12-1, Friday 10-12

Location: UC Center Sacramento

Office Hours: Wednesday 10-11, Friday 12-1,
and by appointment

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Purpose of the Course

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 Textbooks

Introduction to Public Policy, Charles Wheelan

Additional readings may be assigned. These readings will be made available on Canvas. Students may download or print these articles and bring them to class. All of the assigned readings should be completed before coming to class each week.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation	10%
Speaker Series Analysis (x2)	10%
Research Paper	50%
Final Exam	30%

Students are expected to **attend all classes as well as the Wednesday Speaker Series lunch and lecture**. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Students should come to the Wednesday Speaker Series student meetings with questions for the invited speaker. 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 must sign in on the sign-in sheet during each class period.

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 at the beginning of the third week of the course. Details on the Research Paper and Research Proposal 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 finals week during our assigned class period. The Final Exam will be held at UC Center Sacramento. 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.

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 <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/>.

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.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: What is Public Policy?	Chapter 1, Wheelan
Week 2: Understanding Individual Behavior In-Class Activity: Hypotheses and Research Designs	Chapter 3, Wheelan
Week 3: Understanding Group Behavior Case Study: Public Schools in Los Angeles • Paper Proposals Due	Chapter 4, Wheelan
Week 4: Evaluating Social Welfare	Chapter 5, Wheelan
Week 5: The Political Process I Guest Speaker: TBA	Chapter 6, Wheelan
Week 6: The Political Process II	McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (see Canvas)
Week 7: The Role of Government Case Study: California's Water Crisis	Chapter 8, Wheelan
Week 8: The Role of Institutions	Chapter 14, Wheelan
Week 9: Program Evaluation Case Study: Innovations in Healthcare Policy	Chapter 13, Wheelan
Week 10: Research Posters, Review • See Canvas for submitting Research Paper	