

Initial Syllabus*
California State University Sacramento
Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration

* Any changes to the syllabus will be posted on webct

Updated September 15, 2008

PPA 200
Introduction to Public Policy and Administration
Fall 2008

Friday September 5th 5pm – 9pm

Saturday September 6th 8am – 5pm

Sunday September 7th 8am – 5pm

Tuesdays (to be determined) 6 pm – 8:50 pm

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Introduction

PPA 200 serves as an introduction to the foundations of public policy and administration; the theories that guide our understanding of public policy making and analysis as well as how public organizations implement those policies in pursuit of the public good. We will begin with a broad review of democratic institutions and the roles of policy making and administration. In all discussions, concepts are explored with an eye towards practical application of lessons learned and understanding of current events.

PPA 200 also serves as an introduction to graduate study at CSUS/PPA. The course will orient you to thinking and writing in an analytical fashion, for some of you this will be old hat, for others, it will be a new skill. Part of this process will include reading several theses that students before you have completed. The course is rigorous and is designed to prepare you for later course work and the thesis itself.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are as follows:

1. Familiarize students with the interdisciplinary roots of the study of public policy and administration including political science, economics and social psychology/administration;
2. Familiarize students with the key institutional features of government especially at the California state and local level;
3. Develop an appreciation of the complexity of approaches that must be employed to fully understand and address public issues;
4. Improve the capacity of students to think and write analytically and practically about public problems;
5. Develop a more analytical approach to problem definition.
6. Work towards development of strong oral presentation skills;
7. Understand the role of the policy analyst and public manager; and
8. Sensitize students to the complexities of making ethical decisions in the public sector.

Format of Course and Expectations of students

This course is the introductory course in the PPA major. It covers a large amount of material with the expectation that students will be exposed to more depth as they progress in the program. This class begins your exposure and lays the foundation for later courses.

As graduate students you will learn many theories and skills. But, as much as we might wish otherwise, there are few hard and firm rules in the application of public policy and administration tools, and you must eventually rely on your own judgment to determine which theory or skill to apply to which problem. The goal of PPA 200 is to set you on a course to digest and appropriately use the skills and concepts you will learn in the coming two plus years. As a starting point for reading, please use the SQ4R technique in the back of the syllabus to do your reading.

The course is taught in a seminar style. That is, students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in conversations about the materials they have read. Study questions will be provided for some classes to give you a starting point for the class discussion. The first seminar will be a long weekend designed to immerse you in the approaches. The entire incoming cohort will be together at first and we will break into two smaller groups for the remainder of the semester. Each small group will meet roughly every other week.

I will never lecture all day; this is hard on you and on me. Rather, I will facilitate discussions and exercises designed to further your learning. The reading will provide the foundation and most class time will be spent practicing application of what we have read. If you have not done the reading, you will not be able to participate. Consistent lack of participation will result in a reduced class participation grade. I strongly discourage absences and in the first weekend they are not allowed. If you anticipate missing part of a class, please consult with me immediately.

I will make use of technologies available through webct to do things such as make the course materials available online and possibly to hold class discussions. This means that you will be expected to obtain and maintain a saclink account and have access to a reasonably current computer. For information about getting connected to saclink, please go to [UCCS](#). Once you have a saclink account, you will be able to access your own courses through webct (these will be available in early-August).

Students are expected to turn in all assignments in a complete and professional manner. Complete and professional means typed, double spaced, proofread, well written, appropriately cited, and on time. Anyone needing assistance in their written work will be notified quickly and strongly encouraged to seek assistance. Papers needing additional work may be returned to be re-done at the sole discretion of the instructor, for partial improvement of grades.

Should you need assistance with portions of class due to disabilities, please let me know as soon as possible. Finally, although I do not expect any issues, please familiarize yourself with the [University's policies on academic dishonesty and plagiarism](#).

Assignments and Grading

No late work will be accepted. I understand that many students are working full-time and attending classes nights and weekends. I will accommodate work "issues" as much as possible but expect you to complete your assignments on time. If you must miss class when an assignment is due, you may drop it off at my office or e-mail it to me prior to class. Except in extenuating circumstances you should email your papers to me as an attachment. Except as noted, they are due at the starting time for the class. It is your responsibility to insure that I have received it and that it is retrievable. You may do this by requesting a confirming email from me. I am most likely to receive it in Microsoft Word Format.

Papers	65%
Group presentation	20%
Class participation	15%
<u>(Attendance and active participation in conversations contribute to this grade.)</u>	
Total	100%

The PPA program uses the APA style (which is detailed in the Hacker style manual) for ALL papers and the thesis. Please familiarize yourself with this citation process quickly. The final paper/toolkit will be less analytical in nature.

Paper #1. Due Friday August 29th by 10pm. Please email this to me at kirlinm@csus.edu

Identify a current public (governmental) issue that you have some interest in and provide a decision maker with a brief memo about the issue. As appropriate, consider the political, fiscal, organizational and policy dimensions of the issue. Help the reader understand the complexities of the issue as well as how the issue may be understood differently by different groups of interested people. Be careful to distinguish between fact and opinion in your analysis.

This paper will provide a baseline assessment of your writing. The paper will be graded but I also understand that for many of you it will be the first time you have been asked to do an analytical paper. You will also re-write this paper later. This first paper is worth 15% of your grade.

I will return the papers to you during the first weekend in class. Please do not call me for additional instructions -- the assignment is somewhat vague on purpose. You will do a similar assignment near the end of your program and we use these as part of our program level assessment in addition to providing me with a initial sense of your writing skills. Few people do a perfect job on this, that isn't the goal. Just do your best.

Paper #2 Redraft of paper number #1 Due September 30

Revise your briefing memo based on comments you received and any materials you have learned so far in the program. Please pay particular attention to clear definition of the problem(s) addressed in your memo and provide a short summary of what we know about this issue, this section is usually called a literature review. 20%

Paper #3 due October 21 or 28 depending upon your schedule

Tufte argues that there are six fundamental principles of good design of quantitative information. He suggests these are also the principles of good “consumption” of information. Use the reports below as examples and assess the work using Tufte’s six principles. You may also use additional concepts you find useful from *Beautiful Evidence* but you must use the six principles. Hint: An “A” paper will use the principles of design in the paper to the extent possible. For this paper the focus is on using a concept, in this case Tufte’s principles, to assess a particular situation, the reports you select from the list below. 15%.

Reports to be used for this paper:

Identify one report from the [Legislative Analyst Office](#) and one report from the [Public Policy Institute of California](#). The report should be of a subject matter that is interesting to you and contain some data. Both these sites will be used as resources throughout your program experience.

Paper #4 Due November 30

This paper will be your toolkit paper. You will turn in your “toolkit” in addition to a 4-6 page paper explaining to me what 4 or 5 of the items in your toolkit are, why they are important to you, and how you have learned to use them. We will discuss this more as the semester progresses. 15%

Group project (20%)

Details about these will be distributed during the first weekend.

Editing papers:

Some students are quite comfortable editing their own work and turn in polished, edited work the first time. In order to reinforce the notion of finished work, I *may* return papers for editing. Papers that require further editing will not be given credit until the required editing is complete.

Important note regarding formatting papers:

All papers are to be typed, double spaced, and fall within the page limits specified. Please put a cover page on each assignment containing your name, your email, and the assignment title. Do not use more than 12 point or less than 10 point type. (No squished margins either!) Correct punctuation, spelling and citations are expected. If you are unfamiliar with the APA style, consult the Hacker style guide.

The first two papers should be analytical in nature, using the theories and concepts from class to illuminate a particular situation. (See the attachment, “Writing an Analytical Paper”.) The toolkit paper can be in any format you wish as long as it is narrative.

Written presentation is very important. You will often be called upon to communicate your thoughts and recommendations quickly, clearly and concisely in work environments. Please take this opportunity to practice and perfect this technique!

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Required Texts

The books are available in the bookstore or you can purchase them at any other location. Just make sure you purchase the correct edition. Please bring the appropriate readings to class as we will often use them in exercises. This includes those articles you retrieve electronically (most electronic readings are in the syllabus schedule, not here). *Hacker, Bardach, Rainey and Tufte will be used in other classes so please keep them!*

Baldassare, Mark. (1998) *When Government Fails: The Orange County Bankruptcy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bardach, Eugene. (2005) 2nd Edition. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: the Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*.

California Legislative Analyst Office. (2006) [Cal Facts](#). You may download this document for free at the Legislative Analyst's Office site or you can order it by calling 916-319-8317.

Hacker, Diane. (2007). *A Pocket Style Manual*. Fourth Edition. Boston: Bedford Books.

Kingdon, John W. (1999) *America the Unusual*. Wadsworth.

Rainey, Hal. (2003) *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations* 3rd Edition. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. (Please keep this text as it will be used in the 240 sequence.)

Tufte, Edward (2006) *Beautiful Evidence*. Chesire, CT: Graphics Press.

Recommended for those who feel a bit uncomfortable with their knowledge of basic government systems is Kettl, Donald F. and James W. Fesler. (2005) 3rd Edition. *The Politics of the Administrative Process*. Washington, D. C.: CQ Press

* Articles marked with one asterisk (*) will be available on the webct site.

Course Outline and Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
<p>September 5 5 pm – 9 pm</p> <p>September 6 8 am – 5 pm</p> <p>September 7 8 am – 5 pm</p> <p>Please do all the work for these three days in advance. You will not have the time or energy to be doing last minute reading during our first weekend together. We will not necessarily cover the topics in the order listed making it important to be prepared.</p>	<p><u>Overview and Introduction to the field</u> PPA 2005 Self Study, pgs. 3-13 (Each CSUS academic department is reviewed every few years by a faculty committee. The self study document is prepared by the department to explain the academic discipline, outline student learning goals, explain the curriculum organization etc..) * McSwite, O.C., (2001) "Theory Competency for MPA-Educated Practitioners", <i>Public Administration Review</i>, Vol. 61:1 <u>Study questions:</u> What is public policy and administration? What do you want to get from your studies? What do the core ideas by McSwite suggest about what you should get out of your studies?</p>	
	<p><u>The sectors: public, private and non-profit</u> Rainey, Chapter 3</p>	
	<p><u>Institutional overview: American Government</u> Federalist Papers #10 and #51 available online at several sites including Yale's Avalon Project Kingdon, John. <i>America the Unusual</i>, all. <u>Study question:</u> What are the key ideas that make the US political system unique?</p>	
	<p><u>State and Local Structure and context</u> Review the Cal Facts publication about California</p>	
	<p><u>California State Political Context</u> Baldassare, all <u>Study Questions:</u> Do the three factors that seemed important in the Orange County bankruptcy still exist in CA? What are the key ideas that make the CA political system unique?</p>	
	<p><u>Understanding MPPA Expectations</u> Review at least three of the theses (plural for thesis) available on webct. I will be adding to these over the next few months. Try to get a sense of the different methodologies that can be used. O'Hare (JPAM, 2004, v. 23, #2), "Rhetoric: Memo to My Students"</p>	<p>Identify three or four thesis questions that might be interesting.</p>

Session 1 September 9 or 16	Critical and Analytical Thinking Bardach, all (skim the appendices)	Bring your first paper with comments
Session 2 September 23	Roots of PA: Political Science *Lascher, Edward L. Jr.. 1998. "Loss Imposition and Institutional Characteristics: Learning from Automobile Insurance Reform in North America" <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i>	
Session 3 September 30	Roots of PA: Organization Theory and Social Psychology; Bureaucracy Raine, Chapter 1, 2 <u>Study question:</u> What role do organizations play in the study of public policy and administration?	Re-write of Paper #1 due
Session 4 October 7 or 14	Learning about a Topic: Literature Reviews McEwan, Patrick J. 2000 "The Potential Impact of Large-Scale Voucher Programs" <i>Review of Education Research Volume</i> <i>70:2</i> . Review journal articles for this or other classes and identify the portion of the article that reviews the literature. Bring in three samples.	
Session 5 October 21 or 28	Making Effective Presentations Tufte; read the Introduction and Chapters 4,5, 6 and 7. Bring in the reports you used for your paper and any other samples you find interesting	Paper #2 due electronically please
Session 6 November 4	Ethical Dimensions of PPA * Walton, John R., James M. Stearns, and Charles T. Crespy, 1997. "Integrating Ethics into the Public Administration Curriculum: A three-step Process". <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> 16. pp. 470-483. ASPA Code of Ethics <u>Study Questions:</u> Are public administrators held to a different or higher standard than private or non-profit administrators? Is this reasonable? Why or why not?	
Session 7 November 11 or 18	Group Presentations	
SUNDAY November 30	No class	Toolkit paper due by 10pm Sunday Toolkits due by 6 pm Monday

Writing an Analytical Paper

The easier part:

Use proper grammar, capitalization, punctuation, source citation, italics etc.

Good paragraphs have the following components:

- A topic sentence, usually at the beginning
- Supporting evidence
- A transition to the next idea

Avoid personalizing (I will now, we do this etc...).

Answer the question asked. If it has multiple parts that are not rhetorical, answer all of them.

Tell the readers what you are going to say. It is much easier to read analytical work if you know where the author is going. This is not a mystery novel.

Start at the beginning of the thought, not in the middle. (How much can you reasonably assume the reader knows? Who is audience and what is the purpose?)

Make statements which you can support with evidence as opposed to beliefs.

Every sentence should make or support a point, hopefully one that is connected to your overall argument.

Avoid long explanations of details that are irrelevant. This is probably not the time to dazzle someone with your specialized knowledge of a particular project.

Watch your choice of words, both incorrect and unintended meanings can get you in trouble.

Pick a method for citing references and use it consistently.

The harder part:

Give your total paper a framework, a line of thought that defines and answers the questions posed.

Use the literature (hopefully multiple authors) to ground your work.

Be analytical, not editorial or colloquial.

Use the right analytical framework and avoid confusing applications. Don't use a tool for analyzing policy and programs to analyze an organization. This is hard to learn, do it consciously... "what level of analysis is this tool designed for? Is that what I am applying it to?"

Take the time to make the document shorter, clearer. (huh???)

Tips

Think about the question being asked for a few days.

Make an outline.

Have someone proofread it.

Do logic checks...that is, this is a topic sentence and it is supported by the following evidence, this is the analytical tool I'm trying to use because...etc.

SQ4R

Reading for Comprehension for Graduate Students

The SQ4R technique is designed to help you begin to read for comprehension and understanding. The goal is not to read faster, it is to read more effectively the first time and retain the important concepts.

Scan:

The first task is to scan the material you about to read to determine the point of the piece. Review the title, the table of contents, the book jackets, the preface, introduction and conclusion if appropriate. Well written books and articles *tell you what they are going to tell you*.

As you scan, look for context, topic, main ideas, authors perspective or bias, main arguments made, etc.. How does this fit with other material you've read about this topic?

Questions:

What question(s) is this author trying to tell you? What question(s) is he trying to answer? What should you know or better understand as a result of reading this piece?

Many books and most articles at the graduate level have a particular perspective. Text books, of course, are a bit different as much of what is conveyed in those is factual information rather than perspective or viewpoint. Some texts will contrast several theories. Articles and most books however are trying to address a particular question, theory, or convey an idea.

Write down the questions you have identified before you begin to read the then look for the answers to your questions.

The 4 R's:

Read: Once you have your questions identified, begin to do the reading. First, glance at the material, is it organized into subsections that are logical? If it is, then it may make sense to scan them for content. Much of the reading assigned at this level has a main point and the author tells you what it is in an introduction or overview chapter. Skim the areas that make sense at first glance and read more in depth in the areas you didn't understand as well. I tend to skim examples or illustrations unless I don't understand the point they are explaining. Look at graphs, charts and tables as sources of summary information as well.

Remember what your questions are. Read sections of material at a time, not the whole thing from beginning to end (unless it's short). As soon as you feel yourself straying mentally, stop reading! Stretch, get up, do whatever you need to in order to get your focus back. Review where you left off to make sure you didn't stray much earlier ☺!

The zebra stripe problem...

"Highlighting" can confuse you more than help you. Wait until you have completed the reading and answered the questions before you highlight. Then, you know what the truly important points are, and you can annotate them with your own thoughts. Otherwise, you wind up with the dreaded zebra stripe... lots of yellow and white stripes with no real meaning.

Reflect: Think about what you just read. Can you answer your questions? Your roommate asks what you're reading, can you say "This chapter is about the way people behave in organizations, right now I'm reading about how we motivate people.", instead of saying, "My Public Affairs stuff."?

Recite:

Saying things out loud really does help retention of the information. Just that act of putting it into words means you have to understand it at some level. So, tell someone the summary of what you just read, or say it to yourself out loud. Think of examples that you know of that help illustrate this point. Ideally, get into a study group and share your questions and answers, after everyone has done their initial reading.

Review:

Review what you have written down. Is it in your own words? Does it make sense to you? Can you make sense of it 3 days later? What about 3 weeks later? Notes that don't mean anything to you, either from class or from readings, are not worth the time it took to write them down. If your notes don't make sense now, they never will. One hint on notes is to use your own words 99% of the time. Someone else's quote won't have quite the same meaning as your own words.

Sources:

Petrie, Trent A., Lisa Pinkenburg Landry, and Kimberly Bobinski Edwards, 1999, Achieving Academic Success, Ron Jon Publishing

Lecture notes from Dr. Ross Clayton and Dr. John Kirlin, University of Southern California

Toolkits

What is a toolkit?

It is a compilation, in whatever form works for you, of those things that help you make sense of the world, the things that provide new perspectives, new insights, and allow you to understand the complex assortment of problems and questions that are raised in the public sector. It allows you to look backward for understanding and forward to solve problems creatively.

Why do I need a toolkit?

If you are sitting in this class, you have some desire to learn, to get a better education, perhaps to further your career goals. Sitting here one night a week or a series of Saturdays will not make you a better manager, finding ways to internalize what you have learned, and will learn in other classes, *will*. By internalizing I mean making it part of how you think about the world. Few of us have time to pull a book off the shelf and thumb through it looking for a crisis that needs an answer NOW. But, most of us, in the 30 seconds it takes to draw breath to respond, can glance at the wall, or the desk, or the inside of your wrist, and look at what is in your toolkit.

Bennis talks about the fact that leaders force themselves to find time to reflect on what is going on in their lives, both past and projecting forward. These leaders are seeking to identify lessons and look forward, with some thought, to what might be happening now. Your toolkit is a way of forcing reflection. When you come upon a problem you're not sure what to do with, look at your toolkit list while you ponder the problem. Pretty soon, you won't need the toolkit list, it will be part of the way you think.

What form can my toolkit take?

3x5 cards

A sheet of paper

A binder

A collage

The key to a toolkit is to have it visible frequently, someplace where you will use it, and start to incorporate it into the way you think everyday, not just when you have the benefit of reflection. My toolkit was a 4x6 index card, taped to the wall near my phone. It had been compiled over the course of my graduate school work, in several spiral bound index card books.

What should be in my toolkit?

The most critical item about your tool kit is that it is YOURS. Not mine, not your groups, but yours. It is those tools that work for you. The thing that makes the world crystal clear for me may be simply an ancillary thought for you.

Your toolkit should contain the words and phrases and concepts that remind you of the bigger theme behind them. It should be brief, but meaningful.

For example, one of the items in my toolkit is simply the word "incentives". For me that conjures up a story I heard when I visited a friends policy class at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. The professor was talking about a state where roads were being torn up by cars and trucks. The policy wonks decided that it would be best to assess a fee to the vehicles which did the most damage. Naturally, trucks did the most damage so the policy folks suggested a per axle

fee be levied against all trucks in the state. Makes sense right? Fine the guys who do the damage. Well, if you charge a fee per axle, what is the incentive you provide? For the truck drivers who want to reduce their costs, the incentive is to reduce the number of axles. As you reduce the number of axles, you increase the amount of weight per axle, further damaging the roads -- exactly the opposite affect the policy makers were trying to achieve.

At some point, policy analysts began to have a conversation about welfare benefits. If people actually made less money if they went off welfare, what was the incentive to leave the system and work? Paying attention to what it is that you are encouraging people to do helps me understand how policy solutions sometimes have unintended consequences.

"Incentive" logic can be applied to individuals as well. Understanding what motivates people can often help address workplace morale issues. Public organizations in particular seem to have trouble finding ways to reward "good" employees monetarily. Eventually it becomes clear that punching the clock and doing the minimum required gets you the same pay as going above and beyond the call of duty. So what is the incentive for an employee to work harder? What is the incentive for someone to come to work there, to stay, or to work hard?

I also occasionally think about organizations when I see the word incentive. For example, what is it that drives this organization? Is it an organization which gets its revenues from charging fines to the people it regulates? If so, then what happens if the regulatees disappear? Sometimes organizations have perverse incentives, if the EPA really cleaned everything up, it would go out of business. All these are questions I think about when I see the word "incentive".

How can I use my toolkit?

Schon talks about being a reflective practitioner, that is, the people who are the most skilled are doing and thinking at the same time, unconsciously. Weick talks about this in his piece in the Executive Mind as well. Ed St. John talks about it as individuals framing, deconstructing, and then re-framing concepts. People learn something, take it apart so its pieces make sense to them, and then reconstruct it in a way that they can "carry around". This is the art of building a toolkit. The use is in finding a way to carry around what you have learned until you no longer need to put it on paper.