LAST REVISED: October 6, 2006

To get to online syllabus:
www.csus.edu/indiv/s/shulockn/#classes

Sacramento State University
Department of Public Policy and Administration

PPA 297A&B:
CALIFORNIA EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP SEMINAR
Fall and Spring, 2006-07

Instructor:

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Seminar meetings:
Fridays, 9:15a.m. - 12 p.m.
Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, 2nd floor conference room
1400 Tenth Street (Corner of 10th and N Streets), downtown Sacramento

Course Objectives

This course is designed to complement your placement with a combination of theory and practical knowledge to help you make sense of, and contribute to, your executive branch department. As a staff member in the executive branch, you will be involved in policy issues from the perspective of a public agency that plays a critical role in policy development and implementation. The course is intended to help you understand the policy process and the organizational environment in which public policies are adopted and implemented. Your experience in the state bureaucracy sets this program apart from the legislative fellows programs. Your colleagues in those programs may spend more seminar time on specific policy or political issues. For our program, it is important that we spend time on the role of executive branch organizations in the policy process and the factors that make those organizations more or less effective. Therefore, in addition to discussing current political and policy issues, we will take a broader look at the policy process and the role that the executive branch plays in that process.

The course is divided into three major units:
Part 1.  **The search for responsive government**: Students will learn about the various meanings of effective government and efforts to reform government to make it more effective and responsive to citizens.

Part 2.  **Understanding the policy process**: Students will learn about the different roles of various actors in the policy process, how and why policy change occurs, and about distinctive features of the policy environment in California.

Part 3.  **Understanding and being effective in organizations**: Students will learn about the functions and dysfunctions of organizations and their leaders, along with practical skills that California’s public sector leaders need.

An overriding goal of this course is to heighten your appreciation for, and your commitment to, public service. As you know well, negative notions of “bureaucrats” and “bureaucracy” are commonplace. I hope, through the readings and seminar discussions, to enrich your understanding of the vital role and the contributions of public servants. We want you to complete the Executive Fellowship Program with an even greater commitment to public service than that which led you to this program in the first place.

The learning objectives for the course can be summarized as follows:

1. Learn the content in each of the three units and capacity to “think big” about these issues:
   - What is “effective government” and how do efforts to “reform government” address the issue?
   - How does the policy process work and what is distinctive about California policymaking?
   - What makes for effective state-level organizations?

2. Develop a “tool box” of key concepts that are helpful in your placement and will be helpful in your future public service

3. Enhance your commitment to public service

4. Learn about careers in public service as a means to think about your own future career

5. Learn how to communicate effectively for policy audiences, with a special emphasis on writing

**Seminar Format and Expectations**

The seminar is a required component of your program. While I understand that you may be more excited about your agency placement than about the seminar, the two go hand in hand and you cannot be successful in the fellowship program without being successful in the seminar. Mentors are aware of this requirement and have been advised to ensure that
Friday mornings are free for fellows to attend the seminar. **You are expected to attend every seminar.** Only on rare exceptions, and with my explicit, **prior** approval is it acceptable to miss class. If a class is missed, fellows must make up any missed assignment *and* demonstrate completion of that week’s readings by submitting an extra writing assignment.

Seminars are a mix of discussions of the readings, presentations by guests from throughout state public service, and student-led discussions that relate course topics to their placement experiences. It is very important that you do the reading. In fact, it is so important that your primary assignment will be to write a one-page reaction to the readings on ten separate occasions. There will be little lecturing. This is a graduate seminar and the fun in that lies in having lively, provocative, and *respectful* conversations and debates about the issues at hand. I expect students to come to the seminar having read the assigned material and ready to discuss it. A significant part of your grade will be your participation in these discussions – demonstrating your ability to relate readings to one another and to your placement experience.

At the end of each class, time permitting, we will collectively recap by recalling key concepts that we have discussed. Over the weeks, then, we will assemble a “tool box” of concepts on which you can draw to help you understand what you are observing in your placement and to help you with your policy and management memos.

To ensure that we all begin with no misunderstandings, I need to make an important point about what seminar *is not*. Seminar is not a practicum. Seminar is not a place where we will solve the world’s problems (or even those of California). You can solve problems (or try) in your placement. Seminar is a place where we will confront the many complexities of public policy in a democratic system of government in perhaps the most complicated political and social environment in the country. I want you to embark on, or continue, your public service career with a rich set of thoughts, concepts, and tools on which to draw when you do confront problems. I believe that thoughtful and broadly educated public servants are the most effective public servants.

So, in summary, here are my expectations, which, if you follow, should make you successful:

- Do the reading each week.
- Come to seminar on time, with homework completed, and prepared to discuss the readings.
- Open your mind to big-picture thinking and to contrary points of view and be respectful of those views.
- Think about how the issues from seminar relate to your organization, and to California state government generally.
• Work hard on your writing and pay attention to the comments I give you on written assignments.

Assignments and grading

Class participation. Effective participation in class discussions is an important component of performance. I will let you know, halfway through the year, how you are doing in class participation, so there are no surprises and so you can make adjustments. In addition to participating in weekly seminar discussions, each student will have one group assignment where three students lead a short class discussion on a topic of their choice that relates some experiences from their placements to class topics. The class participation grade will reflect weekly discussions and the group assignment.

Reflections in response to weekly readings. The primary set of assignments is a 1-page reflection on the weekly readings. Each student must do 10 of these over the course of the year. In recognition of your variable workloads at the office, you can pick the weeks. The reflection must be analytical (not simply a summary of main points), in that you will assert an opinion or position about the reading(s) and defend it. It should be written in memo format to me, use headings and bullets, as applicable, and be concise and easy to read. For example, you can state the argument that you found the most compelling, or the weakest, or the most relevant to what you’ve observed in your placement and cite your reasons for that. Alternatively, you can compare and contrast two or more readings, citing similarities or differences and deciding which makes more sense. You can compare one week’s readings to something we discussed earlier. Or, you could write more generally about how the reading made you think about your interest in public service. Remember, I have read the material – so don’t summarize it for me. Spend the scarce space giving me your reactions to the material. You will be graded equally on content and writing. You will also be required to keep a log that documents the feedback I am giving you on your writing and what you are doing to improve your writing.

Policy memo. This assignment will draw on what we have read and discussed about the policy process generally and the policy environment in California. You will select a specific policy issue that is of importance to your organization and write a 3-4 page memo that analyzes how your department can best accomplish its goals with respect to the issue. Topics to include might be: how to get it on the policy agenda, how to use the media most effectively, how to deal with interest group opposition, how to garner public support, how best to frame the issue, what kind of research or analysis to present to whom, how to deal with expected turnover in legislators or committee leadership, how to deal with budget implications, etc. In your memo you will need refer specifically to readings from at least three different weeks’ readings to illustrate the concepts on which you are drawing.

Management memo. This assignment will draw on what we have read and discussed about public sector organizations and the factors that promote or impede their effectiveness in providing public services or otherwise fulfilling their missions. You will write a 3-4 page memo that discusses how your organization might increase its effectiveness. Possible topics would include greater involvement of citizens, improved planning processes, different hiring practices, better internal communication about
performance objectives, improved budget or data systems, different leadership approaches etc. In your memo you will need refer specifically to readings from at least three different weeks’ readings to illustrate the concepts on which you are drawing.

The final course grade will be determined as follows:

- Seminar participation: 15%
- 1-page reflections (10): 50%
- Writing log: 5%
- Policy memo: 15%
- Management memo: 15%

**Required Readings**

Readings include four books along with numerous articles and reports, mostly available on-line (a few may be distributed to you). You absolutely need access to a computer and printer to do the required reading. I realize that it is hard to read long reports online, and may be inconvenient to print them, but you will have to do whichever works best for you. It mirrors real-world situations, where so much of what we have to read is on line.

Books:

- Peter Schrag, *California: America’s High Stakes Experiment*, University of California Press, 2006. ($16.50)
- Kenneth Ashworth, *Caught Between the Dog and the Fireplug, or How to Survive Public Service*, Georgetown University Press, 2001. ($22)

Many of the articles, reports, and websites are listed below under the weekly topics, but I will fill it out as the year evolves. *Be sure to consult the web version of the syllabus to be up to date with readings and assignments.*

**Schedule of Class Sessions**

Any eight-month schedule of classes is subject to change. I will maintain an updated version of this syllabus on my website which you should consult on a weekly basis for possible changes to class meeting dates, scheduled topics, readings, and guests.
ORIENTATION

Session 1 - Oct 26: The California Context for Policymaking – Part 1
  • Schrag, Introduction and Chapters 1-2

Session 2 – Oct 30: The California Context for Policymaking – Part 2
  • Schrag, Chapters 3-5

Guest: Peter Schrag

Session 3 – Nov 6: Governance Challenges: the Case of Infrastructure
  • PPIC, California 2025: Taking on the Future
    o Chapter 1: Introduction and Summary
    o Chapter 6: California Comes of Age: Governing Institutions, Planning, and Public Investment

Session 4 – Nov 17: Californians and their Government
  • PPIC Statewide Survey, Californians & the Future, August 2006
  • PPIC Research Brief, Participating in Democracy: Civic Engagement in California, April 2004
  • Government Performance Project, Grading the States 2005: California

Session 5 – Nov 27: Effective Writing for Policy Audiences
  • Various handouts (to be prepared)
  • Bill analyses

FALL SEMESTER

Part I: The Search for Responsive Government

Week 1 (Dec. 1): Public Management Reform and the “Reinventing Government” Movement

Readings:
  • Donald Kettl, The Global Public Management Revolution (entire book – it’s short)

Week 2 (Dec. 8): Citizens or Customers: Finding the Public Interest

Readings:


DECEMBER 15: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION – NO REGULAR SEMINAR

Week 3 (Dec. 22): Public Attitudes Toward Government; Civic Engagement

Readings:


Guest:

Mary Kirlin, Professor of Public Policy and Administration, Sacramento State
SPRING SEMESTER

Week 4 (Jan 12):  The Context and Challenges of Government Reform

Readings:


• Little Hoover Commission, Governing the Golden State: A Critical Path to Improve Performance and Restore Trust

• Governor’s State of the State Address 2005

• Orange County Register: http://www.reason.org/commentaries/passantino_20050803.shtml

• Governor’s State of the State Address 2006

Week 5 (Jan 19):  Accountability: what does it mean? Can it build public trust in government?

Readings:

• Denhardt, J. and Denhardt, R.  Chapter 7 from The New Public Service, 2003 (to be distributed)

• Book review of Robert Behn, Rethinking Democratic Accountability

• Robert Behn, “The Accountability Dilemma” (2 pages)

• CPR Volume I: “Accountable Government”

• Shulock, N. and Moore, C. A Framework for Incorporating Public Trust Issues in States’ Higher Education Accountability Plans, April, 2005

Part II:  Understanding the Policy Environment

Week 6 (Jan 26):  Influencing Public Policy: What Are The Roles Of The Various Actors?

Reading

Kingdon, Chapters 1, 2, 3
**Week 7 (Feb 2):** Other Players: Role of the Media; Foundations

**Readings:**

- Geneva Overholser, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, eds., *The Press*
  
  - Chapter 9, The Agenda Setting Function of the press
  - Chapter 10, The Watchdog Role
  - Chapter 11, Informing the Public


- The California Endowment, “*The Challenge of Assessing Policy and Advocacy Activities*.”

**Guest:**

Pamela Burdman, Program Officer, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and former journalist

**Week 8 (Feb 9):** Policy Processes and Policy Change

**Reading**

Kingdon, Chapters 5-9 (note we skip chapter 4)

**Week 9 (Feb 16):** Policymaking in California: Direct Democracy

**Readings**

- [The Speaker’s Commission on the California Initiative Process](#), January, 2002


**Week 10 (Feb 23):** Policymaking in California: Term Limits

**Reading:**

- Bruce Cain and Thad Kousser, *Adapting to Term Limits: Recent Experiences and New Directions*
• Dan Walters, on Keith Richman, http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/story/14316541p-15231480c.html

Assignments:

• Interview at least one legislative staffer (not a fellow but someone who has been there for quite a while) about the impact on term limits on the functioning of the legislature. Send me an email before class telling me who you interviewed come to class prepared to talk about what they said.

• Outline of policy memo, to include topic and works cited (for discussion in class)

Guests:

Panel of “seasoned” public servants/legislative staffers to discuss “before” and “after” term limits

Week 11 (March 2): Policymaking in California: Budget Politics

Readings:

• Bill Hauck and Jean Ross, “The Hardest Part of Politics: The California Budget”

• California Research Bureau, A Summary of Recommendations for Reforms to the State Budget Process, August 2002


• John Elwood and Mary Sprague, Options for Reforming the California State Budget Process

Week 12 (March 9): Collaborative Policymaking

Readings:

TBA

Guest:

David Booher, Consultant, Center for Collaborative Policy, Sacramento State University

POLICY MEMO DUE MONDAY, MARCH 12TH
Week 13 (March 16):

Case Studies: Climate Change; Immigration

Readings:
TBA

Guest:
Chuck Shulock, California Air Resources Board; project director for AB 32 Implementation

Part III: Understanding Organizations; Skills for Effective Public Service

Week 14 (March 23): Budget Advocacy and Analysis

Readings:

• Department of Finance, *Description of California Budget Process*, and flowchart


• Various readings from Legislative Analyst’s *Analysis of 2007-08 Governor’s Budget*

March 30: CESAR CHAVEZ HOLIDAY – NO SEMINAR (Start reading Ashworth book)

Week 15 (April 6): Working as a Public Servant

Readings:

Ashworth, *Caught Between the Dog and the Fireplug*, entire book, *skip pp. 89-120*

Week 16 (April 13): Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Change, Part 1

Readings:

• Denhardt and Denhardt, *The New Public Service*, Chapter 8 (to be distributed)
• Paul Nutt, “Prompting the Transformation of Public Organizations,” *Public Performance & Management Review*, June, 2004, including a commentary on Nutt article by Gerald Caiden. (to be distributed)


**Week 17 (April 20):** Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Change, Part 2

**Readings:**

• Hal Rainey and James Thompson, “Leadership and the Transformation of a Major Institution: Charles Rossotti and the IRS,” *Public Administration Review*, July/August 2006


• Robert Behn, The Behn Report (2 pages each):
  - May, 2005
  - April, 2006
  - July, 2006

**Week 18 (April 27):** Performance Management

**Readings:**

• Robert Behn, “The Behn Report” (2-pages each)
  - July, 2004 (read this one first)
  - June, 2004
  - November, 2005
  - September, 2006

  (To be distributed)
Assignment:

• Outline of management memo, to include topic and works cited (for discussion in class)

May 4: Interviews for new Fellows (Sacramento) – NO SEMINAR

May 11: Interviews in LA – NO SEMINAR

Week 19 (May 18): Performance Measurement

Readings:


MANAGEMENT MEMO DUE MONDAY, MAY 21st

Week 20 (May 25): Wrap-Up; Student topics