California State University, Sacramento
Public Policy and Administration

PPA 291: COURT OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE
Fall 2009

Instructor: Sherry Caraballo Dorfman

Office & Hours: Wednesday, 12:00 noon SacCT CHAT SESSION
By appointment, email or phone

Email: sdorfman@saclink.csus.edu or sherrydorfman@gmail.com

Phone: 925-330-5656

Class Dates: September 11-12, 2010
October 2-3, 2010
November 6-7, 2010
December 4-5, 2010

Class Time: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Class Location: Administrative Office of the Courts
Northern Regional Office
2860 Gateway Oaks Drive, 4th floor
Sacramento, California 95833

Website: SacCT (use Saclink username and password to access)

Required Texts: Available at University Bookstore or online (e.g. Amazon.com)

- Aikman, Alexander B. (2007), The Art and Practice of Court Administration

- Tobin, Robert W. (2004), Creating the Judicial Branch: The Unfinished Reform

- Hacker, Diana, A Pocket Style Manual or A Writer's Reference

Other required reading, as assigned, will be posted on SacCT.
Course Description

**PPA 291. Court Governance and Operations.** Studies the state judiciary as both independent and interdependent with the legislative and executive branches of government at both the state and local level. The goal is to develop foundational knowledge of the historical and evolving governing and operational principles of the California court system. Units: 3.0

California's state judicial system is the largest in the nation and is at the forefront nationally of judicial innovation and change. In this course, we will examine the judicial branch as a separate and distinct branch of state government. California Supreme Court Chief, Justice Ronald M. George, in his 2007 State of the Judiciary Address noted, “Each of the three branches – although co-equal and independent – is interdependent and must rely upon the other two in order to fulfill its role in the balanced system of government ...”. This course examines how state courts govern themselves as they work with the other two branches, the community, and justice system partners to construct policies and programs that ensure fair and impartial justice while instilling public trust and confidence. To be a fully functioning branch of government and meet its adjudicative responsibilities, courts must be efficient, effective, and adept in responding to the environment characterized by evolving technology, heightened security issues, public policy initiatives, and demographic shifts.

California's Judicial Branch has become stronger with the advent of court unification, state court funding, and other related changes. Concurrently, the Judicial Council, staffed by the Administrative Office of the Courts, has unified and centralized the policy and programmatic focus of the Branch. This course examines the future direction and goals of the state court system, as well as the tensions and challenges inherent in the change from local to state-level governance.

Course Objectives

At the end of PPA 291, students will:

- be able to utilize critical reasoning and analysis skills to conceptualize and understand the structure of governance in the California state judicial system and analyze its accomplishments and challenges;

- understand the interrelationship among the three branches of state government with particular emphasis on policy initiatives and directions in the state judicial system;

- explore the role of the Judicial Council in setting statewide policy direction for the state’s judicial system and the role of the AOC in implementing it;
• understand the governance structure of trial and appellate courts, including the relationship between the bench officers of each court and each court’s executive office;

• examine the relationship between the necessary components of strong court governance and operations with the Core Competencies identified by the National Association of Court Management;

• analyze the specific components of key court operations, including caseflow management, jury management, technology, strategic planning and security; and

• recognize significant statewide trends affecting the courts and how courts respond to those trends.

**Method of Instruction**

The structure of this class, its intensive format, and the nature of its topics demand full class participation by each student. Each of four Friday/Saturday course sessions will include 12 hours of instruction equivalent to a standard semester graduate seminar. Seminar sessions will be broken into several “mini” sessions composed of breakout exercises, guest presentations, student presentations, collaborative problem solving, and group discussions. Judicial officers, court executive officers, clerk administrative officers, and subject matter experts will regularly join the seminars as guest lecturers.

Each student is responsible for completing all assigned readings in preparation for class sessions. The seminar is discussion-based, and students are expected to contribute to each class, raising and responding to questions, commenting on discussion topics, and applying material from readings as well as prior class sessions. Students’ participation will be assessed, in part, by their ability to both critically analyze and incorporate information from the assigned readings into seminar discussions, group work, and Q&A session with guest speakers.

**Sac State Library**

As a Sac State student you have access to various resources offered by the Library. Many of these resources are available electronically, including online tutorials and research databases. Students should initially take time to become familiar with library resources and methods of accessing multiple research databases. This will facilitate ease of access to reading assignments contained in these databases. To learn more about available resources visit the [Sac State Library](http://library.csus.edu/) website.
SacCT

The use of SacCT is mandatory for the course. SacCT is a course management system used on the Sac State campus for online courses or for courses that have an online component. To access a course on SacCT, you must login from the SacCT Login Page (https://online.csus.edu).

All assignments, including readings, papers, and presentations, as well as various resource information useful to judicial administration students, will be distributed through SacCT. In addition, students can use SacCT for electronic discussions amongst themselves with or without the instructor through the CHAT tool of SacCT. Further, online office hours with the instructor will be available to students collectively through SacCT CHAT. Students also may send messages to all enrolled in the class or the instructor through the class SacCT page. The class SacCT page contains links to sites, organizations, and materials useful to the graduate level study of judicial administration.

Course assignments will be submitted by all students through the ASSIGNMENTS tool. Grades will be available to students through the MyGrades tool in SacCT.

To learn more about SacCT visit the Student Resources webpage (http://www.csus.edu/SacCT/student/) where you can view online Tutorials, FAQ’s and other help resources.

Course Topics
Each of the two-day seminars is summarized below. Appendices to the syllabus will be provided detailing reading, writing, and presentation assignments.

**Session 1: September 11 & 12**
**Evolution of an Independent Judiciary In California:** Explores the development of the judiciary and its changes in response to demographic, technological, and economic shifts as California moves from statehood to the post-modern era. To a limited extent, California’s development will be put in the context of the broader national experience.

**Session 2: October 2 & 3**
**The Work of Courts:** Explores the relationship between and among the bench officers and court administrators in governance and court operations, including a focus on caseflow management and jury management.

**Session 3: November 6 & 7**
**Strategic Planning and Continuity of Business:** Explores planning processes in the judicial branch. This includes strategic planning regarding courts as organizations and the branch as a whole, as well as court security,
emergency management, pandemic and disaster planning, particularly concerning continuity of operations.

**Session 4: December 4 & 5**

**Governing and Administering the Court of the Future**: Explores issues necessary for managing the ever-changing court environment through the next decade. Using the ten key trends identified by the NCSC that critically impact state courts, we will explore the ways in which court operations must evolve and adapt to meet the challenges of providing access and fairness, particularly in California. In addition, we will learn about the California Case Management System (CCMS), the statewide-integrated system designed to integrate traffic, civil, small claims, probate, mental health, family law, juvenile and criminal case management information.

**Grades**

Final grades will be based on the following:

- **40%** Papers
- **20%** Presentations
- **20%** Participation
- **20%** Final

Grades will be assigned according to the scale below. The scale defines point ranges for letter grades. This scale is subject to modification at the instructor's discretion for the class as a whole, but modification will never result in a lower grade than that defined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
<th>Letter Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-91</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-81</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72-77</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-71</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52-57</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-51</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minimum Grade for Certificate Credit
A minimum grade of B- is required to receive credit toward your certificate. Grades of C+ or lower will not meet the graduate level standard of academic performance necessary to receive a certificate.

Course Assignments and Projects

1. Assignment 1: Purposes of Courts Critical Thinking Paper
2. Assignment 2: Tobin Presentation
3. Assignment 3: Improving Court Management Paper
4. Assignment 4: Strategic Planning Presentation
5. Assignment 5: Jury Trials Paper
6. Assignment 6: TBD Presentation (Dec)
7. Assignment 7: TBD Paper (Dec)
8. Various projects as assigned related to group work and preparation for guest speakers.

Written Work: Some Guidelines and Resources

Written work will follow APA format. In addition to a required resource, either A Pocket Style Manual or A Writer’s Reference by Diana Hacker, the following resources may helpful.

- The APA Website (http://www.apa.org/)
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab – OWL (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/)
- Sac State Library (http://library.csus.edu/)
- Sac State Research Guides (http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/)

Course Policies

- ATTENDANCE: Attendance at each class session is required. Missed classes, except when excused in advance due to extreme circumstances, will result in a point penalty up to 5% of final point value, reducing the final course grade.
Makeup assignments may be required. Actual reduction of course grade and/or makeup assignments are at instructor’s discretion.

- **LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** The acceptance of late assignments is at the instructor’s discretion. If accepted, late submissions will be penalized up to 10% of assignment’s total point value, subject to circumstances, length of delay, and instructor’s discretion.

- **COMMUNICATION WITH INSTRUCTOR:** Direct communication with instructor is essential in the event of absence, late submission, or any other circumstance which interferes with successful completion of course requirements.

- **EXTRA CREDIT:** No extra credit assignments will be accepted.

- **SacCT:** The use of SacCT is required to obtain course reading assignments, written assignments, and resource materials, and for submission of written assignments.

- **STUDY ROUTINE:** Study teams and peer review are encouraged.

**University Policies**

- **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Students are expected to be familiar with the University’s Academic Honesty, Policy & Procedures. The policy on Academic Honesty and other information regarding student conduct can be accessed from the [University Policy Manual](http://www.csus.edu/umanual/index.htm).

- **PLAGIARISM:** You should include information about the policy relevant to your course; for example, define what plagiarism is based on the University Policy Manual and the consequences for engaging in this particular behavior. For plagiarism specifically, you may want to include a link to the [Library’s Plagiarism Website](http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353).

- **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY:** If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the [SSWD website](http://www.csus.edu/sswd). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.