**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO**

**PPA 210: Political Environment of Policy Making**

**Section 2**

# Spring, 2023

Professor Ted Lascher Class meeting time: Wednesdays,

tedl@csus.edu 6-8:50 p.m., Sacramento State Downtown,

Room 104/105

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-6,

Sacramento State Downtown, Room 230

OVERVIEW

Policy choices are made in the political arena. Decision makers and activists commonly hold different values and interests about policy matters, and attempt to advance them through a variety of means (e.g., deployment of resources, advantageous issue framing, appropriate choice of decision venue). Outcomes frequently reflect participants' skills, clout, match with the public mood, etc. Timing matters a lot and the role of policy entrepreneurs is critical. Ultimately politics heavily influences what public policy choices are possible and how decisions are implemented. Accordingly, it is crucial that MPPA students gain an understanding of the political arena.

This course has two broad aims along with specific learning goals. The first broad aim is to enhance your effectiveness in the political arena. To that end we consider political features that practitioners need to understand as well as skills that will be of value. The course’s second broad aim is to enhance your understanding of what people *should* do in the political arena. We consider both individual ethical obligations and the ethics of policy choices.

PPA 210 focuses especially on the development stage of the policy process, and particularly efforts to secure enactment of legislation. I find legislative battles especially useful for illustrating key analytical points. However, we will also devote considerable attention to policy implementation and how political battles continue after laws are enacted.

LEARNING GOALS

The PPA faculty members have established a set of learning goals for the program as a whole and have identified particular ones that are relevant to PPA 210. Following are the primary goals for the course (we also have secondary goals) and how they are to be met in PPA 210.

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| **Primary MPPA Program learning**  **objectives covered for PPA 210** | **What we expect students to learn in PPA 210** |
| Diagnose, map, and analyze decision making processes, actors, and context. | Understand and apply the multiple streams approach (and its limitations) for determining how and why policies advance in the political arena,  Recognize when windows of opportunity for policy change arise or close.  Understand how the way a policy choice is framed affects its potential for support.  Understand the political tools available to influence policy after legislative enactments.    Learn a variety of analytical skills that helpful in the political arena (e.g., ability to choose the right venue for action). |
| Analyze systems and practices to surface systemic biases, including structural racism, that advance or impede a more just and equitable society. | Understand how differences in resources and ability to gain attention advantage some actors and hurt others. |
| Effectively communicate with different audiences to build understanding of public problems and policy and administration strategies. | Learn the different styles of communication most appropriate for the advocate, analyst, and advisor in the political arena. |
| Understand obligations to advance public value consistent with rule of law and an enduring search for reasonable and just action. | Draw from unit on ethics to develop an understanding of different approaches to advance public value. |
| Consider ethical dimensions of choices in public policy and administration. | Develop an appreciation of the choices inherent in both policy decisions and how policy makers carry them out. |
| Understand differences between analysis and advocacy including insider and outsider roles. | Understood the differences between the advocate and analyst roles. |
| Recognize professional role and responsibility/duty of care to your organization. | Appreciate the obligations and limitations that follow from an understanding of role ethics. |

CONDUCT OF THE SEMINAR

The term "seminar" is accurate. While I will offer mini-lectures on key concepts, summarize points, and draw lessons, the bulk of class time will be devoted to exchange about course topics, in-class exercises, etc. Student participation is therefore not a luxury: it is essential to course success. I expect that students will come to class consistently, be prepared to discuss the week's readings as well as other materials, and be prepared to accept special in-class assignments such as leading a critique of a particular argument from the literature.

READINGS

One book is required for the course: Leah Cardamore Stokes, *Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States* (Oxford University Press, 2020). This paperback book is available at the Hornet Bookstore and through various online venues.

Additionally, I have l assigned articles, case studies, and other reading materials not in book form. As well, I have assigned videos and podcasts for you to review prior to class. These materials will be available on Canvas or otherwise easily accessed without cost. I aim to limit the number of pages you need to read each week, recognizing your professional obligations and work required for other PPA courses. However, this makes it especially critical that you keep up with the material that I assign.

GUEST SPEAKERS AND TWEAKING CLASS SCHEDULE

I expect to draw from a variety of guest speakers for the course. Because of busy schedules and limited availability, this may require me to tweak class schedules and topics for particular days. If appropriate, I will share a revised syllabus when the schedule for guest speakers is clearer.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING WEIGHTS

You will complete a variety of written assignments of varying complexity. Due dates are specified in the syllabus; guidelines for each assignment will be forthcoming. You will also be evaluated on the quality of your class participation, with consideration given to attendance. Grading weights are as follows:

Take home final examination 25%

Agenda setting memo 20%

Ethics paper 20%

Bill proposal 15%

Stokes book reading reaction paper 10%

Class participation 10%

SPECIAL NEEDS RELATED TO DISABILITIES

Should you need assistance with portions of class due to disabilities, please let me know as soon as possible. The University offers services to student with disabilities and I would be glad to refer you to the appropriate campus unit.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

I take issues of academic honesty (including avoiding plagiarism) seriously and you should as well. If you are unfamiliar with the specifics of University policy in this area I recommend you review the appropriate section of the on-line University Policy Manual: <http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>.

DISTRACTIONS

Please do not use cell phones or surf the Web during class unless I instruct you to do so.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED CLASSES

Assignment deadlines are to be taken seriously. At my discretion, a student who misses a deadline *may* be able to submit a late or make-up assignment. Whether this will be allowed, and whether a penalty will still be assessed, depends on the reason for missing a deadline (e.g., a family emergency constitutes a good reason; a competing requirement for another course does not).

You should inform me prior to the session if you must miss class on a specific day. Except under very unusual circumstances, a student who misses three classes will be penalized one entire grade (e.g., a B+ for the course will become a C+), and a student who misses more than three classes will receive a failing grade.

**CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to revisions)**

*Part I: Overview of the Politics of Policy Making*

1. January 25. How to View the Policy Making Process as a Whole, Part One

**Read**: 1) “From Research to Policy,” case study, Kennedy School of

# Government, Harvard University; 2) Rebekah L. Craig et al., “Public Health

# Professionals as Policy Entrepreneurs: Arkansas's Childhood Obesity Policy

Experience,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 2010

1. February 1. How to View the Policy Making Process as a Whole, Part Two

**Watch before class**: Heath Brown, “What Are Policy Focusing Events

and Policy Entrepreneurs?” YouTube video

**Read**: 1) Mathis Ebbinghaus, et al., “Defended or defunded? Local and state

outcomes of the 2020 Black Lives Matter” protests,” 2021; 2) Timothy Callaghan and Steven Sylvester, “Private Citizens as Policy Entrepreneurs: Evidence from

Autism Mandates and Parental Political Mobilization,” *Policy Studies Journal*, 2019

1. February 8. How to View the Policy Making Process as a Whole, Part Three

***Agenda setting memo due***

**Read**: Michael D. Jones et. al., “A River Runs through It: A Multiple Streams

Meta-Review,” *The Policy Studies Journal*, 2016 (skim for important themes)

1. February 15. System Biases and Potential Blowback in the Implementation Stage

**Watch before class**:“Dark Money” documentary (selection)

**Read**: 1) Richard Johnson and Lisa L. Miller, “The Conservative Policy Bias of US Senate Malapportionment,” *PS: Political Science & Politics*, September 2022; 2) Stokes, *Short Circuiting Policy*, chapters 1 and 2;

1. February 22. Deeper into Achieving Success as a Policy Entrepreneur (and the Dark Side of Success)

**Read**: 1) Sara E. Abiola et. al., “The Politics of HPV Vaccination Policy Formation

in the United States,” *Journal of Health Policy, Politics and Law*, 2013; 2) Paul

# Cairney, “Three Habits of Successful Policy Entrepreneurs,” *Policy & Politics*

# 2018; 3) Reid J. Epstein, “Where Facts Were No Match for Fear,” *New York*

# *Times*, October 24, 2021

*Part II: Deeper into Strategic Choices and Tactics*

1. March 1. Moving from an Idea to Legislation

**Read**: California State Senate, “The Legislative Process: A Citizen’s Guide to Participation”

1. March 8. Framing Issues for Success

**Read:** 1) Susanne C. Moser and Lisa Dilling, “Communicating Climate Change:

Closing the Science-Action Gap,” 2014; 2) Ezra Markowitz and Lucia Graves,

“After 2020, We Need to Talk about How We Talk about Catastrophe,”

*Washington Post*, 2020; 3) Ezra Klein, “The Great Delusion Behind Twitter,”

*New York Times*, December 11, 2022

1. March 15. Choosing the Right Venue

***Bill Proposal Due***

**Read**: 1) Joshua J. Dyck and Edward L. Lascher, Jr., *Initiatives without*

*Engagement: A Realistic Appraisal of Direct Democracy’s Secondary*

*Effects*, 2019, selection; 2) Barry Rabe, “Political Impediments to a Tobacco

Endgame,” *Tobacco Control*, 2013

1. March 29 (No class March 22nd: spring break). Understanding the Constraints Posed by Political Partisanship and Polarization

**Listen before class**: 1) John Hibbing segment, “More Divided Than Ever? Excavating the Roots of Our Political Landscape,” Hidden Brain, NPR, May 27, 2019; 2) Lilliana Mason, “What If We Don’t Need to Fix Polarization?” The NPR

Politics Podcast, March 26, 2021

**Read**: 1) Eli J. Finkel, et. al. “Political Sectarianism in America,” *Science*,

October 30, 2020; 2) Boris Shor, “How U.S. state legislatures are polarized and

getting more polarized (in two graphs),” *The Washington Post*, January 14, 2014;

3) Christopher Ingraham, “A stunning visualization of our divided Congress*, The*

*Washington Post*, April 23, 2015

1. April 5. Choosing an “Insider” or “Outsider” Strategy to Influence Legislation (or both)

**Watch prior to class**: “Crip Camp,” 2020 documentary movie; PBS Frontline Documentary, “Gunned Down: The Power of the NRA,” 2015

1. April 12. Understanding the Tactics that Undergird Group Power

**Read**: “Against All Odds,” Kennedy School of Government case study

1. April 19. Thinking Further about Implementation

***Short reading reaction paper due***

**Read**: 1) Stokes, *Short Circuiting Policy*, chapters 3, 4, 5, and 9; skim the remainder; 2) OAL Summary of Rulemaking Process

*Part III: Individual and Policy Ethics*

1. April 26. Role Ethics

**Read**:1) Arthur Applbaum, “Professional Detachment: The Executioner of

Paris,” *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 109 (December, 1995), pp. 458-486;

2) Anonymous, “I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration,” *New York Times* op-ed, 2018

1. May 3. The Ethics of Policy Choices, Part One

**Watch prior to class**: “Justice with Michael Sandel” (selections)

**Read**: 1) Ben Davies, “John Rawls’ ‘A Theory of Justice,’” 1000-Word

Philosophy; 2) Erica D. Smith and Anita Chabria, “California Spends Billions

Rebuilding Burned Towns. The Case for Calling it Quits,” *Los Angeles Times*,

September 27, 2022; 3) Sarah E. Roberts, “The Kankakee Wetlands: A Case Study in Ethics and Public Policy,” *Politics and the Life Sciences*, September 1999.

1. May 10. The Ethics of Policy Choices, Part Two

***Ethics Paper Due***

**Watch prior to class**: “Justice with Michael Sandel” (selections)

**Read**: “Matters of Life and Death: Defunding Organ Transplants in the

State of Arizona,” Kennedy School of Government case study

*Take home final examination due at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 18*

**Student Services Information and Links**

1. [Services to Students with Disability (SSWD)](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/)  
   *“Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where the course or instructional content is usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided.”*
2. [Student Health and Counseling Services](https://www.csus.edu/student-life/health-counseling/)  
   *“Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education, and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.”*
3. [Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES)](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/)  
   *“If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student*
4. [Drop and Withdrawal Policy](https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/internal/_internal/_documents/drop-and-withdrawal-policy.pdf)
5. [Grading Policy](https://www.csus.edu/umanual/acad/umg05150.htm)
6. [Academic Advising](https://www.csus.edu/student-life/academic-advising/)

[Information Resources and Technology](https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/)

[Support Centers and Programs](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/)

[Reading & Writing Center](https://www.csus.edu/undergraduate-studies/writing-program/reading-writing-center.html)

[Student Rights and Responsibilities](https://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/stu-0119.htm)