

Department of Public Policy and Administration

PPA 297B: Executive Fellows Seminar Course Syllabus Spring 2022

California State University: Center for California Studies
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Catalog Description

Seminar will extend the examination and analysis of the Executive branch of government to include alternative administrative practices, policy implementation strategies, and related administrative issues.

Introduction and course objectives

The Executive Fellows Program is an extraordinary opportunity to become immersed in the inner workings of state government through your placement and receive professional guidance by your placement mentor, while also and being able to build your expertise of public organizations, leadership, and public policy and hone your professional skills through this graduate level seminar. The components of the program are designed to work together – your placement will give you on-the-ground practical experience and your graduate work in this seminar will ground you in the theories that help make sense of those experiences.

Working in the executive branch, you will be involved in policy issues from the perspective of a public agency that plays an important role in policy development and implementation. As such, this course intends to help you understand the policy process, the organizational environment in which public policies are shaped and implemented, and the skillset needed to effectively serve the public good.

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. In our program, we also examine the role of executive branch organizations in the policy process and the factors that make those organizations more or less effective.

The specific learning objectives for the course(s) remain as follows for the second term:

1. Understand introductory organization theory. Develop the necessary skills to analyze the effectiveness of an organization and its leadership in fulfilling its mission (reflection memos 1 & 2); and Improve your ability to communicate effectively for policy audiences, further refining your writing and developing your ability to make oral presentations including visual displays of complex information (group project and final presentation).
2. Deepen and broaden your understanding of policy analysis concepts, and apply them to specific issues in California including the policy, political and organizational dimensions (group project, reflection memos 3 & 4);

In the Fall, you learned the basics of governance in California and basics of policy analysis. You also surveyed the policy and political landscape that shape governance in the State. Our focus in the Spring will be more on the specific workings of organizations and how that understanding can shape policy (and politics) in California.

Format of course

We will continue to have regular Friday morning seminar meetings beginning January 14 and continuing into mid-May. Mentors are aware of the seminar and have been advised to ensure that Friday mornings are for Fellows to attend the seminar. Please remember that the seminar is a required component of the fellowship program. **You are expected to attend every seminar.** You may miss one class, for a work-related purpose, without penalty, **if you notify me first.** If you miss more than one class (illness aside), your course grade will be reduced, without exception. **You are also expected to be at seminar on time.** Excessive late arrival will result in a reduced course grade.

This is a graduate seminar with graduate-level academic content. It is an opportunity to share experiences from your placement. You are expected to do the reading and think about the key concepts before class. We will use seminar time largely to move *beyond* the readings – applying them to current events and your placements. I consider it fair and reasonable to call on anyone and expect him or her to be familiar with the key concepts from the readings. Occasionally we will have a guest speaker who is related to the subject matter we will discuss. I also expect that you will be able to ask questions to the speaker and engage in thoughtful discussion. A portion of your grade is based on class participation – reflecting your ability to draw out the key concepts from the readings, to relate readings to one another, and to your placement, to the guest speaker, and to be respectful of others' ideas and contributions.

Successful completion of the Academic Component is required to maintain your Fellowship status. **If you are dropped from the Academic Component, you will also be terminated as an Executive Fellow.**

Successful completion of the program means you will receive six units of graduate credit for this course from Sacramento State. Those of you planning to attend graduate school may be able to use the credits in a degree program. Your course work will certainly be part of your application. Graduate school grading is a bit different. Anything below a B- is not considered passing and you must maintain a 3.0 average to stay in good academic standing.

In addition, successful completion of the seminar is required in order to be eligible to earn the graduate certificate in Applied Policy and Government at the end of your fellowship.

Office hours with me will also be a little different... mostly because there is no physical presence for seminar this semester. Having said that, I will be happy to meet with students virtually at a mutually agreeable time. Please contact me by email if you want to set up time to meet.

Required Readings and Texts

The books may be provided by the department. You should receive them within the first couple of weeks of January. Additional readings are embedded in the syllabus. From time to time I may stumble upon an applicable article or two during the semester and will email you the link to those articles. Please bring the appropriate readings to class (including the hard copies or electronic material) as we will often use them in exercises. If you bring a laptop or tablet with electronic sources be sure you can quickly access the materials.

Required texts:

Bolman, Lee G. and Terrance E. Deal. *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*, 5th Edition or later. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Stone, Deborah *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*, any edition. WW Norton & Company

Grading and Assignments

Participation	10%
Attendance	5%
3 Questions	10%
3 Questions Used	5%
Reflection Memos	10%
Discussion Leadership	20%
Group Policy Brief	15%
<u>Group Project</u>	<u>25%</u>

Grading scale:

A:	≥ 94%
A-:	90 – 93.9%
B+:	87 – 89.9%
B:	84 – 86.9%
B-:	80 – 83.9%
C+:	77 – 79.9%
C:	74 – 76.9%
C-:	70 – 73.9%
D+:	67 – 69.9%
D:	64 – 66.9%
D-:	60 – 63.9%
F:	≤ 59.9%

No late work will be accepted. I understand that Fellows are working full-time while taking a graduate course. This is true for all fellows as well as most of the graduate students in the Sac State PPA masters program. 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 e-mail it to me prior to class. If you email it, it is your responsibility to ensure that I have received it and that it is retrievable. You may do this by requesting a confirming email from me. I can receive it in either Microsoft Word or PDF format.

Should you need assistance with portions of class due to disabilities, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make appropriate accommodations.

Finally, although I do not expect any issues, please familiarize yourself with the [University's policies on academic dishonesty and plagiarism](#). I take them seriously and expect you to as well.

Written coursework

All written coursework should have the following format:

- 12 pt Arial font
- Single space
- Use 6 point spacing between paragraphs, headers and bullet points
- One-inch margins around the page
- Naming convention: Yourlastname(s)_nameofassignment

Please note: You got mulligans in the Fall semester, but you will have points deducted if your written assignments do not conform to this standard formatting. I encourage you to ask questions if you have any questions about this.

Reflection Memos

You will submit 1-page memos in response to the prompts on the syllabus. They are to be written as memos to brief a policy/decision maker who is bright but not well informed about the topic. They should be concise and easy to read using headings as appropriate and, as needed, bullet points. They will often benefit from one or two small graphical images that capture dense information that should be *seen* instead of *told*. I am looking for evidence that you have read, absorbed, thought about, and applied the readings to the prompt. You will be graded on content and writing. Writing should be logical, clear, concise, and have no grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors. To avoid problems, here are explicit rules about the memos:

- These must be submitted to me before the start of seminar.
- There are no make-ups for memos.
- Memos are graded with a 1, 2 or 3 point system.

Please note: The schedule of assignments refers to your agency/placement as the group/organization to apply the concepts within the prompt. I understand that observing an organization remotely is differently than observing it in person. If you feel you do not have sufficient background on your placement to respond to the prompt, you may replace your placement with another organization that you are sufficiently familiar. This substitute organization may be a social club, a previous job or another agency.

Expectations about writing and peer editing

We produce written work to create understanding that can be consumed without face-to-face interaction. This is a key component of your professional development because you need to learn how to disseminate enough information so that policymakers can make informed decisions. In your professional life you will observe that, most likely, others will always preview writing before it is complete, especially when concepts are as complex as they often are in policy work. To that end, I expect that you will identify at least two peer editors who will review nearly all your written work this semester. That may include any work assigned to you at your placement. If you need help with writing, your peers will help. If your writing is solid then by helping others you will become a better writer and editor. Help each other out as best as you can, since another component of professional development is to create and maintain networks. The goal is to become good writers AND good editors.

Discussion Lead

We are continuing the work we started last semester with the Fellows who have not been discussion leads taking over in this semester. The goal is to provide another vehicle to practice (or perfect) reading, comprehension and critical thinking skills, as well as hone your ability to clearly communicate complex ideas to others. Those Fellows who have not been leads were sorted into pairs to lead

a discussion on the readings for that week. The two discussion leads for the week will be expected to provide an overview of the reading assignment, in depth analysis for that week's reading, and be able to answer questions related to the reading. Discussion leaders must submit reading and discussion questions to me by the Monday before the Friday class so that I can review and provide guidance (if any) on your discussion points. These discussion questions should show that the pair will be able to provide the detail needed to conduct a well-organized discussion on the topics covered in that week's reading. You must prepare enough discussion points and questions to lead a discussion for at least 50 minutes. *If during your week's assignment you feel as though your partner did not contribute to the work in a manner that constitutes giving them the same grade, please email me directly.*

Oral Coursework

This semester you will produce two presentations, a group policy brief and a group presentation.

Group Policy Brief

In groups of 3, you will deliver a 4-minute oral presentation, visual aids (handouts), and one 5-10 page policy report. This is to prepare yourself for the Group Presentation. We will discuss this further in Late January/early-February.

Group Presentation

In the same group of 3 for the Group Policy Brief, you will choose a policy question of importance to California to present. Your presentation should cover the policy question, why it is important to the State, identify the players involved (governmental and non-governmental), the issues surrounding this policy question and some of the proposed policy initiatives to address this issue. The expectation is a PPIC-level analysis of the policy question. This means you must research it as thoroughly as you can and sources must be cited. Placement mentors will be invited to observe these presentations and may ask questions, especially if the topic you choose is within their policy arena. The presentation must be 10 minutes max coupled with a period of questions and answers of approximately 5 minutes.

Just for the Thrill of It Coursework

3 Questions

If there is a reading assignment due in that week **and it is not lead by a Fellow Discussion Leads**, you will submit 3 discussion questions to me on the subject matter(s) that was/were covered. These will need to be submitted to me via email and are due at noon the Wednesday before seminar. The questions you produce should be about the deeper issues within the reading assignments dealing with argument, evidence, methods, approaches, or theory. They should not be fact checker questions, counter factual questions, or yes or no questions. You are encouraged to tie the reading with current events if you think it is

applicable. If I select your question to be used during seminar, it will go towards the 5% of your grade that is in the "3 Questions Used" category above. NOTE: Because of time constraints, we may not get through all of the selected questions. The *selection itself* will nevertheless count towards your grade. No, you may not check in with me weekly to ask if any of your questions were selected.

Schedule and Assignments

Any schedule of classes is subject to change but that is especially true in this setting. I anticipate being adaptable as I learn more about you, what you want to learn, and how we can best take advantage of your placements and the other learning opportunities available to you in Sacramento. I will update this syllabus regularly and post changes by email. Please ensure that I have an email that you will see regularly although I do **not** recommend that you use a placement (publicly funded) email for this purpose. I will highlight any changes.

The course includes broad content knowledge as well as skill development. Specifically, you will learn about the context of California policy making (governance structure, the use of initiatives and fiscal issues), policy analysis, organizations and leadership in complex public organizations. Throughout the term we will work on skills sets including writing, analysis, making oral presentations and displaying graphical data. To the extent possible, each seminar will include a combination of discussion of the readings, developing skills, and working on application of theory and skills to your placements.

I anticipate the schedule will change to accommodate changes in the flow of learning, guest speakers and opportunities that arise. There may well be sessions where reading is assigned but something comes up and we do not discuss it. I expect you to do the reading, work to understand it, and be prepared to use it in future sessions. Much of being a professional in this arena means taking initiative to learn.

DRAFT Fellows Seminar Schedule as of January 2022

FOR DISCUSSION

This is a living syllabus, subject to change.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1	January 14	Foundation: Wilson's Bureaucracy model and Merton's typology	<u>Wilson bureaucracy types chart (bottom chart)</u> <u>Merton's Strain Theory of Deviance</u> <u>Merton's Strain Theory, Crime, and My Pants (despite the title, it actually explains the theory well)</u> <u>Robert K Merton's Strain Theory - Explained (text and video, but watch the video first)</u> <u>The Tipping Point: Most Americans No Longer Are Middle Class</u>	
2	January 21	Frames and Organizational Structure	Bolman and Deal Part One (chapters 1-2)	Reflection Memo 1: Bolman and Deal state "the ability to size up a situation quickly is at the heart of leadership." Ask your mentor or others at your placement how they size up a situation quickly. Consider how the strategy(ies) mentioned do or do not attempt to minimize any "framing effects" that may impact the ability to understand the situation and reframe it.

3	January 28	Frames and Organizational Structure (cont'd)	Bolman and Deal Part Two (chapters 3-5)	<p>Bring in the organization chart for your department or agency (the whole thing, not just your unit).</p> <p>Reflection Memo 2: Given your growing expertise on organizations, and organizational structure in particular, analyze your organization's structure.</p> <p>Discussion Leads: España/Hinton</p>
4	February 4	"Kill all humans!" - Bender	<p>From Hiring to Retiring: Strategies for Modernizing State Human Resources</p> <p>Bolman and Deal Part Three (chapters 6-8)</p>	Discussion Leads: Bulloch/Uy
5	February 11	Organizational Politics and Power	<p>Pfeffer. Understanding Power in Organizations (to be emailed)</p> <p>Theiss-Morse and Hibbing. Citizenship and Civic Engagement article</p> <p>The Laws of the Public Policy Process</p> <p>Bolman and Deal Part Four (chapters 9-11)</p>	Discussion Leads: Klier/Sanchez, V.

6	February 18	Symbolism and Ritualism	Bolman and Deal Part Five (chapters 12-14)	<p>Reflection Memo 3: Describe the culture of your placement. Which parts are conducive to the purpose, which (if any) make it harder to achieve the purpose?</p> <p>+1: Have an item that is important to you handy to discuss. It can be anything that holds a lot of meaning to you beyond its apparent purpose</p>
7	February 25	Leadership & Change, Part 1	Bolman and Deal Part Six part 1 (chapters 15-17)	
8	March 4	Leadership & Change, Part 2	Bolman and Deal Part Six part 2 (chapters 18-20)	<p>Reflection Memo 4: Identify an issue percolating in your placement. How do different frames allow you to understand the issue(s) from multiple perspectives?</p>
9	March 11	Group Presentations		Group Policy Brief
10	March 18	No seminar		
11	March 25	Spring Recess – No Class		

12	April 1	Paradoxically Speaking	Stone Part I (chapter 1)	
13	April 8	Paradoxically Speaking (cont'd)	Stone Part II (chapters 2-5)	Discussion Leads: Pantoja/Rapada
14	April 15	"It's like the more money we come across The more problems we see"	Stone Part III (chapters 6-10)	Discussion Leads: Gordon/Sanchez, O.
15	April 21	Solutions!	Stone Part IV (chapters 11-15)	Reflection Memo 5: Stone tells us that policy responses to problems are not typically <i>solutions</i> or permanent fixes but are <i>ongoing strategies</i> or next moves. Using a topic from your placement, describe some of the policies that have been adopted in recent years – or at least proposed – to try to move the issue along, e.g., have they improved things, changed the nature of understanding the problem, etc. In other words, don't just list bills or new policies but say something about them.

16	April 22	Group Practice Run Part 1		Have your group presentation ready as if you'll be presenting to the mentors (up to and including any presentation materials and programs that you will use)
17	April 29	No seminar		
18	May 6	No seminar		
19	May 13	Group Practice Run Part 2		Have your group presentation ready as if you'll be presenting to the mentors (up to and including any presentation materials and programs that you will use)
20	TBD	Group Presentations		