

Public Policy and Administration

PPA 297A: Executive Fellows Seminar Course Syllabus Fall 2016

California State University: Center for California Studies

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Seminars meet on the specified days in the Center for Collaborative Policy Conference Room

Catalog Description

Seminar will examine and analyze California State government, with an emphasis on the Executive branch, and dissect the fundamentals of public policy analysis.

Introduction and course objectives

Speaking from personal experience, the opportunity to serve as a Capital Fellow is extraordinary. Specific to the Executive Fellowship program, you have a bird's eye view of the inner workings of State agencies and professional guidance by your placement mentor. In addition, you are given time to attend the graduate level seminar that accompanies the placement. The two are designed to work together -- your placement will give you "on the ground" practical experiences and your graduate work will give you the theories and backdrop that help put those experiences into perspective.

The specific learning objectives for the course are as follows:

1. Understand distinctive features of the California political context and processes and how those features influence policy;
2. Learn core concepts about policy design and analysis and be able to apply them to specific policy issues;
3. Understand your own ethical obligation to promote the public good;
4. Learn to communicate effectively for policy audiences, with an emphasis on writing and visual presentation of analytical information.

Format of course

The seminar consists of two separately graded 3 unit graduate seminars (PPA 297A and B) and is a required component of the fellowship program. During the Orientation period we will hold seminar alongside your other activities. The goal during Orientation

is to prepare you to choose a placement that suits you and to give you baseline background skills and knowledge. There will be extensive reading and writing required during Orientation per the syllabus.

Your placement starts just prior to Thanksgiving and we will begin having regular Friday morning seminar meetings December 5. Mentors are aware of the seminar and have been advised to ensure that Friday mornings are free for fellows to attend the seminar. ***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 arrive on time.*** Excessive late arrival will result in a reduced course grade.

This is a graduate seminar with graduate-level academic content. 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. 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, 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.

Office hours with me will also be a little different... mostly because I don't have an on-campus office and I work in Placerville, about an hour away from Downtown Sacramento. Having said that, I will be happy to meet with students at mutually agreeable times and places. Please contact me by email if you want to set up time to meet. I will also attempt to hold regular "coffee shop" office hours downtown on Fridays before seminar, depending on traffic. This is an excellent place to seek assistance with writing.

Required Readings and Texts

The books may be purchased through Amazon or another on line provider (many students use www.half.com or even eBay.) The bookstore on campus may have some of these but we will not order them specifically for this class.

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. Please note that there is wi-fi access at the Center's conference room, although the Center may limit access to it at their discretion.

Note that the syllabus is for 297A only. 297B will have a syllabus with reading materials as well.

Required texts:

Bardach, Eugene. (2011) 4th Edition. *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: the Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. CQ Press College.

Mathews, Joe and Mark Paul. (2010) *California Crack Up: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We Can Fix It*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Grading and Assignments

Participation	15%
Preliminary Paper	5%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Placement #1	20%
<u>Placement #2</u>	<u>20%</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%
<u>F:</u>	<u>≤ 59.9%</u>

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

Preliminary Paper

Suppose you are on a plane, train or a bus on your way to Sacramento, eager to start this Fellowship. A gentleman sits next to you and starts asking about your trip and what brings you to the state capital. You say that you're about to start the Executive Fellowship. He then introduces himself as Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon. He thinks there could be better coordination between the branches of government. He proceeds to ask you about your preferred policy area/program and how the Legislative Branch can help the Executive Branch accomplish these goals for this policy/program. Without doing any more research than what you already know about your preferred policy/program, what would be your response? Please include a brief description about this policy area/program and what draws you to it. Two pages max.

Paper 1

After you have read the Crack Up book, write an essay explaining the primary factors that seem to make governance in California challenging. Use evidence from the book and other outside material you find to support your argument. Please understand that many things have changed since the Matthews book was written. I don't expect you to know all of those (although if you do please include them). I am looking for your understanding of the California context as well as your ability to distil a complex topic into something that is understandable. Six pages max.

Paper 2

Identify a California public policy area you are interested in, develop a "question" using the Bardach approach, and then "assemble evidence" that the problem exists and warrants public sector attention and funding. These are the first two steps in the Bardach process and are considerably more complex than they appear. This needs to remain fact and evidence based, not editorial or advocacy. Cite your sources. Work to stay clear in your logic from beginning to end. Six pages max.

Placement memo 1

Write a briefing of your placement including the organization's purpose [the primary tasks/roles it plays (what does it do, for whom, with what other entities) and "how" it undertakes these (direct service provider, regulation? etc.)], its budget size, its source(s)

of funding, and any major policy issues they are likely to be dealing during your placement. Three pages max.

Placement memo 2

The second briefing covers the structure and context of your placement as you understand it. For the structure portion I would like you to describe the “official” structure and the governance processes in place for the placement. In other words, what does the organization chart look like? Who governs the organization? Under what authority? How is the work divided? For the context portion, you will describe the external environment, what sorts of stakeholders are there? What are the major constituencies? Finally, describe how the leadership of the organization is selected (appointees vs. advancement). Two pages max.

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.

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 insure 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.

I have laid out the initial schedule for the October-December period. The spring schedule (297B) will be available early in December.