

## **Public Policy and Administration**

### **PPA 297B: Executive Fellows Seminar Course Syllabus Spring 2016**

California State University: Center for California Studies

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Seminars meet on the specified Fridays, 9:00 am – noon in the Center for Collaborative Policy Conference Room

### **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**

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(s) remain as follows for the second term:

1. Deepen and broaden your understanding of policy analysis concepts, and apply them to specific issues in California including the policy, political and organizational dimensions (Steams memo, group project, strategic choices memo);
2. Understand introductory organization theory. Develop the necessary skills to analyze the effectiveness of an organization and its leadership in fulfilling its mission (group project, performance paper, leadership memo, power memo); and

3. 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).

In the Fall, you learned the basics of the Executive Branch 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 20 and continuing into mid-May. Mentors are aware of the seminar and have been advised to ensure that Friday mornings are free 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 arrive 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 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](http://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.

#### **Required texts:**

Wilson, James Q. (1989) (Please don't go past the) 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. *What Government Agencies Do And Why They Do It*. Basic Books.

Bolman, Lee G. and Terrance E. Deal. (2013) *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*, 5th Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

### **Grading and Assignments**

Participation	10%
Streams memo	15%
Performance paper	15%
Leadership paper	15%
Strategic Choices	20%
<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**

Streams memo

Identify an issue that is related to your placement. It can be either policy or organizational in nature. It does not have to be a "big" but it must be clear. Provide a small amount of necessary background on this issue. Once that is complete, identify the concepts floating in the three streams (policy, problem and politics) that surround this issue. You may also identify the person or entity(ies) who are active actors [or who was/were the policy entrepreneur(s) if a window of opportunity has opened in the past] related to this issue. Please ensure to provide context: Describe the external environment. What stakeholders are out there? And what are the major constituencies with an interest on this issue? The goal here is not to solve the problem, or even

identify what it would take to solve the problem, but to carefully assess the dynamics surrounding the issue. 2 pages max

### Leadership

In this paper you will assess a leader you have had the chance to observe. This can be in your placement or in another organization. This paper has four components. First, 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? Don’t forget to describe how the leadership of the organization is selected (appointees vs. advancement). Second, I want you identify the sources of power in your placement. Note that power may exist in the authority of your placement organization and/or in individuals. Be sure to delineate these distinctions. Third, what skills and training does that individual possess? Finally, what does the organization need from a leader at this point in time? How aligned is the leaders skill set to the organization’s needs? You may certainly write this paper such that the organization and the individual are not identifiable. *You will submit this paper in hardcopy only unless you and I come up with a mutually agreeable arrangement beforehand.* 4 pages max

### Performance Paper

In this paper you will assess the performance measures in use at your placement. If you are at the Agency level it is unlikely there will be any, in that case you may select a department within the Agency.

You will begin by reviewing the public purpose (value) of the organization. Next, you will use James Q. Wilson’s bureaucracy types to identify the type of organization your agency falls under. You will list the performance measures (explicit or not) that are in use. Finally, provide an assessment of whether those performance measures are adequate given the agency’s categorization. This may involve assessing whether they map appropriately to the organizations purpose, whether they measure outputs or outcomes, and whether the measures are sufficiently comprehensive. If the organization does not have performance measures in place begin by attempting to discern why that is the case. You may take a stab at designing some. Note that this is more difficult than it appears. 4 pages max.

### Strategic Choices memo

You will conduct a mini strategic planning exercise for your organization. After you provide the basic purpose of the organization you will begin by conducting a SWOT. The elements do not need to be described in detail; a table is sufficient. The bulk of the memo will describe what you find to be the most strategic goals (efforts) for the organization to undertake. These can be internally or externally focused or some combination. This is not a “strategic plan” but a strategy memo for leadership. The only rule is that the efforts MUST come from the SWOT analysis. 4 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.

### **Oral Coursework**

This semester you will produce two presentations, a group presentation and an individual “final” presentation.

#### Group Presentation

You will be divided into groups of three and you will choose a policy question of importance to California to present. The policy question must be on a subject matter none of the group members are working on in your respective placements. You will present 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.

#### Final Presentation

This presentation will be on a topic area you choose, care about, are excited about and/or know well, but the preference is that the topic is related to your placement (especially if it's a project you worked or are working on). You may incorporate various elements from this semester [Bardach (from Falls Semester), Bolman & Deal, Kingdon's streams, Wilson's bureaucracy types, etc.) to present this issue to the best of your ability. The primary goals of this exercise are 1) to structure a well-organized presentation that explains the topic concisely and thoroughly for the benefit of your colleagues and 2) give you more practice with public presentations. Please note that I will call you to present “on the spot.” This means you must be ready by Week 10 with your presentation because I will be random in my selection. The presentation must be 8 minutes max.

### **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.