

## CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

### PPA 210: Political Environment of Policy Making Spring, 2019

Professor Ted Lascher  
Amador Hall, Room 255 &  
Sacramento State Downtown office

tedl@csus.edu  
278-4864 (office)  
(530)400-5688 (cell;  
no calls after 8:00 p.m.)

Course meeting time and place:  
Wednesdays, 6-8:50  
Sacramento State Downtown,  
Room 110

Office hours: Wed. 4-6 at  
Sacramento State Downtown; by  
appointment in Amador 255

### OVERVIEW

One of the recurring themes in American history is the desire to remove politics (that great beast!) from policy making. Fortunately or unfortunately, we live in the real world where politics matters. Decision makers commonly hold different values and interests, and attempt to advance them through a variety of means (e.g., deployment of resources, advantageous issue framing). Outcomes frequently reflect participants' skills, clout, match with the public mood, etc. Timing matters a lot and the role of political entrepreneurs is critical. And ultimately politics heavily influences what type of public policies are possible.

This course aims to develop your ability to diagnose the political factors that affect outcomes. The ultimate goal is to improve your effectiveness in the policy arena.

PPA 210 also has a strong focus on ethics. I believe it is possible to teach people *both* to be skilled about acting within a highly political system *and* to do so in an ethically defensible way, cognizant of broad public purposes.

This course focuses mainly (although not exclusively) 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 touch on how politics enters other forums and stages, including policy implementation.

### LEARNING GOALS

The PPA faculty members have established a set of broad learning goals for the program as a whole, and have identified particular ones that are relevant to PPA 210. Following are those broad goals and how they are to be met in the course.

Broad MPPA Program learning	What we expect students to learn in
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<b>objectives covered</b>	<b>PPA 210</b>
Use different analytical skills and tools strategically	<p>Understand the multiple streams framework for how and why policies are chosen</p> <p>Understand how to recognize when to advance policies based on whether or not windows of opportunity are open or closed</p> <p>Understand how the way a policy choice is framed affects its potential for support</p> <p>Learn a variety of analytical tools that are helpful in the political arena (e.g., skill at political communication, ability to choose the right venue for action)</p>
Understand the critical role of effective leadership in the public sector	Understand the key leadership role played by political entrepreneurs
Frame and present problems to different audiences to optimize understanding	<p>Understand how to frame and present problems to different audiences to optimize understanding</p> <p>Understand the particular importance of framing in terms of gains versus losses</p>
Consider the ethical dimensions of choices in public policy and administration	<p>Consider how public policy choices may be viewed from different ethical frameworks (e.g., utilitarianism, Rawlsian justice)</p> <p>Consider the ethical nature and limits of role responsibilities</p>
Understand the difference between analysis and advocacy	Understand the difference between analysis and advocacy
Understand the significance of diversity in effective public governance in California	Understood how the diversity of political actors affects the type of policy choices that are made

## CONDUCT OF THE SEMINAR

The term "seminar" is accurate. Conventional lectures will be limited and classes will be discussion oriented. While I will guide the conversation, 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 a successful

course. I expect that students will come to class consistently, be prepared to discuss the week's readings, and be prepared to accept special in-class assignments such as leading a critique of a particular argument from the literature.

## READINGS

The following books are required and available at the Hornet Bookstore.

Francis, Megan Ming. *Civil Rights and the Making of the Modern American State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Kingdon, John W. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1995).

Mettler, Suzanne. *The Government-Citizen Disconnect* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation 2018).

Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

There are also a few articles and case studies that will be available on Canvas or otherwise provided to you.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There will be three short papers and a take home final examination. Assignment due dates are specified in the syllabus.

Course grades will be determined in accordance with the following weights:

Paper #1 (agenda setting memo)	20%
Paper #2 (thesis design overview)	20%
Paper #3 (ethical policy choice)	20%
Take home final examination	30%
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/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>.

## DISTRACTIONS

Please do not use cell phones or surf the Web during class. If laptops are being abused in class I may prohibit their use.

## MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSED CLASSES

Late assignments will *not* be accepted. At my discretion, a student who misses a deadline *may* be given a make-up assignment. Whether or not a penalty will be assessed depends on the reason (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

1. January 23. Introduction: How Do Things Come Together for Major Policy Change?

**Read:** 1) “The Voting Rights Act of 1965, Parts A and B,” case study, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; available on Canvas; 2) Julian E. Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now* (2015), selection; 3) Kingdon, ch. 1

**Recommended Film:** “Selma” (2014)

2. January 30. The Multiple Streams Framework, Part 1: The Problem Stream

**Read:** Kingdon, skim chapters 2-3, focus on chapters 4-5; 2) David L. Eckles and Brian F. Schaffner, “Loss Aversion and the Framing of the Health Care Reform Debate,” *The Forum*, 2010; Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 2011, selection

3. February 6. The Multiple Streams Framework, Part 2: The Policy Stream

**Read:** Kingdon, chapter 6

4. February 13. The Multiple Streams Framework, Part 3: The Political Stream and Windows of Opportunity

**Agenda setting memo due**

**Read:** 1); Kingdon, chapters 7-9; 2) Rebekah L. Craig et al., “Public Health Professionals as Policy Entrepreneurs: Arkansas's Childhood Obesity Policy Experience,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 2010

**Discussion**

Come to class prepared to discuss your assignment

5. February 20. Developing Tactics, Choosing Venues, and Learning from Political Experience: The Civil Rights Movement over the Long Run

**Read:** Francis, entire book

6. February 27. What Has Changed Since Publication of the Kingdon Book? Polarization, Sorting, and Campaign Funding

**Read:** 1) Michael Barber and Nolan McCarty, “Causes and Consequences of Polarization,” American Political Science Association Task Force Report, 2015; 2) Boris Shor, “How U.S. state legislatures are polarized and getting more polarized (in two graphs),” *The Washington Post*, January 14, 2014; 3) Lilliana Mason, “The Rise of Uncivil Agreement: Issue Versus Behavioral

Polarization in the American Electorate,” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2013

7. March 6. How Does the Framework Apply Differently in Varied Contexts? And What Does this Indicate about Best Venues for Policy Change?

**Key Policy Questions:** Can the political system cope with truly wicked problems, notably climate change?

**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) Robert Keohane, “The Global Politics of Climate Change: Challenge for Political Science,” 2015

8. March 13. An Important Digression: Writing a PPA Thesis about Politics

**Thesis Design Overview Due**

**Read:** 1) Sabrina Bradbury, “Predicting Environmentally Friendly Behavior,” PPA thesis, 2012; 2) Christina Kersey, “What Happened to ‘Tuition Free’ College Education? Explaining Why Fees Have Risen Sharply in the CSU System,” PPA thesis, 2012

9. March 27 (No class March 20; spring break). Applications in the California Setting and Regulatory Politics

**Readings to be Determined**

10. April 3. Policy Design and Political Feedback, Part One

**Read:** Mettler, chapters. 1-3

11. April 10. Policy Design and Political Feedback, Part Two

**Read:** Mettler, chapters. 4-6

12. April 17. The Ethics of Policy Choices, Part One

**Read:** Sandel, chapters 1-6

**View in Class:** “Justice with Michael Sandel” (selections)

13. April 24. The Ethics of Policy Choices, Part Two

***Ethics Paper Due***

**Read:** 1) “Matters of Life and Death: Defunding Organ Transplants in the

State of Arizona,” Kennedy School of Government case study Case Program);  
2) Sandel, chapters 7-10

14. May 1. The Ethics of Administrative Discretion and Entrepreneurship

**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

15. May 8. Putting the Pieces Together

**Read:** “Against All Odds,” Case Study, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

*Take home final examination due in electronic form at 5:00 on Wednesday, May 15*