

PPA 296e: Intergovernmental Relations Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Nikki Crew

Email: n.crew@csus.edu or through Canvas

Phone: (714) 930-6128

Course Room & Meeting Details: Thursdays 6-8:50; hybrid format. Room 108 when in person. The Zoom link will be provided on Canvas for online sessions. Please see the course schedule below for details.

Communication Policy

I prefer inquiries come primarily through email/Canvas, as I am generally able to respond within a few hours (or the next day if a late inquiry), but for emergencies – please don't hesitate to shoot me a text. My phone is always on silent so no worries about whether it's too late/early. Note: I am an early bird, so please be aware that late evening messages in any form will likely receive a response the following morning. If you send me an inquiry and don't hear back within 36 hours, please feel free to ping again.

Course Description

This course will help PPA students understand how different levels of government interact vertically and horizontally in implementing policies and delivering services. Using real-world cases, previous literature, technical reports, and in-class activities, the class will review the origins and various types of federalism in the American government system and learn collaborative competencies and strategies in multi-level governance. Beyond reading and participating in class discussions and assignments, students will apply concepts from collaborative governance, intergovernmental relations, and network management to analyze and prescribe action for their local/community issues, particularly via public engagement and examination of current events.

Learning Objectives

PPA296E is an elective class. The following table shows the PPA learning objectives applicable to PPA296E and how they are applied in this course.

PPA Learning Objectives	Applications to PPA296E
(1) e. Draw upon multiple disciplines to understand and address policy and administrative problems	Learn different cases of state-local relations by reading papers from multiple disciplines; Learn collaborative partnership and competencies from various disciplines to address policy and administrative problems
(2) d. Frame and present problems to different audiences to optimize understanding	Explore and practice different ways of framing and presenting problems, options, and new information to various stakeholder groups.

(2) f. Use and articulate a confident style of oral presentation	Prepare discussion questions through weekly posting and practice taking the lead in mini-class discussion; Prepare an oral presentation of your case study
(3) a. Recognize the role public servants play in advancing or impeding a more prosperous, just, equitable, and inclusive society	Understand key roles and varying perspectives of public administrators and policy makers, and how they collaborate in decision-making; Learn how community partnership is made in the region
(3) d. Understand the significance of diversity in effective public governance in California	Articulate the benefits of stakeholder diversity in state local relations and community partnership; Explore competitions and collaborations in multi-level governance in California

Class Format & Readings

Success in this course is dependent upon participation. Whether class is held online or in person, this course will be conducted in a discussion-forward seminar style with frequent individual and group activities. Students are expected to read weekly materials and come prepared to respectfully share their thoughts with classmates through open discussions and assignments/activities. Assigned articles can be accessed through library services or Google Scholar. In addition, there will be chapters from various textbooks assigned throughout the semester; pdfs of those chapters will be made available on Canvas. Weekly readings will begin after the first week. The reading list will be discussed on the first day of class.

General note: Please do not use AI for any assignment or discussion. While recognized that it is rapidly becoming a significant part of all our lives, in this class I am interested in what's in your brain. As such, AI submissions will not receive full credit.

Attendance & Missed Work

Weekly participation constitutes 40% of the grade for this course. So, it is imperative you attend class. There are 3 weeks that class will be held asynchronously (9/17, 10/1, and 11/5). For these weeks, students are required to participate online by the deadlines given to receive participation credit. If you must miss a class, please let me know in advance. Dependent upon circumstance, make up assignments may be permitted, usually for partial credit (again, dependent upon circumstance).

Bottom line: please talk to me as soon as you know you have a conflict whenever possible. I am a reasonable human, and we can almost always work something out. However, I can't help if I don't know there's an issue. Please be aware that 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.

Grading Weights

Weekly Participation/Discussion: 40%

Current Events: 10%

Article Summaries: 10%

After Action Report: 10%

Public Engagement: 15%

Final Presentation + Paper: 15%

Weekly Participation/Discussion

A reading reflection will be due each week by 11:59pm on Wednesday starting in week 2 regardless of the class format for that week. These will be worth 5 points each and will be part of your participation/discussion grade. The expectation is that you write an elevator speech style summary of that week's readings by highlighting main points, connections/conflicts between readings, lingering questions, etc. A couple of paragraphs/approximately one single spaced page is sufficient – substantive content is far more important than specific length. **Do Not Use AI** to write this – I want to read your words from your brain. If you use AI or fail to engage with the material, you will not receive full credit.

Additionally, you are expected to meaningfully contribute to class discussions and participate in activities each week. When class is asynchronous, all discussions will be conducted online throughout the week. When class is held in person or online, discussions will take place during class time. As mentioned above, reading reflections are due every week.

The third component of your participation grade is comprised of the activities completed in class. Activities may be small group or individually based depending on the week. It cannot be guaranteed that points from weekly activities can be made up if you miss class as there are some that will require mini presentations to the class.

Current Events

Twice throughout the semester, each student will be required to bring a current events news story related to that week's subject matter for class discussion. Please submit your summary + the article to Canvas by 11:59pm on Wednesday of the weeks you sign up for and be prepared to present to the class. Weekly sign up will be done on the first day.

Article Summaries

Students will sign up to lead class discussion on two of the assigned readings. Similar to the current events assignment, please submit your summary and minimum of three discussion questions to Canvas by 11:59pm on Wednesday of the week the article is assigned. Summaries need not exceed one single spaced page in length.

After Action Report

For the asynchronous week in November, you will participate in a table top exercise simulation and draft an ~5 page after action report. Further details will be provided on the first day of class.

Public Engagement

Students will be required to attend two governmental meetings throughout the semester; further details will be provided on the first day of class.

Final Presentation + Paper

These will be based on an analysis of the two public engagement meetings each student will attend; further details will be provided on the first day of class.

Academic Honesty

Students should familiarize themselves with the University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy, particularly regarding plagiarism. The Student Code of Conduct defines academic misconduct, nonacademic misconduct, and the consequences or penalties for each. Details are available at <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/academic-dishonesty.html>.

Student with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. Students with disabilities that could affect their ability to participate in the course or perform well on graded assignments should see me early in the semester. I am receptive to these situations and will try to make any reasonable accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), please contact:

Services for Students with Disabilities
Division of Student Affairs, (916)-278-
6955, sswd@csus.edu.

Land Acknowledgement

Sacramento State is proud to recognize the California Native Nations, communities, and peoples throughout the state and acknowledge the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this territory.

Our campus operates on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Miwok, Wintu, Maidu, Nisenan (Southern Maidu), and Patwin Native peoples.

Course Schedule*

**Reading list will be posted to Canvas; we'll go over it week 1.*

Week 1: 9/3 – Course Overview and Introductions. (in person)

Week 2: 9/10 – Federalism. (in person)

Week 3: 9/17 – Politics of Intergovernmental Relations. (asynchronous)

Week 4: 9/24 – Federalism and Fiscal Matters. (online)

Week 5: 10/1 – Federal + State. (asynchronous)

Week 6: 10/8 – State to State. (online)

Week 7: 10/15 – State + Local. (in person)

Week 8: 10/22 – Federal + Local. (online)

Week 9: 10/29 – Local to Local. (online)

Week 10: 11/05 – Intersector Relations. (asynchronous)

Week 11: 11/12 – Tribal Government Relations. (online)

Week 12: 11/19 – Federalism and Implementation. (online)

Week 13: 11/26 - no class, Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 14: 12/3 – Presentations. (in person)

Week 15: 12/10 – Presentations. (in person)