

**POL 196E: Research Methods for Political Science and Public Policy,
UC Center Sacramento**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2pm-3pm (on Zoom), Fridays after POL 196E (in person), and by appointment (on Zoom)

Course Objectives

POL 196E is a course designed to bridge the internship experience with the academic study of related disciplines such as political science and public policy. The ability to translate empirical evidence for use in policy debates is central to policymaking. As a member of the policy community students require a sophisticated understanding of a variety of types of data and policy analysis. This course will introduce strategies for data analysis and collection, study design, and principles for evaluating research. Topics will include: experimental design, case study evaluation, small-n studies, survey and questionnaire design, sampling, measurement construction and reliability, data collection and analysis, and hypothesis testing.

Course Outline:*

- Week 1: Identifying the Focus of Research
- Week 2: Data, Research Design, and Experimental Methods
- Week 3: Observational Studies
- Week 4: Surveys and Qualtrics
- Week 5: Measurement Construction
- Week 6: Research Posters
- Week 7: Data Visualization and ArcGIS
- Week 8: Data Analysis
- Sunday after Week 8: Research Poster Rough Draft Due
- Week 9: Elevator Speeches and Practice Poster Presentations
- Wednesday of Week 10: UCCS Undergraduate Poster Showcase
- Week 10: To be Determined

*Course schedule subject to change/adjustment.

Grading

Course grades for POL 196E are based on the following components:

- Attendance, participation, and assignments [20%]
- Research Method Critiques (x2) [10%]
- Research Poster Data Proposal [20%]
- Research Poster Rough Draft [20%]
- Research Poster [30%]

Attendance, participation, and assignments: Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive to class on time. Students should come to class prepared to discuss any assigned readings and complete the in-class assignments. Grades will be based off attendance and participation in class activities including class discussion, in-class assignments, group work, elevator speeches, and practice poster presentations. Students that constructively contribute to class discussion most regularly and fully participate in other in-class activities will receive a boost to their attendance and participation grade. Students that do not contribute to in-class discussion or fully participate in other in-class activities will receive a lower grade. Students may have two unexcused absences for the class. Any student that has more than two unexcused absences will not be able to receive a passing grade for the class.

Students are allowed one excused absence for family emergencies, medical emergencies (accompanied by a note), or internship-related activity. Students must email uccsabsences@ucdavis.edu and complete a make-up assignment (assigned by the instructor) to receive an excused absence. After one excused absence, absences are only excused for extenuating circumstances.

During the course of the quarter students will also complete out-of-class assignments designed to help them with their Research Poster and overall research projects. Assignments will be completed independently or in groups.

Research Method Critiques: Students will complete two Research Method Critique papers (1-1.5 pages) based on the Wednesday Speakers Series Lectures. The critique papers will not only encourage attendance at the Speakers Series but will also give students a chance to develop their analytical skills. The objective of these papers is to critically analyze and not just summarize the presentations. These papers should emphasize assessing the strengths and limitations of research procedures presented in the Lecture with an eye toward applying potential research outcomes. Using concepts discussed in class, critique papers may evaluate the conception, operationalization, and measurement of important variables; suggest hypotheses for future research; discuss potential alternative explanations for findings or ways to approach the topic of research; and discuss potential implications for these findings for California and the United States, among others. Choose one of these options and go into detail about it.

Research Poster Data Proposal: During the fourth or fifth week of the quarter students will submit a ~2 page data proposal for their Research Poster via Canvas. The proposal will outline the data you intend to use or collect and provide a road map for your analysis.

Research Poster: The Research Poster is designed to provide students with a critical learning experience as well as an opportunity to engage in active research. For the poster you are required

to conduct an original research project where you will gather, analyze and report on an important public policy issue in California. The original research for this project will be done in conjunction with your research for POL 195.

This Research Poster will be presented at the end of the academic quarter. A draft of the poster will be due after the eighth week of class. Additional information on the poster and presentation will be provided in class and made available on Canvas. The Research Poster will be due, via Canvas, during the last week of the course. All work must be in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct.

Course Policies

Late Policy: Extensions will be allowed only in the event of a medical or family emergency. The emergency must be documented [doctor's note] in order to be able to have an extension. If documentation is provided, then a decision will be made regarding whether you will be granted an extension. Any requests for an incomplete must be accompanied by a written medical report.

Grade Appeals: Students will have one week from when grades are posted to appeal their grade. All appeals must include a typed, double-spaced statement explaining why you are requesting a grade appeal, and you must justify with evidence from your assignment. If you choose to appeal your grade, the instructor reserves the right to increase or decrease the existing grade.

Pass/No Pass Grading: If you opt to take this course P/NP, in order to receive a P (Pass), you must turn in all required assignments. Failure to do so will result in you not being able to receive a P (Pass).

Notice of the Code of Academic Conduct

As a University of California student, you have agreed to abide by the University's Code of Academic Conduct. Cheating and other violations of the code of conduct are serious offenses. Students are expected to work independently on all graded assignments. Students who engage in cheating will earn an F grade for the assignment. In addition, per Regulation 550, when "academic misconduct is admitted or is determined by adjudication to have occurred," instructors have the authority to assign a student a grade of F for the course. Please refer to the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct for further details: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>

Students with Disabilities

Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet any of the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation for individual learning needs. UC Davis and the UC Center will make every attempt to accommodate all qualified students with disabilities.

Mandatory Reporting

Please be advised that UC Center Sacramento professors, instructors, teaching assistants, and

administrators are mandatory reporters under Title IX. This means that we are required to pass on reports from students, whether communicated verbally during class discussion or office hours or as part of a written assignment or exercise, to the UC Davis Title IX officer and other relevant UC Davis officials. If you wish to seek out help or resources with a non-mandated reporter, please see <https://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/get-support>

Laptops and tablets are permitted in-class for note-taking only. Please do not disrupt your classmates by surfing the web or engaging in other activities