

POL 193: Special Studies in American Politics
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 193 is a course designed to complement courses on public policy and research design, as well as your internship experience. The focus of this class is providing students with knowledge and skills that will help them to better understand and affect the state legislative process. In this class, students will learn about the structure of government and public policy in California/United States, the roles of policy stakeholders, and ways they can more effectively affect the policy process. Through assignments such as letter writing, opinion editorials (OpEds), and elevator speeches, students will also develop written and oral skills that will help them more effectively communicate their ideas in a policy setting.

Your work in this class is part of a larger initiative to engage undergraduate students with public policy in state legislatures. ENACT, The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation, provides an online network for students across the country to connect on legislative issues.*

Course Outline:[†]

Week 1: Syllabus and Introduction

Week 2: Structure of Government/Public Policy Part I

Week 3: Structure of Government/Public Policy Part II

Week 4: Legislation and Coalitional Landscape

Week 5: Contacting Legislators

Week 6: OpEds

Week 7: Elevator Speeches

Remaining Weeks: TBD

*This course is adapted from Professor Melissa Stimell's Advocacy for Policy Change (LGLS 161b) at Brandeis University.

[†]Course schedule subject to change/adjustment.

Grading

Course grades for POL 193 are based on the following components:

Attendance, participation, and in-class assignments [40%]

Bill Summary and Map of Coalitional Field [20%]

Letter to the Legislator [20%]

OpEd [20%]

Attendance, participation, and in-class 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. Students may be given time in class to work on assignments. This time is to be used only for coursework. Students are encouraged to bring their laptops to class for these assignments. Students that do not fully participate during this work time 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. Arriving 10 minutes late to class will count as an absence.

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.

Bill Summary and Map of Coalitional Field: For this class, students are required to summarize a current piece of legislation in California. Students will also map the policy stakeholders relevant to that legislation. Additional information on this assignment will be provided during the quarter.

Letter to the Legislator Students will compose a letter to their sitting state legislator regarding a piece of legislation. You do NOT have to send your letter to a legislator. Additional information on this assignment will be provided during the quarter.

Letter to the Editor Students will write a newspaper opinion editorial on a piece of legislation that interests them. You do NOT have to submit your OpEd to a newspaper. Additional information on this assignment will be provided during the quarter. 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 exam, paper, or summaries. 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