

Public Affairs 20: Power, Politics and Social Change in the United States

University of California, Los Angeles
Winter, 2021

Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Marika Csapo [CHOP-oh]

Email: mcsapo@ucla.edu

Pronouns: *she/her/hers*

Class Virtual Meetings: M/W, 2:00 - 3:15 pm PST via Zoom¹

Virtual Office Hours: F, 1:00 - 2:15 pm via Zoom²

Teaching Assistants:

TA	Email	Section	Date	Time
Tam J. Guy	tamjguy@g.ucla.edu	1A	W	5:00 pm
Ilan Zur	zur2021@lawnet.ucla.edu	1B	W	6:00 pm
Alexandra Weber	acweber@g.ucla.edu	1C	Th	9:00 am
Nathan Keibler	nkeibler@g.ucla.edu	1D	Th	4:00 pm
Matt Phillips	mattphillips@g.ucla.edu	1E	F	11:00 am

¹Zoom url will be linked to the course website and the password will be distributed by email to enrolled students. Live lectures will be recorded and made available on CCLE for those who cannot attend live.

²A sign up sheet for 15 minute slots will be available on CCLE. Appointments outside of office hours are welcome and recommended for those who need more time or cannot make the scheduled hours. Please email the instructor to schedule individual appointments.

Course Description

This is a course in American politics for students interested in developing the skills to address social problems in the United States through policy change. The policy process is inherently a political one. Understanding who has the power to enact and implement a given policy and what their incentives and constraints are will help you develop a realistic strategy for pursuing your policy ideals and promoting social change. These skills also support critical policy analysis and evaluation.

Toward this end, the course is divided into three analytical “Modules.” The first module will address the institutions of American governance that structures the policy-making process at the federal, state and local levels. The second module provides a toolkit for analyzing and predicting the behavior of political actors that operate within our government entities, including electoral, bargaining, financial, and informational dynamics that together comprise the incentive structure of policy-makers. While examples are integrated into the first and second modules, the third module will focus exclusively on the application of your developed skills to a set of salient social problems. We will engage in analysis and evaluation of the policy status quo and discuss strategies for pursuing change. You will also have an opportunity to independently practice these methods by developing a policy proposal on a topic of your choosing over the course of the quarter.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the quarter, students should be able to

- identify the key actors in the policy-making process at the federal, state, and local levels of governance.
- characterize the constraints on these actors imposed through political institutions.
- understand the incentives that motivate these actors, including those driven by electoral, bargaining, financial, and informational dynamics and demands of associated stakeholders.
- evaluate the quality of information sources and evidence in support of policy goals.
- assess the success of a given policy at improving target outcomes.
- summarize key advancements, setbacks, and policy spillovers pertaining to several key issue areas in U.S. policy, including policing and justice reform, homelessness, and immigration, among others.

Homework and Grades

Course grades will be comprised of the following components: seven assignments, two quizzes, a policy project, an online final exam, and participation credit for section engagement and end-of-the-quarter course evaluations. See Table 1 for a breakdown of the weight each component contributes to your final course grade, and details about graded components below.

Table 1: Grade Component Breakdown

Component	Weight
Assignments	28%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Week 1: Federalist Papers Reflection (4%)• Week 2: Decentralization Reflection (4%)• Week 4: Gerrymandering Activity (4%)• Week 5: Policy Record of Your Representative Activity (4%)• Week 6: Congressional Bargaining Activity (4%)• Week 8: Design a Policy Evaluation Activity (4%)• Week 9: Evaluating Quality of Evidence and Information (4%)	
Quizzes	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Week 3: Quiz on American Political Institutions (10%)• Week 7: Quiz on Political Dynamics of Policy Process (10%)	
Policy Brief and Strategy	20%
Final Exam	20%
Participation	12%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section Participation and for-Credit Work (10%)• Course Evaluation Participation (2%)	
Total	100%

Grade Scale

Each component of the grade will be graded on a 100-point scale. At the end of the quarter the weighted-average will be computed over the components according to the weighting scheme in Table 1 above. This weighted average score for the quarter will be used to determine the final letter grade for the course using the mapping in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Range
A+	97 → 100
A	93 → 97
A-	90 → 93
B+	87 → 90
B	83 → 87
B-	80 → 83
C+	77 → 80
C	73 → 77
C-	70 → 73
D	60 → 70
F	0 → 60

Assignments: There are seven short assignments for this course that will be due on Sunday nights by 11:59 pm of the weeks they are assigned. These are meant to be relatively easy assignments to help you process lecture and reading material in a personal and concrete way. Sections will help you think about these assignments and in some cases you may complete them mostly in section, so it is important to attend sections. Therefore it is also important to sign up for a section that fits your schedule. If you must miss section you may still submit the assignment (though the assignment may need to be different for you if that assignment depends on an in-section activity).

Quizzes: There will be two multiple choice and short answer quizzes—one following Module 1 (online during Week 3, including material from Weeks 1-3) and a second one following Module 2 (online during Week 7, including material from Weeks 4-7). These will help you retain information from early in the quarter, and also help you prepare for the cumulative final exam. The quiz will be posted Friday at noon on the week it is assigned and will be due Sunday by 11:59 pm of the same week. There is no time limit besides the deadline.

Policy Proposal Development Project: The Policy Brief and Strategy project will be due Sunday of Week 10, by 11:59 pm. The project will take the form of a 6-8 page paper (standard 11-12 pt font, double spaced, section headings, 1-inch margins, works cited page that does not count toward the 6-8 page paper length). It should include the following five section headings: Problem, Objective and Measurement; Issue History and Status Quo; Actors, Interests and Constraints; Strategy; Evaluation. Throughout the quarter, there will be five for-credit activities (submission of these activities will contribute to section participation grades) to help you begin work on the project early. The project write-up will be much easier if you put effort into these for-credit activities throughout the quarter. I will post activity guidelines throughout the quarter and a detailed project description during Week 5.

Participation: In addition to for-credit activity submissions, you will get participation points by attending and engaging in weekly discussion sections. In addition, the University will circulate a link for anonymous course evaluations during Week 9 (due by the Saturday

following Week 10 by 8 am)—two points will be awarded toward your final grade for submitting the evaluation (answers are still anonymous).

Final Exam: The final will be a cumulative online short answer and multiple choice exam and you will have a 24-hour window to complete it at your leisure. I will post a study guide on CCLE during Week 10 and we will have an in-class review on Wednesday of Week 10.

Course Materials

Course Website: The course website address is <https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/21W-PUBAFF20-1>.

Lecture Slides: Lectures are mandatory, though if you cannot make the live lectures on Zoom you have the option to watch recordings of them I post to CCLE. I post these by the day after class and you should watch them during the same week as that lecture was held. I also post my lecture slides on CCLE after each lecture (by the next day)—however, the slides are outlines and are not meant to replace lecture. I will also provide some important tips and reminders in lecture that are not included in the slides.

Reading Materials: There is no required text-for-purchase for this class. I will post all of the reading materials on CCLE during the week preceding the lecture they are meant to accompany. All of the reading materials posted on CCLE are required reading, unless otherwise specified.

Discussion Sections: TA-led sections are meant to help you digest the lecture and reading materials interactively and assist you in completing assignments, as well as to aid you in preparing for quizzes, exams, and project activities. Section attendance is mandatory.

Office Hours and Appointments: My weekly (virtual) office hours are for questions regarding lectures, readings, section activities, and the policy project. You may sign up in advance for a 15-minute slot through a spreadsheet linked to CCLE. For one-on-one appointments for questions related to research or academic development, or for course-related questions for those who cannot make drop-in hours, please email me to set up an appointment. I will make every effort to respond quickly to inquiries, but if you have not heard from me by two business days from your first inquiry, feel free to follow-up with a gentle reminder.

Wellness Resources

This is an unusual quarter with a lot of new logistical, financial, temporal, and psychological demands placed on students (as well as faculty). Please be in touch with me or your TAs if/when you face personal demands that are affecting your ability to meet course requirements so we can brainstorm about how to support you in the course.

COVID-19:

- If you experience COVID-like **symptoms**, please call the UCLA Ashe Center COVID Hotline at (310) 206-6217 to get more information and resources.
- You can find up-to-date information on **campus services, resources, and policies** during COVID-19 at <https://covid-19.ucla.edu/information-for-students/>.
- Information about COVID-19 **testing** through Los Angeles County can be found at <https://covid19.lacounty.gov/testing/>.
- LA County provides information about **food assistance** for those facing food insecurity during COVID-19 here: <https://covid19.lacounty.gov/food/> and other resources for the vulnerable including some pertaining to **eviction prevention** here: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm>.

Other Wellness Resources:

- One number to keep in your phone contacts is UCLA **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** 24-hour number for mental health support (as well as scheduling during daytime hours): 310-825-0768. CAPS offers individual services as well as many support and self-care groups for students. Find out more about the services they offer at <https://www.counseling.ucla.edu/>.
- UCLA Office of Diversity and Inclusion resources for **race-related trauma**: <https://equity.ucla.edu/know/resources-for-racial-trauma/>. CAPS also offers individual and group counseling specifically oriented toward racial trauma (see above for phone and website). Finally, Community Care for Black Bruins is available through UCLA's Rise Center at <https://risecenter.ucla.edu/virtual-library/healing-support-for-black-bruins>.
- **Confidential legal counseling** is available for UCLA students through <https://www.studentlegal.ucla.edu/> including eviction prevention advice and consultations regarding the rights of students who are either documented or undocumented immigrants.
- Accommodations requests for **students with disabilities** are welcome and may be made through the Center for Accessible Education (CAE). Please see the CAE website, <https://www.cae.ucla.edu/>, for more information about how to request accommodations.
- UCLA students have access to online **guided meditations, peer support, and mindfulness resources** through UCLA's RISE program. Go to <https://risecenter.ucla.edu/visit-us> for more information.

Course Policies

Acceptable and Unacceptable Collaboration: Students are welcome and encouraged to discuss lectures, readings, section activities, and their own policy proposal development with each other outside of class or to study for exams jointly. However, in-section write-ups must be entirely your own and written in your own voice and diction. Quizzes and exams are non-collaborative and you may not consult others on these graded materials once they are posted. Section write-ups that are not original (all or in part) will be given a score of zero. Collaborating on quizzes or exams will result in a score of zero and will be reported to the University, which could result in an investigation. Individual project submissions must cite references when relevant (in any mainstream reference style—Chicago, APA, or MLA are common choices). Failure to cite ideas and/or directly copying the language of sources is plagiarism. Consequences will depend on the severity of the infraction, ranging from a zero on the assignment to a formal report to the University.

Inclusion Statement: One of the tremendous benefits of a UCLA education is the diversity of experiences, identities, and perspectives represented in our classrooms. Diversity fosters the type of rich, critical discourse that is fundamental to both high-quality education and research. This type of discourse is only possible when the campus community is not only diverse, but when all feel they can safely and respectfully be heard. My job is to do all that I can to create this type of safety for all students. Hate speech or other forms of identity-hostility will not be tolerated in the classroom, discussion boards, sections, or between students outside of class.

Grade Disputes: Grade disputes must be made in writing, should be made only after requesting feedback from the TA, and must make clear which question or portion of the assignment you believe deserved a better grade and, most importantly, why. Regrade requests will be granted under these circumstances, but assignments will be re-graded in their entirety, and by me instead of your TA. This could lead to an increase or decrease in total points allocated so please evaluate whether a regrade is likely to produce an improvement before requesting it.

Late Assignment Submission: Requests for deadline extensions due to extenuating circumstances need to be made in advance of the original deadline. Submissions after the deadline (with 2-hour grace period) will be marked down by a flat rate of 10% unless a deadline extension was requested and granted. It is still much better to submit late than not at all.

Email Response: Please allow up to 48-hours of response time to emails. I will make every effort to respond to email as soon as I am able. If you have not received a response within 48-hours, feel free to send a follow-up. This means last minute questions shortly before deadlines may not receive a response before the deadline.

Course Structure and Due Dates

Module 1: The American Political System

Week 1

Lecture 1.1: The Logic of American Political Institutions (Mon, Jan 4)

Lecture 1.2: Congress and the Presidency (Wed, Jan 6)

Week 1 Reading

◦ **Required:**

- ▷ The Constitution.
- ▷ The Federalist Papers, No. 10
- ▷ The Federalist Papers, No. 51

◦ **Optional:**

- ▷ Hannah-Jones. “America Wasn’t a Democracy until Black Americans Made It One.” *New York Times Magazine*. 1619 Project.

Week 1 Due Dates

- Federalist Papers Reflection (Sunday, Jan 10, by 11:59 pm)

Week 2

Lecture 2.1: Agencies and Regulatory Bodies (Mon, Jan 11)

Lecture 2.2: Dynamics of Federalism (Wed, Jan 13)

Week 2 Reading

◦ **Required:**

- ▷ Gordon, Sarah, Nicole Huberfeld, and David Jones. 2020. “What Federalism Means for the U.S. Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019.” *Journal of the American Medical Association*.
- ▷ McGovern, Shannon. 2011. “A New Model for States as Laboratories for Reform: How Federalism Informs Education Policy.” *New York University Law Review* 86: p. 1519-1555.

Week 2 Due Dates

- Decentralization Reflection (Sunday, Jan 17, by 11:59 pm)
- Preliminary Sign-Up (participation credit only) for Social Issue for Policy Brief and Strategy

Week 3

Lecture 3.1: NO CLASS—M.L.K., Jr. Day (Mon, Jan 18)

Lecture 3.2: The U.S. Judiciary System(s) (Wed, Jan 20)

Week 3 Reading

- **Required:**
 - ▷ Spohn, Cassia. 2018. “Reflections on the Exercise of Prosecutorial Discretion 50 Years after Publication of *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*.” *Criminology and Public Policy* 17 (2): p. 321-340.
 - ▷ Shatz, Steven, Glenn Pierce, and Michael Radelet. 2020. “Race, Ethnicity, and the Death Penalty in San Diego County: The Predictable Consequences of Excessive Discretion.” *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 51 (3): p. 1072-1100.
- **Optional:**
 - ▷ Lynch, Mona. 2018. “Prosecutorial Discretion, Drug Case Selection, and Inequality in Federal Court.” *Justice Quarterly* 35 (7): p. 1309-1336.

Week 3 Due Dates

- Quiz 1 (Sunday, Jan 24, by 11:59 pm)

Module 2: Politics of Policy-Making Analytical Toolkit

Week 4

Lecture 4.1: Electoral Constituencies (Mon, Jan 25)

Lecture 4.2: Enfranchisement, Turnout and Voter Suppression (Wed, Jan 27)

Week 4 Reading

- **Required:**

- ▷ Wines, Michael. “What is Gerrymandering? And Why Did the Supreme Court Rule on It?” *The New York Times*, June 27, 2019.
- ▷ Henderson, Tim. “Counting Prison Inmates Differently Could Shift Political Power to Cities.” *Stateline* (PEW), January 2, 2019.
- ▷ Liptak, Adam. “Justices Put Off Ruling on Trump Plan for Unauthorized Immigrants and Census.” *New York Times*, December 18, 2020.

- **Optional:**

- ▷ Hajnal, Lajevardi, and Nielson. 2017. “Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes.” *The Journal of Politics* 79 (2): 363-379. (skim for main points)

Week 4 Due Dates

- Gerrymandering Activity (Sunday, Jan 31, by 11:59 pm)
- Policy Objective (participation credit only) for Policy Brief and Strategy

Week 5

Lecture 5.1: Public Opinion and Voting Behavior (Mon, Feb 1)

Lecture 5.2: Electoral and Extra-Electoral Dynamics (Mon, Feb 3)

Week 5 Reading

- **Required:**

- ▷ Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes. 1999. “Elections and Representation.” In *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Cambridge University Press.
- ▷ Healy, Andrew, and Neil Malhorta. 2009. “Myopic Voters and Natural Disaster Policy.” *American Political Science Review* 100 (3): p. 387-406. (skim for main points)

- **Optional:**

- ▷ Arceneaux, Kevin. 2002. “Direct Democracy and the Link between Public Opinion and State Abortion Policy.” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 2 (4): p. 372-387.

Week 5 Due Dates

- Policy Record of Your Representative Activity (Sunday, February 7, by 11:59 pm)
- Sources for Issue History of Social Issue (participation credit only) for Policy Brief and Strategy

Week 6

Lecture 6.1: Organized Interests and Lobbying (Mon, Feb 8)

Lecture 6.2: Partisan Politics and Congressional Bargaining (Wed, Feb 10)

Week 6 Reading

- **Required:**
 - ▷ Finnegan, William. “How Police Unions Fight Reform.” *The New Yorker Magazine*, July 27, 2020.
 - ▷ Wouters, Olivier. 2020. “Lobbying Expenditures and Campaign Contributions by the Pharmaceutical and Health Product Industry in the United States, 1999-2018.” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 180 (5): p.688-697.
 - ▷ Fiorina, Morris. “Gridlock Is Bad. The Alternative Is Worse.” *The Washington Post*, February 25, 2014.

Week 6 Due Dates

- Congressional Bargaining Activity (Sunday, February 14, by 11:59 pm)
- Issue History Outline (participation credit only) for Policy Brief and Strategy

Week 7

Lecture 7.1: NO CLASS—President’s Day (Mon, Feb 15)

Lecture 7.2: Media, Misinformation and Social Media (Wed, Feb 17)

Week 7 Reading

- **Required:**
 - ▷ Meserole, Chris. “How Information Spreads on Social Media—And What to Do About It.” Brookings Institute, May 9, 2018.
 - ▷ Roberts, Jessica. 2019. “#280 Characters of Legal Trouble: Trump, Twitter, and the Presidential Records Act, 2019.” *University of Illinois Journal of Law, Technology and Policy* 2: p. 489-514.

- **Optional:**

- ▷ Wenner Moyer, Melinda. “People Drawn to Conspiracy Theories Share a Cluster of Psychological Features.” *Scientific American*, March 1, 2019.

Week 7 Due Dates

- Quiz 2 (Sunday, Feb 21, by 11:59 pm)

Module 3: Issue Areas and Applied Policy Analysis

Week 8

Lecture 8.1: Evaluating Policy Success (Mon, Feb 22)

Lecture 8.2: Applications in California Criminal Justice (Wed, Feb 24)

Week 8 Reading

- **Required:**

- ▷ Jones, Harry. “A Guide To Monitoring and Evaluating Policy Influence.” Overseas Development Institute, February, 2011.
- ▷ Cao, Lan. 2019. “Made in the USA: Race, Trade, and Prison Labor.” *New York University Review of Law and Social Change* 43 (1): p. 1-58.

Week 8 Due Dates

- Design a Policy Evaluation Activity (Sunday, February 28, by 11:59 pm)
- Key Actors’ and Interest Groups’ Motivations and Procedural Constraints (participation credit only) for Policy Brief and Strategy

Week 9

Lecture 9.1: Applications to LBGTQ+ Rights and Access (Mon, March 1)

Lecture 9.2: Applications in Housing and Homelessness (Wed, March 3)

Week 9 Reading

- **Required:**

- ▷ Simmons-Duffin, Selena. “Transgender Health Provisions Reversed by Trump Administration.” NPR, June 12, 2020.

- ▷ Chinchilla, Melissa, and Sonya Gabrielian. 2019. “Stemming the Rise of Latinx Homelessness: Lessons from Los Angeles County.” *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*.
- ▷ Henwood, Benjamin, and Deborah Padgett. 2019. “Homelessness in Los Angeles and New York City: A Tale of Two Cities.” In *Homelessness Prevention and Intervention in Social Work*. Springer.

Week 9 Due Dates

- Evaluating Quality of Evidence and Information (Sunday, March 7, by 11:59 pm)

Week 10

Lecture 10.1: Applications in Immigration Policy (Mon, March 8)

Lecture 10.2: Synthesis and Review (Wed, March 10)

Week 9 Reading

- **Required:**

- ▷ Dickerson, Caitlin. “A Private Security Company Is Detaining Migrant Children at Hotels.” *The New York Times* August 16, 2020.
- ▷ Getrich, Christina, et al. 2019. “Navigating a Fragmented Health Care Landscape: DACA Recipients’ Shifting Access to Health Care.” *Social Science and Medicine* 223: p. 8-15.

- **Optional:**

- ▷ Pham, Huyen. 2020. “Proposition 187 and the Legacy of Its Law Enforcement Provisions.” *UC Davis Law Review* 53 (4): p. 1957-1982.

Week 10 Due Dates

- Policy Proposal and Strategy Brief (Sunday, March 14, by 11:59 pm)

Finals Week

Final Exam opens Thursday, March 18 at 8 am (closes Thursday, March 18, at 11:59 pm)