

**ECONOMICS 175: PUBLIC POLICY AND THE CALIFORNIA POLITICAL ECONOMY**  
**University of California Center Sacramento (UCCS)**  
**SYLLABUS: SUMMER 2009**

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**Class meeting times and place:**

Class-only sessions: Friday 9:00 AM-11:30 AM, UCCS Conference Room (mandatory for policy track students)  
Public seminars for California policy-makers: Thurs. & Fri., 12-1:30 PM (selective scholar intern attendance)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course develops a systematic understanding of policy analysis, helps students develop their own advanced policy analysis on a California-related policy issue, and analyzes several key policy challenges that globalization poses for California's political economy. The challenges we will study include the following: first, the chronic-growth, boom-bust structure of California's economy, and its link to the ongoing California budget crisis; second, California's health-care policy crisis and policy options; third, the subprime-lending and foreclosure crisis; fourth, the challenge of rethinking the California educational system; fifth, California's hunger and jobs crisis.

Two kinds of class sessions will be held. First, there will be mandatory classes for all policy-track students; these will (with one or two exceptions) be held on Friday mornings, 9:00-11:30 AM. Second, a number of 90-minute public seminars will be held at UCCS during the summer months, usually on Thursdays and Fridays at noon. These are on topics of central interest to California policy-makers, and guests at these events total between 30 and 80. These sessions are organized by theme; this summer, we will have some sessions on environmental policy, health policy, the budget crisis, and K-12 education.

The course has four goals for students' educational development: first, building skills in designing and writing research-based policy analyses; second, providing opportunities to learn to make professional oral presentations; third, building knowledge about California policy issues; fourth, learning how to think systematically about complex public-policy problems.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class sessions and seminars, to schedule and attend tutorial sessions, to complete several worksheet assignments, and to complete step-by-step assignments linked to their policy analyses. Points in this course will be awarded as follows:

Attendance and participation:	7.5%	First outline of research topic	4%
Meetings with instructors:	6%	Preliminary oral presentation	2.5%
Worksheets:	12%	First complete draft	15%
Formal oral presentation(s)	13%	Final draft	40%

**DETAILS:** Grading of the **first complete draft** is based on three component scores: completeness (5%), analytical depth (5%), responsiveness to instructions (5%). The score for the **formal oral presentation(s)** includes component scores as follows: preparation, 4%; presentation, 3%; content, 4%; discussant role for another classmate, 2%.

The **final policy research paper** should contain 5-8,000 words (16-26 pages double-spaced). The draft is graded based on these elements: executive summary, 5%; strength of argument, 5%, use of appropriate and compelling evidence, 7.5%, legislative history, 5%, policy recommendations, 5%, research resources, 7.5%, analytical depth, 5%.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

Eugene Bardach, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis. 2nd Edition*. CQ Press, 2005. Pb. (ISBN 1568 0292 33)  
Peter Schrag, *California: America's High-Stakes Experiment*. Univ. of CA Press, 2006. (ISBN: 0520244362)  
Sasha Abramsky, *Breadline USA: The Hidden Scandal of American Hunger and How to Fix It*. Polipoint Press, 2009 (ISBN-13: 978-0981709116)

## **COURSE & MEETING SCHEDULE (Friday morning sessions only; public seminars are TBD)**

Week 1 (June 15-19):

Wednesday, 4:00 PM – Gary welcomes class, explains the syllabus

Friday, 9:00 – 11:30 Class 1, policy track (Gary, Art, Sasha present)

Week 2: (June 22-26)

Monday-Wednesday, mandatory meetings of students with Gary, Art, Sasha, to be scheduled

Friday, 9-11:30 Class 2, policy track (Gary, Art)

Week 3: (June 29-July 3)

Monday-Wednesday, mandatory meetings of students with Gary, Art, to be scheduled

Thursday, July 2, 3-5:30 PM, Class 3 (Art)

Friday, July 3, holiday

Week 4: (July 6-10)

Monday-Thursday, meetings of students with Gary, Art, to be scheduled

Friday, July 10, Class 4 (Art-Gary) 9-noon session, “4-minute” topic presentations by students

Week 5: (July 13-17)

Friday, July 17, Class 5 (Speaker TBD), 9-11:30 AM, “The ABCs of Health Care Reform in California: Past, Present, Future” Students will be asked to prepare a VSP (very short paper) on a reading selected by the speaker, and to bring this to class.

Week 6: (July 20-24)

Friday, July 24, Class 6 (V. John White, Exec. Director, CEERT), 9-11:30 AM, “The ABCs of Environmental Reform in California: Past, Present, and Future” A VSP will be required for this class as well.

Week 7: (July 27-31)

Friday, July 31, Class 7 (Sasha Abramsky), 9-11:30 AM, “Poverty and Hunger in California, Part I” VSP may be required for this class or for class 9, based on Sasha’s new book.

Week 8: (August 3-7)

Monday, August 3, 5 PM, First draft of policy-research papers is due.

Friday, August 7, Class 8 (Art, Gary, Sasha), 9-11:30 AM Students’ topic-group dialogues about paper drafts

Week 9: (August 10-14)

Friday, August 14, Class 9 (Sasha Abramsky), 9-11:30 AM, “Poverty and Hunger in California, Part II”

Week 10: (August 17-21)

Friday, August 21, Class 10 (Sasha, Art, Gary), 9-11:30 AM, Brainstorming/finetuning class

Week 11: (August 24-28)

Monday-Wednesday (if needed), August 24-26, 9 AM-5 PM Final policy-paper presentations

Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 5 PM, final drafts of policy papers due