

POSC 395: Fall 2023
DIRECTED GOVERNMENT & POLITICAL LEADERSHIP
California Policy Research Internship Program

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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Friday, September 8, by 5pm:

Students must register for POSC 395 on WebReg (D-Clearance required prior to registration)

Friday, October 13, by 5pm:

First political event write-up must be submitted on Turnitin on or before this date. ***Write-ups are due within one week of event.***

Thursday, November 30 (Time TBD):

Final presentations to representatives of partner organization, presentation times are TBD.

Monday, December 11 by 12pm:

Submit final policy report
Second political event write-up

EVENT REQUIREMENTS

All Students ***Must Attend***:

- Bi-monthly meetings with Mr. Akhavan and Mr. Domond
- Mid-semester exchange with partnerships
- 2 Unruh Institute Political Events (2-page write-up is due within one week of each event)
- 2 of the Course Activities (Listed on Page 4)
- 1 one-on-one meeting with Mr. Akhavan to discuss final policy report

Please note, Political Events and Course Activities are independent of one another and are not interchangeable

1. Course Description

Students will take part in a team-based research project where they will work to develop potential solutions in their respective policy areas by conducting original fieldwork, interviewing policy experts, reviewing academic and policy reports, and using other forms of primary and secondary research. At the conclusion of the internship, each group will present their final product to representatives of their partner organization.

2. Internship Hours per Units of Credit

Units/Credits	2	3	4
Suggested weekly hours	8	12	16
Total hours at internship	100	150	200

3. Meetings and Communication with Partnership Organization

An introductory meeting between students and representatives of their partner organization will take place in the beginning of the semester. The Mid-Semester Exchange in which students will share research progress with their partner organization will take place midway through the semester. Each policy group will deliver their final product to representatives of their partner organization. Students should stay in close contact with their partner organization throughout the semester, but are required to include the Internship Director and Student Programming Manager in any communication with them.

4. Meetings and Communication with Unruh Staff

Groups will meet with the Internship Director and Student Programming Manager on-campus twice a month. In these meetings, interns are expected to bring a **1 to 2-page summary** of their research **(to be submitted on Turnitin before the start of the meeting)** and share research progress as an individual and as a group. Mr. Akhavan will be in contact with you throughout the semester via the Blackboard system, and Blackboard will have the most updated announcements regarding the course.

Student groups will present their final product to the Unruh staff and partner organization before the final presentations. The specific date and time is dependent upon the students' schedules. If a student does not adequately prepare for the run-through presentations, as determined by Mr. Akhavan and Mr. Domond, then he/she may not be permitted to present before their partner(s). Alternative arrangements will be made for students to give their final presentation.

You are encouraged to meet with your policy team at least once a week. The organization of these meetings will be left to group members.

5. Grading

Course grades will be based on satisfactory completion of the required number of hours at the internship, the supervisor's evaluation of your performance, and fulfilling other coursework requirements. The final grade for the course will be based on:

Bi-Monthly Evaluation	25%
Final Policy Presentation	20%
Final Research Project	35%
Event Write Ups	10%
Course Activities	10%

*NOTE: The Bi-Monthly Evaluation will comprise of attendance at all meetings,, submission of bi-monthly write-ups and participation during all meetings, partner and bi-monthly alike.

6. Late Assignments

All late papers will be marked down by 5 points for each day they are late. Papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for every 10 hours of research that the student is short of the required 100 hours).

7. Course Activities

The following list of course activities have been carefully organized with the intention of enhancing each student's career development skills. These activities will bring in experts in the corresponding fields to give students an opportunity to gain life-long skills in each category.

All students, including students that have previously taken POSC 395 in prior semesters, are required to attend two of the following course activities of their choosing. Students who

would like to attend more than two course activities may do so for personal benefit, but will not receive any extra credit or additional course recognition.

Registration for all course activities is first-come, first-serve. Students will receive an email no more than a week in advance of each course activity with information on how to register for each. Please note that the list below is only accurate as of the start of the semester, and due to the very nature of the course activities, is subject to change due to unforeseen conflicts for our political professionals. All changes will be communicated in writing as expediently as possible, and alternate course activities will be offered in the event of a cancellation.

Course Activities for the Fall 2023 Semester:

The following list of course activities have been carefully organized with the intention of enhancing each student's career development skills. These activities will bring in experts in the corresponding fields to give students an opportunity to gain life-long skills in each category.

- **All students, including students who have previously taken POSC 395/POSC 395 (Research) in a prior semester(s), are required to attend two of the following course activities of their choosing. Students who would like to attend more than two course activities may do so for personal benefit, but will not receive any extra credit or additional course recognition.**

1. **American Democracy Summit**

Sep. 27-20, (in-person at The Reef in downtown LA)

Come learn about political reforms from the changemakers pushing for them. This summit costs \$325 per ticket. Mr. Akhavan will secure complimentary tickets for you to attend.

Transportation is on your own. The speakers are well-known politicians and celebrities. Bring your questions and get ready to mingle and be inspired. This summit has never been held in LA. It is going to be a big deal. Details at <https://americandemocracysummit.org/>

Event RSVP: Required

2. **The Unify Challenge College Bowl**

Sep. 26 – Oct. 5 (virtual)

The Unify Challenge College Bowl is a face-to-face video conversation between students who attend different colleges and may have different political orientations, live in different parts of the country, and have different life experiences. Throughout this exercise, students will discuss a wide array of issues and work at reaching common ground.

Event RSVP: Required

3. **Mentoring Coffee Talks with our Fellows & VIP Guests**

(in person), see schedule below

Throughout the semester, students can sign-up to participate in small group mentoring session(s) with our CPF fellows who work in the field of politics. You will hear first-hand about various types of jobs within politics and how one enters into such fields.

Event RSVP: Required

FELLOWS

Addisu Demissie – Democratic political campaign consultant: Date + Time TBD

Arnon Mishkin – Fox News election analyst: Date + Time TBD

Mike Schmuhl – Campaign manager, Buttigieg 2020: Date + Time TBD

Betty Yee – Former California State Controller: Date + Time TBD

VIP GUESTS

Sam Dorn – Political communications expert: Date + Time TBD

Christian Grose – USC professor and redistricting expert: Date + Time TBD

7. **Attending Political Events and Write-Ups**

You are required to attend at least two (2) politically-focused events during the Fall and turn in a 2–page write-up for each event. Your write-up **MUST** follow the memorandum format, an example of which is attached to the syllabi. ***Please submit your write-up on Blackboard within one week of the event.*** Your write-up should briefly describe the event, including what was the event, who spoke, at least one page on what was said and at least half page on whether you agree or disagree on what was said and why. An example MEMO is at the end of this syllabi. The first write-up is due no later than **Friday, October 13, by 5pm (PST)**.

The Final Written Policy Report & Presentation

You are required to complete a writing assignment in which you analyze your designated area of research and make policy recommendations.

Final written projects should be 8-15 pages (depending on units, see below) and must include substantial *scholarly research*, including consideration of relevant literature. Please discuss your project in detail with the Internship Director and Student Programming Director throughout the course of the semester.

A) Policy Presentation: Thursday, November 30 (time “TBD”):

Presentations will be one hour in length comprised of a 30-minute presentation to representatives of your partner organization followed by a 30-minute Q&A session. Exact date and time will be set according to students and partner’s schedules at the mid-semester partner exchange.

B) Written Policy Report: Monday, December 11, by 12pm:

The final written component should be in the format of an 8 to 15-page policy report. Papers must be typed and double-spaced in 12-point font with 1" margins. Paper/project length is dependent on the number of credits/units earned:

- 2 units: 8-10 pages
- 3 units: 10-12 pages
- 4 units: 12-15 pages

Students' papers will receive 5-point deductions for failing to meet the minimum page length, failure to include a "Work Cited" page and 5 points for every day late. Note: You must use in-text (parenthetical) citations along with your work-cited page. Only include citations in work cited that are used in the paper. **Students are required to submit their final papers on Blackboard through the "Turnitin" system by the deadline.**

8. Academic Integrity

Because the completion of the internship is a major part of this course, you **MUST** work all of the hours listed on your internship agreement form. All written assignments for this class must be your original work, completed only to fulfill the requirements of this course. Sources must be cited accurately and completely. You may **not** use AI assistance such as Chat GPT for research or writing.

NOTE ON "RECYCLING PAPERS": Your paper/project **MUST** be original work done for this class and related to your internship. You may not re-use another student's paper, or your own paper from a previous course or a course in which you are currently enrolled. Please refer to the SCampus chapter on "University Student Conduct Code" (scampus.usc.edu/university-student-conduct-code) or contact the Internship Coordinator if you have any questions.

*Please note POSC 395: Directed Government and Political Leadership Syllabus is not a binding contract. Mr. Akhavan has the discretion to make changes as deemed necessary.

MEMORANDUM

FROM: **(Your name)**

SUBJECT: California Water: Planning for a Better Future **(Memo/Event topic/Event Participants)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to understand how climate change, population growth, long droughts, and severe floods have created stark regional differences in availability and demand of water throughout California. Consequently, this means the State might have to make inconvenient legal and political changes in order to reach effective solutions.

Background (This section should include general event details such as who spoke at the event, what was the general topic of the panel, etc...)

The event was sponsored by the California Water Project and participants included: John Jones, Jane Smith and Sam Hadley. Hadley began by suggesting the biggest challenge behind California's water system is the issue of instability in the Delta, which is considered to be the hub of California's water supply. The instability issue with the Delta comes from weak levees, damaged by earthquakes, rising sea levels as well as climate change and the collapse of native fish species (creating cutbacks for pumping water). Jones noted California is fortunate enough to have many tools to be able to cope with the challenges facing its water system, because the economy continues to prosper. . . .

Tools to Combat Water Scarcity (This section should be a general summary of what was learned at the event, at least 1 page):

The following targeted reforms are believed to be the key to seeing fruitful changes in water management in California so that our state will be able to overcome its current challenges:

- **Bay Delta Conservation Plan**

The construction of two tunnels, upstream on the Sacramento River, and move the tapped water to underneath the Delta, where pumping occurs. The results would be having fewer native fish trapped in the pumps and it would become easier to restore more natural water flow in the Delta.

- **Governance and Finance Solution**

While the state's economy will benefit from an improved quality and supply of water and taxpayers are willing to support the new required infrastructure, moving to more locally based funding will help to fill funding gaps in water management efforts.

- **New Water Efficiency Options**

Options such as using recycled water or water marketing (the sale or leasing of water) will provide more incentives to conserve.

- **Underground Storage**

Storing underground can be a cost-effective way to save water for drought years, which will become more important with climate change.

Analysis (This section should be your analysis of the event - do you agree or disagree with the topic? Your analysis must be at least ½ page):

While we have laid out some very thought-provoking solutions to the issue of California water management, only through policy reform and new investments will these solutions see the face of reality. The Bay Delta Conservation Plan, while a good concept, will require solid policies on finance, governance, and mitigation for the residents of the Delta to be in full support. In addition, the state of California always seems to face issues of funding. In order to truly find a solution to this issue, we will need to have more local funding, which requires making a solid case to the voters. I agree with Hadley's comments on the reasons for the reason California has so many water issues, however, I believe that he overlooks one key factor Jones correctly acknowledges that California possesses many solutions to deal with these issues. However, I

would have liked Jones to offer greater specific solutions rather than simply relying on the strength of the California economy as a means of resolving this significant problem. Overall, there will need to be a more active policy approach to preserving California's ecosystem.