

POL 109: Policy Agenda Setting

University of California, Davis

Winter 2017
M, W 8:00–9:50am
Olson 206

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This course is about the politics of public policy, agenda setting, and issue framing. As a class, we will develop a more sophisticated understanding of these concepts throughout the quarter. But in a nutshell, the term “agenda setting” refers to the process by which *attention* (in this case, mainly the attention of the U.S. government, media, and public) gets *allocated* across policy issues (gas prices, immigration, abortion, war, the spotted owl, and so on). The term “issue framing” refers to the process by which a specific issue is defined from one perspective (at the necessary neglect of alternative perspectives). We will cast a broad eye on the major policy activities of the U.S. federal government, focusing specifically on how issues rise and fall on the national political agendas over time and how these issues are framed.

Two research assignments will require you to make extensive use of resources available on the Policy Agendas Project website <www.policyagendas.org>, which allows users to trace governmental and public attention to different policy topics over time. I encourage you to use these assignments as opportunities to develop your skills in social science research as well as your writing. This is an upper division class, so be prepared to work hard (but hopefully we’ll have some fun along the way too).

Most classes will include lectures and slide-based presentations, but the course is also designed to allow for significant student questioning and discussion. Regardless of the size of the class, I expect participation. So come to class ready to discuss things; if things are confusing, come with questions. If you do not participate of your own initiative, be prepared to be called on in class. The more you participate in discussion, the better the class will be and the easier it will be for you to learn more and, ultimately, earn a better grade. Plus, it’s my habit to include questions on exams that can only be answered by people who attended—and participated in—each class. In other words, be forewarned that in order to do well on assignments and exams, you need *to engage actively* the readings and you need *to engage actively* the lectures and class discussion. Neither one activity is sufficient on its own.

A syllabus is like a contract, so I've tried to specify lots of details in the document to follow, sometimes in relatively harsh language. Don't be turned off. We'll read a wide variety of very interesting things and you'll learn a lot in this class. I am excited to teach it and am looking forward to each week of what follows. I certainly hope it will be one of the best courses you ever take.

Class Expectations

Please abide by the following classroom etiquette. I have developed this set of expectations not to be Draconian, but because outlining these guidelines at the beginning of every course helps me focus my time and attention less on logistical issues and more on teaching. I find the material I teach tremendously exciting, and I love teaching it.

SmartSite

All information for the course can be accessed on the UC Davis SmartSite web page for this course. Go to <<https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu>> and log in, then select the tab for POL 109. Please do not email questions until you have double-checked these resources documents for the answer.

I welcome email questions and comments, as do TAs. When you email me or a TA, you should compose your email as you would any piece of professional correspondence. Specifically:

- So that I know which course you are emailing about, be sure to include POL109 below your name AND in the subject line of the email.
- Begin the email with a salutation (e.g., "Dear Professor Boydston," "Hi Dr. Boydston"). It is ridiculous to start a professional email without a salutation. "Hey" does not count.
- Use a capital letter to start the first word of each sentence and every proper noun.
- Use complete sentences, correct spelling and correct punctuation. Texting language is for texting. Professional emails require full use of the English language, which (by the way) is a lovely language.
- Be courteous and respectful.
- Sign off with "Sincerely," or "Best," or the equivalent, and below this line write your first and last name in your first email and then just your first name thereafter, followed by POL109.

Email etiquette applies to emails you send to a TA as well as those you send to me; be conscientious. We will respond to your emails as quickly as possible, but please do not expect a quick response to email sent on weekends or after 5pm on any day. That said, remember that the TA(s) and I really are very excited to hear your questions and thoughts about the class or related topics.

Lecture Slides

Power point slides will be available on SmartSite, usually by the morning of a given lecture. Feel free to print out the slides prior to class. Given that I make these slides available for you to download, I do not guarantee that I will slow down or stop my lecture to allow you to copy down the material on the slide. However, I am always happy to slow down, repeat myself, or explain an idea further if you have questions about the material. Be warned that the material on the slides usually does not include all the important information we will cover in class. The slides are designed to help structure your note taking and studying—not to replace it. Thus, I encourage you to attend class each day. And if you miss a class I encourage you to talk with a fellow student to get filled in on what you missed and, of course, ask me and/or the TA(s) if you have questions. Moreover, the assigned readings are required, even if we do not discuss them in detail in class.

Desk Name Tag (yep, you read that correctly!)

Even in large lecture classes, I try to foster as much class discussion as possible. Toward that aim, I ask that you place a “desk name tag” on the desk in front of you in class each day. Although attendance will rarely be taken, showing up to class with your desk name tag will help your participation grade. The best way to make this name tag is to take a 8½ x 11 inch piece of construction paper or lightweight cardboard, fold it in half lengthwise (so it’s now 4¼ x 11 inches), and write your name on one side so that your name is upright when you put the folded piece of paper like a tent on the desk in front of you. Please write your full name (**FIRST AND LAST**—using whatever name you prefer to be called as your first name) in **LARGE, VERY DARK, BOLD** letters.

Laptops and Other Electronics

I love my laptop. And my phone. And my tablet. And I understand how tempting it can be to look at one’s electronic devices instead of the person at the front of the room. To conquer this temptation, I ask that you resort to old-school pen-and-paper notetaking. In other words, do **NOT** use your laptop (or iPad or smartphone or any other electronic device) in class. If you have a documented learning disorder that is helped by typing your notes, feel free to talk with me and I will be happy to consider an exception (although it doesn’t mean I’ll grant one). Finally, just like at the movies, please silence your phones.

Talking in Class

I hope you will talk in class (a lot!) to facilitate rich class discussions. When you talk in class, please talk **LOUDLY** so that others can hear you. If you have something to say that you do not want everyone to hear then please—for the love of Jiminy Cricket—resist the urge to talk to your neighbor during class and say it after class instead.

Required Books (available at the campus bookstore, in new or used form on the internet, and on reserve in the library)

(S) Schattschneider, E. E. 1975. *The Semisovereign People: A Realist’s View of Democracy in America*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth. ISBN: 978-0030133664

(B&J) Baumgartner, Frank R. and Bryan D. Jones. 2009. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 978-0226039534

(B,DB&B) Baumgartner, Frank R., Suzanna L. De Boef, and Amber E. Boydstun. 2008. *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0521715249

Note: I am the co-author of one of the required books. Having to buy one of your professor’s books borders on the obnoxious, I know; sorry about that. However, I don’t mind criticism, so feel free to rip it apart if you don’t like it. By the nature of the course though, you’ll see that the book links closely with our topics of discussion. I do receive (modest) royalties on the book, and I will refund that amount to students registered in the class who attend the final exam. My royalties are about 10 cents per book... don’t spend it all in one place.

Optional Books

(K&F) Kraft, Michael E. and Scott Furlong. 2010. *Public Policy: Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. 3rd Edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

(CQ) Selections from CQ Researcher. 2009. *Issues for Debate in American Public Policy*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Also Required: TopHat Account

In order to help you get the most out of this class, we will be using a website called TopHat <<https://tophat.com/>> that allows me to ask you questions about your understanding of the material during lectures—in turn allowing you to score participation points! The cost is \$16, and I know that's a lot of money on top of your book purchases. But I hope the added engagement it will provide will make it worth it.

Also Required: Project Folder

You will need a folder with pockets (you know, the kind with Batman or Care Bears or the like on the front cover) that you will use to store your two research project assignments. When you submit the hard copy version of your second assignment (in addition to submitting it on SmartSite), you will need to include the graded hard copy of the first assignment as well.

Grading

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Participation | 10% |
| Exam I | 25% |
| Exam II (Cumulative) | 25% |
| Research Assignment #1 | 20% |
| <u>Research Assignment #2</u> | <u>20%</u> |
| Total: | 100% |
| <i>Extra Credit: Experiment Participation</i> | <i>1%</i> |

All items listed above are detailed below.

Grading will be performed as follows: The TA(s) and I work collaboratively to develop a grading system for all graded items. As for the actual grades assigned to you, the TA(s) alone are responsible, and their word on grades is final. Of course, they will consult with me throughout the grading process. But I will not override their grading decisions. After raw grades are compiled, final grades will be calculated based on a curve.

Participation

Your participation grade will be based on the overall effort you put into the class, including the effort you put into your research project assignments, your class attendance (with desk name tag—see above), and your participation in class discussions. Although attendance will only rarely be taken, it's amazing how quickly an instructor and TAs can differentiate the students who attend and participate from those who do not. Thus, do not assume that you will receive full marks for your participation grade

automatically; you must earn every point yourself. Come to class, participate in class discussions, earn a good participation grade, and get more out of the class. It's a win-win situation.

Beware—Everything's Fair Game for Quiz and Exam Questions

Three kinds of information may appear on online quizzes, the midterm exam, and the final exam:

- 1) Material from the readings, even if we do not discuss it in class
- 2) Material discussed in class, even if it is not covered in the readings
- 3) Skills and insights you develop in your research assignments, even if they are not covered in the readings or explicitly discussed in class

Exams I and II

Both the exams are closed-note and must be completed independently. Any attempt to smuggle in answers or copy from another student will constitute a violation of academic integrity.

Short of extraordinary circumstances, you will not be allowed to makeup an exam. If you have planned circumstances that you believe qualify as extraordinary (e.g., a non-flexible academic commitment), you must contact me regarding these circumstances at least two weeks in advance of the exam in question. Otherwise, you will only be allowed to make up an exam in the event of extreme and unpredictable circumstances (e.g., a hospitalization or a sudden death in the family) and then only if you provide documentation that verifies—to my personal level of satisfaction—the circumstances that made it impossible for you to take the exam as scheduled. In the event that you do take a makeup exam, be advised that in addition to receiving a different version of the written exam you would have received in class, you may also be required to complete additional essay questions and/or answer oral exam questions that will count toward your make-up exam grade.

Research Assignments

Two times throughout the quarter, you will be required to hand in a detailed assignment based on your analysis of data from the Policy Agendas Project web site <www.policyagendas.org> as well as additional data of your choosing. Each assignment is due by the beginning of class for that day—**whether or not you attend class**—both as a hard copy you will hand in to the TA(s) and as an electronic document you will upload to the UC Davis SmartSite web page for this course (go to <<https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu>> and log in, select the tab for POL 109). Note that submitting an electronic copy, while required, is not a substitute for submitting a hard copy. **If EITHER the electronic copy OR the hard copy is late, the assignment is late.** When you submit the hard copy of your second assignment, you must submit it in a folder also containing the graded hard copy of your first assignment so that the TA(s) can track the progress you have made.

You must base both assignments on the same policy topic (e.g., energy, education, health care, defense). You will detail the development of your topic from 1947 to present using the Policy Agendas Project datasets as the main sources for your analysis. After identifying specific puzzles related to your topic, you will review relevant academic literature on your topic and analyze the development of your topic over time using the concepts of agenda setting you will learn about in class. By the end of the quarter, you should be nothing less than an expert on your topic. Complete descriptions of expectations for both assignments will be posted on SmartSite.

If you want, you can work with one other student on your research assignments, with the same expectations of quality/quantity as if you worked on your own. If you go this route, both students listed on the assignment will receive the same grade, no matter what the circumstances. So choose your collaborator wisely (or work on your own).

Note that in today's age of external hard drives and cloud services like Box and Dropbox, there's no excuse for not having your work backed up. If your computer crashes / is stolen / becomes self-aware the week your assignment is due, I will feel very bad for you, but I will not grant an extension. You are responsible for staying in touch with the TA(s) and with me throughout the quarter about your progress on your research project, especially if you experience any difficulties.

Extra Credit Experiment

At some point in the quarter, you will be invited to participate in a social science experiment conducted in the Department of Political Science. It usually takes only about 15 minutes to participate in this kind of experiment, and doing so offers a neat way of seeing behind the scenes of the social science research that you will read about in this and other classes. Your responses in this experiment are completely anonymous. You will receive 1% extra credit on your final grade simply for showing up and participating. More information about this opportunity will be provided in class.

Late Assignments

Research assignments are due (both as a hard copy and as an uploaded electronic document to SmartSite) at the beginning of class on the due date. Period. If you know you are going to miss class when an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to upload your electronic document and to get the hard copy of your assignment to the TA(s) (handed to them in person or time stamped in the Dept. of Political Science main office) before class time. In the absence of extreme circumstances (documented to my personal level of satisfaction), assignments turned in after the beginning of class on the due date will be accepted but marked down five percentage points (i.e., one half letter grade) for each 24 hours or portion thereof after the deadline, including weekends, holidays, school breaks, etc. For example, an assignment due Monday at 8am but not turned in until sometime between 8am on Wednesday and 8am on Thursday of the same week would be marked down 15% (one and a half letter grades) below the earned grade (e.g., from a 90% (A-) to a 75% (C)). Bottom line: Don't go there.

Grade Appeals

You may appeal a grade by submitting a written request to the TA(s) in two forms, both electronically and in hard-copy (you should also CC me on the email). Appeals are due within one week of receiving the grade in question. Your written appeal should explain, in logical and concise (and polite) terms, why you believe you should have received a different grade. The TA(s) will take all grade appeals seriously, but be warned that once you appeal a grade they will reconsider that grade with an open mind, and re-grades can happen in either direction. If this reevaluation reveals that you deserved a higher grade than you received, your grade will be changed in your favor. But if this process reveals that you deserved a lower grade than you received, your grade will be changed downward. If your original grade is deemed correct, your grade will remain the same.

Disabilities

UC Davis encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. I am strongly committed to the same policy. If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the Student Disability Center at (530) 752-3184 as soon as possible to identify and document your specific needs. Additionally, it is your responsibility to contact me privately immediately at the beginning of the quarter (i.e., within the first week) so we can discuss how to accommodate your needs. Do not wait until just before an assignment deadline or an exam to inform me of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.

Academic Dishonesty¹

UC Davis and the Department of Political Science take violations of academic dishonesty seriously, as do I. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the UC Davis community are required to subscribe. In cases of a violation of academic integrity, it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to impose appropriate penalties that are consistent with University guidelines. Academic integrity cases will be sent to the office of Student Judicial Affairs.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless I clearly state otherwise. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. See the following link for tips on how to avoid plagiarism: <<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>>. In general, every time you use another person's idea, you must cite the person at the end of the sentence in which you use the idea. Every time you use a specific phrase, even if the phrase is only two words long (e.g., "the fourth branch of government" or "streams of policymaking"), you must put the phrase in quotation marks and cite the original author at the end of the sentence in which you use the phrase. Citations should be based on the Chicago Manual of Style. See the following link for citations guidelines: <<http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/chicagod.php>>.

In an examination setting, unless I give explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist of any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices (including the internet!), or of any attempt to give assistance, whether or not the one so doing has completed his or her own work. Other violations include, but are not limited to, any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in regard to an examination, such as tampering with a graded exam or claiming another's work to be one's own. Specifically, collaborating with another person to complete the online quizzes constitutes cheating.

Violations shall also consist of obtaining or attempting to obtain copies of exams, quizzes, assignments, or any other course materials from earlier versions of this course.

¹ Much of the text in this section has been directly obtained from the sections of the Princeton University website on Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities: <<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/rrr>>.

Perhaps most importantly, lying to or misleading me or a TA shall also constitute a serious violation of academic integrity.

Sexual Harassment Resources

UC Davis is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need. Confidential support and academic advocacy can be found with several campus resources, including CARE (Center for Advocacy, Resources and Education) at (530) 752-3299 and Counseling Services at (530) 752-2349. More information here:
http://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/docs/sexual_violence_support_brochure_jul15.pdf

Weekly Assignments and Topics

The table below shows reading assignments, online quiz deadlines, midterm and final exam dates, and research project deadlines. Everything is required unless otherwise noted. All non-book readings will be available on SmartSite, under Resources/Readings. You should do each day's readings before that day's class. I'll generally keep us on schedule, but note that discussions may bleed over from one class to the next.

| Date | Topic | Readings Due | Notes |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| Week 1 | | | |
| Mon, Jan 9 | Course Introduction & Conceptual Groundwork | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • 13-minute audio story: http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2011/01/26/131192182/cotton | |
| Wed, Jan 11 | What Drives Attention? and <i>Simulation #1</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downs, Anthony. 1972. Up and Down with Ecology: The "Issue Attention Cycle." <i>The Public Interest</i> 28: 38-50. • Article: http://www.climatecentral.org/news/sandy-didnt-change-a-thing-16669 • 4-minute video (fast forward to start clip at 1:34): http://www.cc.com/video-clips/x1h7ku/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-weathering-fights---science--what-s-it-up-to- | <i>Start thinking about your research project assignments!</i> |
| Week 2 | | | |
| Mon, Jan 16 | Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day—NO CLASS | | |
| Wed, Jan 18 | Issue Conflict Expansion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Ch. 1 (The Contagiousness of Conflict) • S Ch. 2 (The Scope and Bias of the Pressure System) • S Ch. 3 (Whose Game Do We Play?) | |
| Week 3 | | | |
| Mon, Jan 23 | <i>Research Project Session</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Project Assignment Instructions (#1 and #2) • Example Research Project Assignments (#1 and #2, examples A, B, and C for each) • Policy Agendas Website: http://www.comparativeagendas.net/ | |
| Wed, Jan 25 | Issue Conflict Displacement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Ch. 4 (The Displacements of Conflict) • S Ch. 5 (The Nationalization of Politics) • S Ch. 6 (The Limits of the Political System) • 5-minute audio story: http://www.npr.org/2013/03/23/175119402/polling-latinos-what-would-it-take-to-turn-republican | |
| Week 4 | | | |

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|-------------|--|--|--|
| Mon, Jan 30 | Punctuated Equilibrium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&J Introduction • B&J Theoretical Beginnings • B&J Ch. 1 (Punctuated Equilibria in Politics) • 5-minute audio story: http://www.npr.org/2013/12/11/250239343/after-fight-over-colo-gun-laws-two-sides-as-dug-in-as-ever | |
| Wed, Feb 1 | Agenda Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&J Ch. 2 (Policy Images and Institutional Venues) • 5-minute audio story: http://www.npr.org/2012/05/12/152578740/how-tv-brought-gay-people-into-our-homes • 4-minute audio story: http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=196338157 | |
| Week 5 | | | |
| Mon, Feb 6 | Two Models of Issue Expansion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&J Ch. 5 (Two Models of Issue Expansion) | |
| Wed, Feb 8 | The Dynamics of Media Attention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&J Ch. 6 (The Dynamics of Media Attention) • B&J Ch. 8 (Connecting Solutions to Problems) • Chapter 1 from: Boydston, Amber E. 2013. <i>Making the News: Politics, the Media, and Agenda Setting</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press | Assignment #1 due by start of class |
| Week 6 | | | |
| Mon, Feb 13 | <i>Overview of Exam I Material and Introduction to Issue Framing</i> | | |
| Wed, Feb 15 | Exam I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring: Blue Book (unmarked), Scantron, and #2 pencil | |
| Week 7 | | | |
| Mon, Feb 20 | Presidents' Day—NO CLASS | | |
| Wed, Feb 22 | <i>Film: Toxic Hot Seat</i> | | |
| Week 8 | | | |

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|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| Mon, Feb 27 | <i>Assignment #2 Overview and Simulation #2</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring your questions | |
| Wed, Mar 1 | The Death Penalty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B,DB&B Ch. 1 (Innocence and the Death Penalty Debate) • B,DB&B Ch. 2 (The Death Penalty in America) • 4-minute audio story: http://www.npr.org/2013/04/05/176302378/without-reviews-inmates-can-get-lost-in-u-s-prison-system | |
| Week 9 | | | |
| Mon, Mar 6 | Framing the Death Penalty (and the Effects on Public Opinion and Policy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B,DB&B Ch. 3 (A Chronology of Innocence) • B,DB&B Ch. 4 (The Shifting Terms of Debate) | |
| Wed, Mar 8 | The Political Psychology of Issue Framing Part I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nelson, Thomas E., Clawson, Rosalee A., and Oxley, Zoe. 1997. Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Controversy and its Effect on Tolerance. <i>American Political Science Review</i> 91(3): 567-84. • Rose, Max and Frank R. Baumgartner. 2013. Framing the Poor. <i>Policy Studies Journal</i> 41(1): 22-32. • Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. Framing Theory. <i>American Political Science Review</i> 10: 103-126. | |
| Week 10 | | | |
| Mon, Mar 13 | The Political Psychology of Issue Framing Part II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakoff, George. 2004. Don't Think of an Elephant (<i>Excerpt</i>) • Luntz, Frank. 2007. Interview with Katharine Mieszkowski on How To Speak Republican. • 5 minute podcast: http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2012/10/23/163194272/the-political-consultants-are-real-the-candidate-is-faket | |
| Wed, Mar 15 | <i>Overview of Exam II Material and Life Lessons</i> | | Assignment #2 due by start of class |
| FINALS WEEK | | | |
| Fri, Mar 24 at 6pm | Exam II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring: Blue Book (unmarked), Scantron, and #2 pencil | |