

Political Science 130
Making Public Policy
Fall 2017
DMH 149A
M/W 10:00-11:45

Professor Gerston
Clark Hall 404M 924-5580
Office Hours: T/Th 7:45 AM-
8:45 AM
lgerston@sjsu.edu

SYLLABUS

SCOPE OF THE COURSE

The study of public policy has become important with the evolution of complex issues and modern governments. Whether large or small, new or old, democratic or authoritarian, all nations develop public policies. Public policy focuses on the major goals, commitments and activities that emerge from political actors, government institutions and society. While the issues may change over time, the processes for making, implementing and evaluating public policies may not. Moreover, these processes occur at all levels of government, whether they are national, state or local.

Political Science 130 begins with a description of the public policy framework. Various components of the policy making process will be described to help us better understand contemporary public policy issues in the United States and the ways they are resolved (or not), with applications at the national, state and local levels.

Policy making is complex and full of uncertainties. Mere awareness of an issue does not guarantee policy response; moreover, enactment of a policy does not assure that it will be made to work. This course addresses those issues and uncertainties, and gives students the opportunity to participate in the process.

PROJECT CITIZEN

We will approach public policy making from two perspectives: as students **AND** participants in the political process. Content from the readings and lectures will serve as † Barbara C. Crosby and John M. Bryson, *Leadership for the Common Good*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2005, p. 59.

he basis of knowledge and information acquisition. Participation in Project Citizen, a pedagogical application tool, will provide “hands on” opportunities to influence the public policy process. In small groups, students will (1) settle on a **local** policy problem, (2) conduct preliminary research that problem, and (3) determine possible alternatives for solving the problem. After further research, groups will propose the best solution to the public policy issue they have selected.

Each group will submit a one-page, double-spaced proposal for approval by the class professor. The proposal should include the names and email address of the group members. The proposal is due in class on Thursday, **September 19th**.

During the Project Citizen experience, students will keep a daily journal in an 8 x 11 spiral binder that will be turned in when requested by the professor; the journal should ALWAYS be brought to class. Journal entries will begin the **first day groups meet** and continue from that point forward until the end of the class. In addition, each student will write a 4-5 page **“Reflections” paper** that covers his/her personal journey associated with Project Citizen. Materials will be distributed to assist with the execution of these course components.

The work associated with Project Citizen will culminate with a group presentation of the research lasting about 20 minutes, followed by a group paper approximately 25-30 pages in length.

REQUIRED READINGS

Gerston, *Public Policymaking in a Democratic Society: A Guide to Civic Engagement*, second edition, 2008

Gerston, *Reviving Citizen Engagement: Policies to Restore National Community*, 2015.

The Wall Street Journal (special student subscription rates are available from the professor)

ATTENDANCE

Because of the extensive group interaction, regular attendance in this class is **essential**. Evaluation of one's participation will be based in part on attendance. Students who fail to contribute appropriately to their groups will find their group project grades reduced.

CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

As a courtesy to other students and the professor, please make sure that cell phones, computers, and all other electronic devices are turned OFF. If your phone rings during class, you will be asked to leave. If you text during class, you will be asked to leave. I AM VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THIS ISSUE.

SPECIAL EVENING LECTURE

There will be a special lecture on campus during the semester as part of the Don Edwards Lecture Series. Mr. Edwards served in the U.S. Congress for more than 25 years as a representative from the San Jose area. He was a leader in civil rights and civil liberties as well as a champion of the environment. The lecture will take place at 7:00 p.m. with the date and site to be determined. Students will be given time off from a regularly scheduled class TBD. **Attendance at the lecture will be mandatory.**

Note: the lecture is videotaped for those with schedule conflicts.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>.

WORKLOAD AND CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with one of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

EXAMINATIONS AND EVALUATION

There will be two examinations in this course consisting of essay and short answer questions. You will be required to bring **LARGE** new green exam books (or other colors) and pens for the exams. **Only medical problems (with physician's note) are accepted reasons for missing an exam and you must inform me in advance.** You may leave class only after you have completed the exam.

The group project will include a class presentation and 25-30 page paper. Student participation, a journal, and an individual 4-5 page "Reflections" paper will round out the rest of the class grade.

Journals will commence with the assignment of the group projects. They must be brought to class daily. Journals will be collected, graded, and returned on a random basis.

First midterm:	25%
Second midterm:	25
Group Project	25
Reflection paper:	10
Journal:	10
Participation:	<u>5</u>
Total:	100%

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS (tentative):

August 24	Introductory remarks; brief outline of the course and expectations; course overview
August 25-September 2	Understanding the Public Policy Framework <i>Public Policymaking</i> , Chapters 1, 2
September 3-11	Triggering Mechanisms and Policy Actors <i>Public Policymaking</i> , Chapters 3, 4, Appendix B
September 12-14	Implementation and Evaluation <i>Public Policymaking</i> , Chapters 5, 6, 7
September 14	Project Citizen Group Meetings <i>Bring journals to class this day and EVERY day forward</i>
September 19	Project Citizen Group Meetings
September 21-28	No Class—students are encouraged to meet in groups during this period
October 3	One Page Group Project Proposal Due in Class
October 3	Midterm I Review
October 5	Midterm I

October 6 October 6-10	Public Policy Issues <i>Reviving Citizen Engagement</i> , Chapters 1, 2
October 11-17	Public Policy Issues, cont. <i>Reviving Citizen Engagement</i> , Chapters 3, 4
October 13-23	Public Policy Issues, cont. <i>Reviving Citizen Engagement</i> , Chapters 5, 6
October 24-31	Public Policy Issues, cont. <i>Reviving Citizen Engagement</i> , Chapters 7, 8, 9
October 31	Project Citizen Group Meetings
November 2	Midterm II Review
November 7	Midterm II
November 9	Project Citizen Group Meetings
November 14 November 16	Project Citizen Group Meetings Group Presentations
November 21	Group Presentations
November 22-24	Thanksgiving
November 28	Group Presentations
November 30	Reflection Paper Handout Group Presentations
December 5	Group Presentations
December 7	Group Presentations
December 12	Project Citizen and Reflection Papers due at Clark Hall 404M