

San José State University
Department of Political Science
Pols 130: Public Policy, Spring 2021—Rev.

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Larry N. Gerston
Office Location:	Off-campus
Email:	lgerston@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tues/Thurs 9:00-10:15 AM
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday and Thursday 7:30-8:45 AM
Classroom:	online

Communication and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as the syllabus, assignment instructions, etc. can be accessed through your SJSU email address. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU at <http://my.sjsu.edu> to learn of any syllabus changes, announcements, or updates.

By enrolling in this course, you consent to all course requirements listed in this syllabus and announced in class. You also accept responsibility for receiving any messages sent via the MySJSU email system. Make sure that MySJSU has your current email address. Please contact me within the first week if you cannot send or receive email.

Course Description

Introduces students to the public policy making process in the American governing system. The politics of agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy implementation are examined. Students learn to analyze and evaluate public policy outcomes.

Additional Course Description

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 issues and controversies 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 an explanation of the public policy framework, beginning with the emergence of political issues and ending with evaluation of policy outcomes. 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 from government actors; moreover, enactment of a policy does not assure that it will work in the manner originally intended by policy makers. This course addresses those issues and uncertainties, and gives students the tools to better understand how policy making works in the real world.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

PSPLO1: Breadth

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

PSPLO2: Application and Disciplinary Methods

Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

PSPLO3: Communication Skills

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

PSPLO4: Citizenship

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of active, lifelong participation in political processes.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

CLO1 Learn and apply social science theories of public policymaking and use them to explain the behavior, decisions, and outcomes of government policy

CLO2 Demonstrate the ability to critically think about the politics of the policymaking process in the broader American federalist system

CLO3 Develop a deeper understanding of substantive policy issues in contemporary national politics

CLO4 Demonstrate knowledge of main components of policy analysis including policy formulation, cost/benefit analysis, and policy evaluation.

Mapping POLS 130 Course Learning Outcomes to Political Science PLOs	Program Learning Outcomes	Assessment
CLO1: Learn and apply social science theories of public policy making and use them to explain the behavior, decisions, and outcomes of government policy	PLO1, 3	Two midterms and a final examination, all written as papers
CLO2: Demonstrate the ability to critically think about the politics of the policymaking process in the broader American federalist system	PLO2, 4,	Two midterms and a final examination, all written as papers
CLO3: Develop a deeper understanding of substantive policy issues in contemporary national politics	PLO2, 3	Two midterms and a final examination, all written as papers
CLO4: Demonstrate knowledge of main components of policy analysis including policy formulation, cost/benefit analysis, and policy evaluation.	PLO1,2	Two midterms and a final examination, all written as papers

Required Texts

Gerston, *Public Policy Making: Process and Principles*, 3rd ed.

Gerston, *Reviving Engagement: Policies to Renew National Community*

Rushevsky, *Public Policy in the United States*, 6th ed.

Occasional handouts distributed via email.

Miscellaneous: You may be assigned to watch select television materials or other events as part of your course work.

Note: It is vital that you use the editions attached to the book titles as they reflect considerable changes from previous editions.

Staying on Top of the News: There may be times during the semester when unexpected topics emerge, and as such, demand our attention. Example: In 2020, COVID-19 (also known as the coronavirus) became the most important political issue of the year. If such an issue arises during

the semester, you may be expected to read assigned information and be prepared to discuss it in class as it relates to the concepts presented during the course.

Additional Recommended Readings

I also urge you to read a national newspaper several times a week (the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* are excellent sources for in depth political and policy news. This is something you should do anyway, but since we will be discussing a variety of policy topics during the semester, keeping up with the news of the day will most certainly add to the quality of our discussions in class. There are a variety of other great news-related websites out there as well. In short, keep yourself informed.

Library Liaison

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help using the library for research. His name and contact info is: Paul Kauppila, Librarian (Political Science Liaison). He can be reached by telephone (408) 808-2042 or by email Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. **Course Readings:** All assigned readings are required. It is expected that students complete the assigned readings each week *before* attending class. Reading assigned materials in advance of class will aid the student's ability to better grasp the value of accompanying lectures and class discussions. Students may find it necessary to read all or portions of the assigned readings more than once to comprehend complex material. Students who feel they need additional help with effective reading comprehension strategies should consult with the professor during office hours.

2. **Exams:** Two midterms will be required in the form of papers (6-8 pages) responding to assigned questions based on the readings and lectures. The papers will be typed, double-spaced, numbered, and with 1-inch margins. The exam questions will be assigned approximately 8 days in advance of the due date.

3. **Term Paper:** A final term paper (8-10 pages) will require students to analyze a public policy issue selected by the student (but only after receiving approval by the professor). A separate memo with more details about this assignment will be distributed at the beginning of the second full week of class. Only one student will be permitted to write on each topic with the designated assignment determined on a first come, first served basis. Students may choose a research paper topic from a list provided by the professor, *subject to the professor's written approval*. Topics must be selected no later than 3/10 *before class*. If topics are not selected by 3/10, the professor will determine the topic for the student. Given the paper assignment protocol, it's incumbent for students to act as soon as practicable.

Evaluation on the assignment will be based on the application of pertinent concepts, clarity and quality of the student's research and written discussion. Students will be required to incorporate a mix of academic books and peer reviewed journal articles as well as online news articles as materials for the term paper. The papers will be typed, double-spaced, numbered, and with 1-inch margins.

Plagiarism Tutorial

As part of your preparation for the final paper, you are required to take and must pass all modules of a plagiarism tutorial modules with a score of at least 75%. If you complete the quiz on time and earn at least 75%, you will receive 3 points as part of your final exam grade. Please note the following:

- The plagiarism tutorial is a requirement for the final paper proposal. I will not accept this paper until you submit your tutorial quiz results (with at least 75% score) to me.
- You must **email** your plagiarism tutorial quiz results to me at lgerston@sjsu.edu
Please note: The library will not send your results to me. You must forward to me the results the library sends to you. **Do not send a screenshot of your quiz results.** Forwarding to me the email ensures we both have a copy that includes your information.
- I must receive confirmation of your completion of the plagiarism tutorial modules no later than February 25, 7:30 AM.
- **The time and date I receive your email with the forwarded results is the time and date of submission**, regardless of the date you actually completed the quiz. Late completions of the tutorial will be penalized one point per day, beginning February 25th at 7:31 AM.
- The tutorial can be found at: <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/plagiarism>

4. **Class Participation:** Participation is an important part of the course. Without participation from a broad cross section of students we all (including the professor!) don't learn as much as we would otherwise. Participation can be demonstrated in a variety of ways: asking questions, offering insights into current events, and making regular comments in class about assigned materials. **Note: If you don't attend class, you can't participate!**

Final Examination

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment. Our final examination will be in the form of a researched term paper that includes citations. The paper will be due on May 25, the scheduled examination time, no later than 9:30 AM.

Extra Credit

There will **no** extra credit opportunities in this class. If you have "extra" time, it should be devoted to the assigned materials.

Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

At SJSU, students are expected to spend two hours outside of class for every one hour of class time. Because this is a four-unit class, you can expect to spend a minimum of eight hours per week in addition to time spent in class and on scheduled tutorials or activities. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. In this class, one of the four units is dedicated to research for your final paper. You are expected to spend 45 hours this semester (both to prepare for and to

complete the work) to successfully complete this unit. More details about student workload can be found in <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>

Grading Information

Your grade will be based upon the following:

- how well the assignment addresses the topic
- how well you analyzed the course material used for your assignment
- the quality of the writing

In addition, for the final research paper:

- the quality of research, analysis and conclusions
- the quality (and appropriate quantity) of the sources cited as well as the proper use of APA formatting.

Students' grades will be calculated using the following assignments (with corresponding points and percentages)

Assignment	Points	Percentage of total
First Mid-term Paper	30	30%
Second Mid-term Paper	30	30%
Final Exam	30	30%
Class Participation	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Your final grade will be calculated by dividing your total points by 1,000. For example, consider the following: Total points = 810; so, $810/1,000 = 81\%$. Using the scale below, this individual would be assigned a B- grade for the course. Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

Grade	Percentage
A plus	98 to 100%
A	93 to 97%
A minus	90% to 92%

B plus	87% to 89%
B	83% to 86%
B minus	80% to 82%
C plus	77% to 79%
C	73% to 76%
C minus	70% to 72%
D plus	67% to 69%
D	63% to 66%
D minus	60% to 62%
F	59% or less

Make-Up/Late Policy

Make-up exams are only given in cases of excused absences in accordance with the university's policy on excused absences. Circumstances that may lead to an excused student absence are subpoenas, jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, illness of a dependent, and bereavement for immediate family. If you are seriously ill, you must notify me as soon as possible by email or on my office phone that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time. Except in cases of documented medical emergency, you **MUST** notify me *before* the scheduled assignment. Be certain you schedule all of our assignments right away. If you have a vacation or social obligation, considering taking this course during another session, as these types of events do not fall under the make-up policy. If you are a member of a SJSU varsity intercollegiate athletic team, please provide me with your team schedule during the first week of the class.

Papers that are turned in late will be penalized a full letter grade for every 24 hours past the original due date. For example, a paper turned in 10 minutes past the scheduled time it was due will be marked down 1 full letter grade. This same penalty will apply to a paper turned in up to 24 hours past the original due date. For every 24 hours after that, a paper will be penalized an additional letter grade and so on until the start value is an 'F'. Please be aware of this policy and be sure to get your writing assignments turned in on time. **I am very serious about this.**

Classroom Protocol

Due to COVID-19, this class will take place via online instruction. All students will be required to list their first name (or preferred nickname) and last name on their zoom screen for security reasons and so that I may learn your names and you get to learn the names of one another.

Inasmuch as participation is part of the grade, and that one can't participate unless he/she is in class, **I expect that if you attend class, I will see you—not a picture or something in place of you.** If I do not see you, I will assume you are not in class. We will use the zoom "chat" function, which will allow you to fully participate and enable me to ask questions of you.

Email Communication

Contact me is via email. Please be aware that I may not (unless in unusual circumstances) respond to email after normal working hours (Monday through Friday 8am-5pm). Otherwise, as a general rule, I will return emails within 24 hours of arrival.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](#), requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- "Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. **You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class.** Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material."
- The greensheet may include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
- In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- "Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. **You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.**"

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>"

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7](#) requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. **Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.** Visit the [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#) website for more information.

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the new Student Wellness Center, Room 300B. Professional psychologists, social

workers, and counselors are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling and Psychological Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

Political Science Department Writing Policy

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count! Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks. Ideas from others must also be referenced. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct, which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/writeandcite>. The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center visit <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>.

Political Science 130: Making Public Policy (Spring 2021) Schedule*

**Schedule is subject to change with fair notice and will be announced via email and/or in-class announcement.*

Week	Date	Topics, Assignments
1	1/27	Course Introduction and Overview No Assigned Reading
2	2/2-2/4	Conceptualizing Public Policy and American Politics Readings: Gerston, Public Policy Making, Chapters 1, 2
3	2/9-2/11	The Public Agenda and Policy Makers Readings: Gerston, Public Policy Making, Chapters 3, 4
4	2/16-2/18 2/16	Implementation, Evaluation and Concluding Thoughts Readings: Gerston, Public Policy Making, Chapters 5, 6, 7 Final Exam Research Paper Topic List Discussed
5	2/23-2/25 2/23 2/25	America on the Brink Readings: Gerston, Reviving Citizen Engagement, Chapters 1, 2 First Midterm Paper Assignment Distributed Tutorial Completion Result due at 7:30 AM

6	3/2-3/4 3/3	The Haves, Have Nots in America Readings: Gerston, Reviving Citizen Engagement, Chapters 3, 4 First Midterm Paper Assignment Due via email, 3/3, 5:00 PM
7	3/9-3/11 3/10	Broken Institutions Readings: Gerston, Reviving Citizen Engagement, Chapters 5, 6 Final Exam Paper Topics Due via email, 3/17, 5:00 PM
8	3/16-3/18 3/17	A Tale of Two Economies, Renewal Readings: Gerston, Reviving, Citizen Engagement, Chaps 7, 8, 9 Paper Topics Returned via email
9	3/23-3/25	Political Structure and the Economy Rushevsky, Chapters 1, 2
10	3/30-4/2	Spring Break Foreign Policy Rushevsky, Chapters 3
11	4/6-4/8	The Economy Rushevsky, Chapter 4
12	4/13-15	Health Policy Rushevsky, Chapter 5
13	4/20-22 4/22	4/20: Environmental Policy Rushevsky, Chapter 6 No formal instruction. Voluntary In-Class office hours; sign up in advance in ten minute increments via email
14	4/27-29 4/27	Criminal Justice Rushevsky, Chapter 7 Second Paper Assignment Distributed
15	5/4-5/6 5/5	Education Rushevsky, Chapter 8 Second Midterm Paper Assignment Due via email, 5/5, 5:00 PM
16	5/11-5/13 5/13	5/11: Equality Rushevsky, Chapter 9 No formal instruction; Voluntary In-Class office hours; sign

up in advance in ten minute increments via email

17 5/25

FINAL Exam Paper due no later than 9:30 AM