

**California Judicial Administration Fellowship Program Seminar
PPA 298B
Spring 2021 Course Syllabus**

**California State University, Sacramento
Center for California Studies
Office – 3038 Tahoe Hall
Office Hours: As scheduled.**

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Welcome: The purpose of this course is to provide academic perspective and to complement what the fellows are learning from their placement in one of ten trial courts or judicial branch offices. This seminar blends academic theory with practice. The academic component will focus on judicial branch administrative history, structures, governance and judicial process supported by experiential learning. The overall goal is to acquire the knowledge needed to understand, evaluate and analyze the policies, practices, procedures and institutional role of the California judicial system. This will enhance the fellows' contribution to the judicial branch and their court placement. In this era of pandemic, academic seminar is held two or three half days each month via Zoom hosted through the PPA 298 Canvas portal. Academic seminars will synchronize with the similarly scheduled field seminars. PPA 298 requires written and oral projects and papers as well as participation in online discussion forums. The spring semester provides both a pragmatic and theoretical foundation that culminates with a spring capstone paper due in May.

Catalog Description:

Building upon PPA298A, further critical examination and analysis of the administrative operation of the California judicial system and its structures, policies and practices. Note: Open only to students admitted to the Judicial Administration Fellowship Program.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the basic features of judicial branch institutional history, structure, governance, management and administration;
2. Describe and explain distinctive aspects of the California judicial system with particular focus on trial courts, trial court culture, court unification, state trial court funding, and judicial independence;
3. Understand and apply key institutional performance measures;
4. Employ research, writing and oral presentation skills.

Academic Seminar Format:

The seminar itself encompasses two half days each month, augmented by periodic online issues forums, and office hours. Seminar begins at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at noon with a 10 to 15-minute recess. Seminar is not a lecture class, although there is typically a short introduction to the material and a review of the class agenda. The seminar is discussion-based guided by study questions, presentations, group exercises, and role-playing scenarios utilizing the assigned readings, case studies, and weekly forum issues. Fellows must be agents of their own learning and come prepared to share their ideas and engage intellectually with each other. And, most critically, they must demonstrate their ability to synthesize course content and link it to their placement and the larger environment. This is the essence of experiential learning.

Academic Seminar Participation:

Active participation is vital to the learning environment and it is therefore required. Effective student engagement is predicated on completing and digesting all reading assignments and it is heavily weighted towards the final grade. Oral presentation and group facilitation also provide opportunities to personally develop a key professional skill and to build self-confidence. Students are expected to demonstrate

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knowledge of the seminar subject or topic by asking relevant questions, answering questions, and providing reasonable explanations and elaboration. Discussion and presentation should reflect a student's increased mastery over their newly acquired vocabulary (legal and technical terms) often unique to court administration. Seminar discussions, group exercises, team interactions and online forum discussions will be respectful and collegial.

Online Discussion Forum: This will resume in February and is a mandatory component of seminar participation. **Each student will be assigned a designated date upon which they will post one or more contemporary discussion topics of relevance to courts, judicial administration, or general legal interest.** The forum is intended to promote student interaction, deepen student learning, build class community, and increase student engagement. The role of courts in our society is evolving rapidly and on a daily basis some aspect of the judiciary appears in the news. The Online Discussion Forum provides a structured opportunity to identify and explore current (and sometimes perennial) issues involving courts, society, and by inference the administration of the judiciary. **Non-posting students are required to respond to each post each week - the response may take the form of a further question, an observation, and so forth.** The length of response is determined by the student. Quality over volume.

Course Final Grades: Letter grades (A – F) are based on the following assignments:

Students are required to research and produce a minimum of 25 pages of written material for the semester.

(1) A series of papers and outlines on various seminar topics and issues	40%
(2) A capstone paper and presentation	30%
(3) Seminar participation, preparedness, discussion forum engagement	30%
	100%

Grading scale:

A:	≥ 94%
A-:	90 – 93.9%
B+:	87 – 89.9%
B:	84 – 86.9%
B-:	80 – 83.9%
C+:	77 – 79.9%
C:	74 – 76.9%
C-:	70 – 73.9%
D+:	67 – 69.9%
D:	64 – 66.9%
D-:	60 – 63.9%
F:	≤ 59.9%

Attendance and Participation Policy:

Attendance and participation in seminar, office hour attendance and completion of all academic assignments are mandatory. Acceptance of admission into the Judicial Administration Fellowship Program is a commitment to attend each class session and a commitment to be prepared for active discussion. Failure to fulfill the terms of the academic program, failure to perform in a professional manner, plagiarism, unauthorized absences, and chronic tardiness at seminar or office placement will be cause for prompt administrative review and may result in termination from the program or other sanctions. In addition to attendance and “seat time,” the quality of preparation for and participation in class discussions will be reflected in grading.

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Required Texts - Fall and Spring Semesters:

Plain English for Lawyers, 6th Edition - Wydick & Sloan

Judicial Council Style Guide - Dec. 2015

Understanding and Managing Public Organizations, 5th Edition - Rainey

Trial Courts as Organizations - Ostrom, et al.

The Art and Practice of Court Administration – Aikman

American Court Management – Saari (located in PPA 298A Reader)

Overview of Court Administration in the United States – Tobin (Located in PPA 298 Reader)

These Estimable Courts: Understanding Public Perceptions of State Judicial Institutions and Legal Policy-Making – Cann and Yates

A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis - Bardach

Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services – Lipsky

Online Courts and the Future of Justice - Susskind

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption – Stevenson

Required Selected Readings: See PPA 298B Seminar Readings and Assignments posted to PPA 298 via Canvas.

Paper Requirements and Deadlines

At least one paper or outline or both will be due for each seminar – the length will vary from 3 to 5 or more pages depending upon the material to be covered. The capstone paper instructions are treated separately below. **Seminar papers and all other writings are due in accordance with the following schedule (and subject to change).** Papers are to be emailed to the address on the first page of this syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted but for extenuating circumstances.

Seminar Assignment Due Dates: On before date of seminar, unless instructed otherwise.

Here are the drafting and format requirements (details matter).

1. Double-space the paper with 1.25” margins.
2. 12 point Times New Roman font.
3. Upper left corner of the first page single-spaced: Your Name, Title of Course: PPA 298 - CSUS, My Name, Title of Paper: _____, Date Submitted: February XX, 2021.
4. Paginate.
5. If a title page or citation page is used, do not count it towards the length of the essay or paper.
6. Judicial Council Style Guide for all seminar papers: See Section 9.3 for citations to books, journals, social media, and so forth. Capstone paper requires APA citation style - unless an exception is made.
7. Electronic format is MS Word. Other formats will be rejected.
8. **File-naming Conventions - this is strictly enforced: Last name - Month - Title (e.g., Outlines; e.g., Pound Paper, etc) Outlines are to be in a single document.**

Critical Writing Guidelines for All Assignments and Papers:

Bearing in mind the importance of the written word in the court setting (and academia), the following evaluative criteria are used when marking seminar papers. Note that content, clarity and conciseness are heavily weighted, and plagiarism is grounds for dismissal. The best papers demonstrate that the writer has thought hard and seriously about the readings, has come to conclusions that reflect relevant information and ideas, and make a logical connection between these and the writer’s own carefully considered experiential learning.

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Organization (25 points)

1. Introduction clear (i.e., Early on you explain what this paper will tell me.);
2. Clearly worded thesis statement early in paper (e.g., first or second paragraph);
3. One main point per sentence;
4. Topic sentences in paragraphs (one main point per paragraph) that together will support your thesis;
5. Support (body) paragraphs fully developed and unified;
6. Smooth, logical transition between paragraphs;
7. Conclusion summarizes main points and restates thesis.

Content (50 points)

1. Appropriate title;
2. Supporting paragraphs strongly support the thesis with evidence such as facts, statistics, experiential examples, and, importantly, connections and reference to assigned readings;
3. Paper content is the assigned length;
4. Appropriate word choice and technical vocabulary are used.

Format, Grammar, Mechanics (25 or more points)

1. Sentence completeness (no run-ons, comma splices, split infinitives or sentence fragments, etc.);
2. Paragraph completeness (no run-ons or incoherent thoughts strung together);
3. Comma usage as necessary in compound sentences;
4. Apostrophe usage correct;
5. Usage of semi-colon vs. colon;
6. Verb usage;
7. Spelling;
8. Language usage;
9. Numbers and calculations used correctly in text.

Use *Plain English for Lawyers* for punctuation, clarity, conciseness, word choice, sentence structure and so forth. Use the *Judicial Council Style Guide* for citations (legal and non-legal), titles of judges and other officials and for areas not covered by Wydick.

The Capstone Paper (Due in May)

As with the fall capstone paper, the spring capstone will provide you with an opportunity to independently study an area of interest related to the courts. For some, the fall capstone research and writing experience might serve as an important step towards preparing for your spring capstone paper.

What is Expected of the Spring Capstone Paper Be advised, primary research (surveys, interviews, facilitated expert meetings, etc.) can be quite time consuming and an early start is advised. You will decide which research question or questions you wish to explore, and which elements best meet your interests and the needs of your paper - a review of literature is a good starting point. That said, the capstone paper should be a minimum of 15 pages and no more than 20 pages. To the extent possible, the paper should attempt to reflect your interests, what you have or are learning from your placement experience and the knowledge you are gaining through seminar readings and discussions. Your placements and interests are very diverse - so each paper is expected to have unique characteristics and unique challenges. One challenge we all face is the discontinuous nature of our seminar schedule and our infrequency of contact. For some this may be a contributing factor to the pace and direction with which the capstone paper will progress. To help address this specific issue, evening office hours by telephone will be scheduled and required.

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Fall Capstone and Spring Capstone Papers: You may use (reuse, repurpose) whatever content of your fall capstone paper that is relevant to the spring capstone paper due in May.

Capstone Paper Section Headings and Content: I have prepared the following list of seven headings and **general content descriptions** for each section of your capstone paper. The specific content and headings will vary from paper to paper according to your topic and the direction you have taken your paper.

I. Title

II. Abstract (short summary of your topic, what question or questions you were seeking answers to - less than 50 words)

III List of Contents: The list (or table of contents) should follow the section headings below or otherwise contained in your paper. Include sub-headings or sub-sections if you are using them.

IV Introduction: This is an expansion of the abstract. It should also include whether you have changed the original direction or focus of your paper and what caused that to occur. (Time, lack of information, lack of support, change in interest, and so forth.) If the fall capstone topic is likely to be linked in some way to the spring capstone, note that here as well.

V. Literature Review, Discussion and Analysis: One or multiple sections depending on the number and complexity of topics covered - probably only one section for most papers. *This should be obvious, but at minimum and throughout your paper as appropriate you must link your discussion and analysis to course content (PPA298A and PPA298B), e.g. Pound, Saari, Aikman, Tobin, Yates, Ostrom, Lipsky, Rainey, Susskind, and others found in our course material in addition to what your literature review or research reveals.*

- Describe what is already known about the subject or topic of your paper or, if an extension of your fall capstone paper, how they are connected.
- Evaluate the literature (is it superannuated (old), irrelevant, non-existent, differentiated in some way, is it from an out of state court, not a trial court, a different discipline, etc).
- Describe the relationship of your paper to this earlier material: studies, reports, texts, articles, etc. For example, if the material is out of date, your work is likely to bring some aspect of it up to date, or create new information, or correct old information, or bring new insights.

VI. Methodology and Data

- If you collected data, what kind of data (secondary sources, interviews, records, surveys, etc. did you collect)? If you did not collect data, then do not have a methodology and data chapter!
- Why was this data selected (it addressed the question by _____, it was available, I had access and consent, I was limited in time, it appeared to be representative, it had been used by others, etc.).
- What additional data would you have preferred but did not have access to or time to collect?
- If you collected data, how was it analyzed, and what conclusions, if any, did you form regarding the data?

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VII Final Chapter (Conclusions and Summary of Analysis)

- What questions did you answer or analyze and what are the answers? Both the questions and answers may be very different from the ones you began with. Describe any phenomenon or information that surprised you or caused you to reconsider preconceptions or early hypotheses (pretty much these would be your initial questions or focus).
- What have you learned from your experience preparing the capstone paper? And if you were pursuing a policy issue or practice - are there implications or recommendations? You are expected to have learned lessons from the capstone experience. Some of those lessons are likely to include the degree of difficulty you encountered in obtaining information, in scaling the scope of your paper, the paucity of literature on the subject, the reliability of and access to certain categories of information, e.g., juvenile justice, mental health, drug treatment, data external to the court, and private or confidential or protected information. These experiences should influence the approach you will take with your spring capstone paper due in May. Here is a schedule to help guide the development of your capstone paper.

PPA 298B Capstone Paper Schedule	
Dates TBD	
February Seminar	Select capstone topic - one paragraph summary due at seminar
March Office Hours - Required	Progress check-in (literature review, data plan, drafting plan, etc.)
April Office Hours - Required	Progress check-in
April Peer Review - Required	Peer review to be conducted outside seminar - results submitted following day
May 13	Capstone Paper Due
May 20 - 21	Capstone Paper Presentations

Disclaimer: Professor reserves the right to alter syllabus content.