

**PLSC 310 HONORS**  
**Policy Analysis Research Paper**

Your paper should address a current issue facing the state of California and offer a specific policy recommendation and well-researched analysis to state or local government officials.

**Length Requirement:** 10-12 pages (12 point font, double spaced)

**Recommended Structure:**

- I. Executive summary
  - A. Summary of the problem
  - B. Summary of your policy recommendation
- II. Background
  - A. Describe the nature and scope of the problem
  - B. Identify the significance and/or urgency of the problem
- III. Existing policy environment
  - A. Describe the implementation of existing policy
  - B. Evaluate the effectiveness and/or efficiency of existing policy
- IV. Policy alternatives
  - A. Describe alternative policies
  - B. Compare and contrast existing policy with alternatives
  - C. Identify obstacles to changing or modifying current policy
- V. Recommendations
  - A. Recommend alternative policy or modifications to existing policy
  - B. Explain rationale for recommendations
- VI. References
  - A. Cite 5-10 reputable sources, including 5 scholarly articles/books
  - B. Use APA style for in-text citations and bibliography

**Step 1: The Research Proposal**

Your one-page research proposal must include a) your topic—a current policy issue or problem facing California, b) your intended audience (e.g. the governor, city council, a state agency, etc.) and c) a description of the type of evidence needed to analyze this issue. All topics must be approved by the instructor.

**Step 2: The Annotated Bibliography**

**Step 3: The Draft**

**Step 4: Revising Your Draft**

**Step 5: Class Presentation**

Your presentation will take place during our last class meeting. You should prepare a 10- minute presentation that explains the policy issue and persuades your classmates to support your policy recommendation. If possible, make a call to action for those who want to get involved.

## Paper Grading Rubric (100 points)

### ✓ **Argument (20 points)**

Does the writer make a specific policy recommendation for California?

### ✓ **Evidence/Use of Sources (20 points)**

Does the paper offer evidence that effectively supports its argument? Does the writer make use of both primary and secondary sources? Are all sources properly cited in APA format?

### ✓ **Thoughtful Analysis (20 points)**

Does the writer demonstrate a thorough understanding of the topic? Does the writer provide accurate interpretations and thoughtful analysis of the evidence presented? Does the paper present alternative viewpoints in a fair and well-reasoned manner?

### ✓ **Organization & Scope (20 points)**

Does the paper include all six required sections with clearly labeled section headings? Do paragraphs begin with topic sentences? Does each paragraph convey one main point? Does the paper fulfill all requirements and meet the required page length?

### ✓ **Style (10 points)**

Is the paper well written and easy to read? Is the tone formal and professional, avoiding the use of slang, vulgarities, and contractions?

### ✓ **Grammar & Syntax (10 points)**

Does the paper contain grammatical errors or typos? Does it have run-on or incomplete sentences?

## Deadlines

1. Submit research proposal by 7:10PM on **March 20<sup>th</sup>**
2. Submit annotated bibliography by 7:10PM on **April 10<sup>th</sup>**
3. Submit semi-final draft by 7:10PM on **May 1<sup>st</sup>**
4. Submit final draft by 7:10PM on **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**
5. Present to class on **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**