



PEPPERDINE
School of Public Policy

New Course Descriptions Fall 2025

Note: MPP 617.01 Designing and Writing Research Proposals (3 units) with [Marlon Graf](#) is strongly recommended/required for those students desiring to pursue an individual capstone. Those that do not will be required to submit a detailed research proposal (such as the one to be prepared in MPP 617) to be allowed into the capstone (see [Capstone Notice](#)). MPP 617 can count for one of the four specializations: Economics, American Politics, International Relations, or State and Local Policy. **Note: this class is suited well for those students interested in grant-making, human subject research, and related fields.**

MPP 647.01 Seminar in Political Issues: Case Studies in Modern Leadership (3 units)

[Dan Schnur](#)

American Politics

In-Person

This course will explore the principles that are essential to successful leadership including the skills and approaches necessary to achieve success in the political, business, military, media, diplomatic, and athletic arenas. Students will explore a series of case studies of six modern leaders from the 20th and 21st centuries combined with an emphasis on six stages of the process of leadership development and application. Students will read biographies of each of the six leaders and participate in both lecture and discussion about those leaders' biographies, challenges, and accomplishments. The six stages of leadership examined throughout the semester are: 1) Getting Started/Early Influences, 2) Developing a System/Putting a Plan in Place, 3) Challenges of Leadership, 4) Building Support/Motivating Followers, 5) Adjusting to New Circumstances, and 6) Measuring Leadership. The course will be conducted in a participatory rather than traditional classroom atmosphere. While the first half of class is devoted to traditional lecture on the pre-assigned reading, students are expected to play an active and involved role in the form of questions, comments, or analysis on the topic at hand. The second half of each class requires even more involvement: it is devoted to a class discussion of the leader in which the students will be asked to prepare questions and analysis of the assigned reading and related materials. Small groups, presentations, and daily news developments will be all utilized.

MPP 647.02 Seminar in Political Issues: Public Policy in the Age of AI (3 units)

[Jarret Catlin](#)

American Politics or State and Local Policy

In Person

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping how we live, work, and govern. This course surveys the major public policy questions raised by how AI impacts subjects including but not limited to national security, intellectual property, and the future workforce and will challenge students to critically evaluate what good public policy looks like. Through real-world case studies and critical discussion, students will develop a strategic framework for evaluating emerging technologies through a public policy lens. No technical background required, just curiosity and a willingness to rigorously wrestle with big questions.

MPP 647.03 Seminar in Political Issues: 20th Century Welfare Policy (3 units)

Abbylin Sellers

American Politics

In-Person

Since America's inception in the late 18th century, the responsibility of taking care of those in need belonged to the community and the family. Neighbors, friends, and family depending on one another for assistance remained the expectation until the early 20th century. Progressive ideology generated a social policy agenda heavily promoting federal government involvement, and coupled with state social welfare policy action, gradually shifted responsibility from family and community to the government. This in turn, laid the groundwork for Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal during a time of economic crisis, which fundamentally transformed the expectation of how society cares for the poor and those in need in the form of the Social Security Act of 1935. More specifically, the federal government ushered in a new era of interventionist policies and regulations on the free market, establishing what is known today as entitlement programming. Notable economists during the era, John Maynard Keynes and Friedrich Hayek, "clashed" in their views and approaches to the role of the government in times of economic downturn. The rise and expansion of the administrative state in the area of social welfare action continued throughout the 20th century, evidenced by subsequent presidential administrations; specifically with Lyndon B. Johnson and his Great Society programs. Efforts to challenge and curb further growth of welfare entitlements did not occur until the 1980s during the Reagan administration and by the early 1990s, the welfare caseload reached its peak. Comprehensive reform regarding the distribution of welfare was not implemented until 1996 with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 by the Clinton administration and the Republican controlled Congress. This was an important step in shifting responsibility back to states and communities, while at the same time reducing federal government control.

This course will offer a broad historical overview of how welfare policy became a permanent fixture of American government, while demonstrating how intervening federal policies have had a detrimental effect on family and community involvement. Students will be exposed to the roots of the federal welfare state and analyze the varying theoretical economic arguments for and against government provision for those in need, the significance of a free market system in helping alleviate poverty, including the importance of the family, church, and community.

MPP 668.01 Seminar in International Relations: Cybersecurity Policy (3 units)

Andy Keiser

American Politics and International Relations

Online with Three In-Person Classes

This seminar course will provide students exposure to the history and key policy issues related to cybersecurity, including the legal authorities and obligations of both the government and the private sector with respect to protecting computer systems and networks, as well as the national security aspects of the cyber domain including authorities related to offensive activities in cyberspace. The course will include a survey of federal laws, executive orders, and regulations related to surveillance, cyber intrusions by private and nation-state actors, data breaches, and privacy and civil liberties matters, among other things. The course will also explore the legislative and technology landscape in this dynamic area and will provide students with opportunities to discuss cutting-edge issues at the intersection of technology, security, and policy. The approach will be historical and topical. The history of signals intelligence and cybersecurity offers a surprising number of illustrative cases and themes—many of which can now be examined in detail using official records and contrarian views, and can be compared with analogues across nations and time periods.

MPP 687.01 Seminar in Regional Policies: California Policy: Problems and Opportunities for Reform (3 units)

[Lee Ohanian](#)

State and Local Policy

In Person

From environmental policy to tax policy, California has originated a number of public policy ideas that have spread around the country. More broadly, the state has been the exemplar of what the scholar Walter Russell Mead called the "Blue State Model"—the idea that residents are willing to pay more in taxes in order to receive superior public services. For the last decade, though, more Californians appear to be wondering whether this nexus—more taxes / better services—is actually happening. Many residents see the higher prices in housing, energy, and taxes, as they're also experiencing declining schools, public safety, and creaking infrastructure. This has led directly to the highest levels of out-migration from the state over the last 15 years in its history.

In this class, our 2025 Giles-O'Malley Distinguished Visiting Professor, Lee Ohanian (UCLA and Hoover Institution), will explore the reasons behind the fracturing of the "Blue State Model," and whether there are opportunities to reform public policies that can balance cost-of-living with other interests including the environment and public services. Part history, part quantitative analysis, part current events, this class will survey the major policy issues facing the state and where there might be opportunities to improve. Can the "Golden State" become golden again? As federal policy continues to push policymaking down to the state level, this course will not only be helpful for those students looking to serve in the state, but also those who wish to better understand state policymaking.

New Faculty Biographies

Full-list of faculty biographies available at: <http://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/academics/faculty/>

JARRETT CATLIN



Dr. Jarrett Catlin is a researcher, writer, policy strategist, and public affairs consultant. He is vice president of Tusk Strategies, a public affairs firm running advocacy and communications campaigns for startups. He previously was a researcher at the RAND Corporation, where his research helped federal agencies plan for emerging technologies and his doctoral dissertation focused on how Southern California cities responded to the arrival of shared e-scooters. Past projects have included "Navigating a Wave of New AI Laws," "Making Crypto Tax Policy Clear," "Breaking into Government Markets," "Developing Original Tech Policy Content,"

and more. Prior to his career as a policy strategist he worked as a policy staffer for multiple members of Congress.

ANDY KEISER



Andy Keiser served for 14 years on Capitol Hill, including as Senior Advisor to the House Intelligence Committee and as Chief of Staff to its Chairman, former Congressman Mike Rogers from Michigan. During his time in Congress, Keiser helped shepherd six Intelligence Authorization Acts into law authorizing funding and authorities for all 17 U.S. intelligence agencies, and Chairman Rogers' cyber threat sharing legislation, the core of which was later signed into law by President Barack Obama. Mr. Keiser was also the head writer for a nationally syndicated radio program and assisted in the production of the CNN series *Declassified*. Dubbed a

"national security expert" by *The Washington Post*, Keiser is a regular media commentator on national security and technology issues. His commentary has been featured by media outlets including *Fox News Channel*, *News Nation*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Politico*, *Real Clear Defense*, *Breaking Defense*, and *The Hill*.

Keiser has a bachelor of arts from Michigan State University and a master of arts from the United States Naval War College. He is an active scholar at the National Security Institute (NSI) at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School, where he serves as a senior fellow, Senior Contributor to The SCIF and guest lecturer, and at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress (CSPC), where he serves as a senior fellow. He also is a member of the OSS Society.

Keiser is the author of a 2023 Foundation for American Leadership paper titled: [Successful Semiconductor Industry Export Controls: The Importance of a Multilateral Efforts](#) and co-author of a 2023 NSI paper titled: [Restricting U.S. Outbound Investment to Targeted Chinese Sectors](#). He is the co-author of a 2021 CSPC paper titled: [The Race for Semiconductor Supremacy: China Versus an Emerging Democratic Technology Alliance](#), the author of 2020 papers titled: [The Race to 5G: Securing the Win](#) and [Securing the Key to the Future: Countering the Threat from State-Backed Chinese Semiconductor Companies](#), and the author of a 2019 NSI Law and Policy Paper titled: [Chinese Telecommunications Companies Huawei and ZTE: Countering a Hostile Foreign Threat](#). He also has [testified before the United States Congress](#) on the subject of Huawei and ZTE's threat to small business.

Keiser is currently a senior principal at Navigators Global where he serves on the Executive Committee and leads clients on national security, intelligence, and telecommunications, technology, transportation and supply chain security issues.

LEE OHANIAN



Lee E. Ohanian is professor of economics, and director of the Ettinger Family Program in Macroeconomic Research at UCLA, where he has taught since 1999. He is also a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and the associate director of the Center for the Advanced Study in Economic Efficiency at Arizona State University. He is an adviser to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and previously has advised other Federal Reserve Banks, Foreign Central Banks, and the National Science Foundation. He has been an economic adviser to state and national political campaigns and has testified to the U.S. Senate and the California State Legislative Assembly. His

research, which recently has been discussed in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and other media sources, focuses on economic crises, and has been published widely in a number of peer-reviewed journals. He is a frequent columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and other media. He received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Rochester.