

Syllabus

Legislative Advocacy for Economic Justice

Course 285.45 sec. 001

<https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1556078>

UC Berkeley School of Law, Fall 2026

Meetings: Tuesday, 3:35 - 5:25 pm

Room 111

Instructor: Norma P. Garcia

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Phone: (415) 305-7409

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m., Cafe Zeb

Welcome

I'd like to welcome you to the fall 2026 session of Legislative Advocacy for Economic Justice at Berkeley Law. If you are interested in learning how to make law at its source, before legislative bodies, in order to advance consumer rights and economic justice, then you have come to the right place. Together we will "lift the dome" off the State Capitol in Sacramento to explore the California legislative process and prepare you to be an effective legal advocate representing low-income communities to solve real-world problems.

Course Description

Legislative advocacy is a necessary and potent tool for advancing and safeguarding economic justice. It means working on behalf of others, and often alongside impacted communities. It can mean taking action to affirmatively advance a change in the law or stepping in to stop a harmful proposal in its tracks. From curtailing abusive marketplace practices that siphon economic resources from vulnerable communities to using legislation to establish agencies to protect consumer rights, legislative bodies debate consequential bills that can change the law and significantly impact consumer protections. And yet - few courses exist to train future lawyers in how to define the issues, shape the outcome, and ensure the public is counted when laws are made. As future attorneys, law students are uniquely poised to advance economic justice by developing and deploying their professional skills to influence lawmaking at its source, before legislative bodies. This course will teach you how.

Using the California Legislature as the backdrop, this course will cover the practical components and considerations necessary to successfully advance a bill from an idea to statutory law. Practical skills taught in this course include learning how to articulate the need for legislative

action to achieve greater consumer protection and economic justice; identifying the appropriate California Code sections for amendment; drafting bill language; articulating strategies for working with legislators and their staff; identifying the main components of successful lobbying as well as ethical considerations for lawyers engaged in this role; identifying the advantages and challenges of working in coalitions; articulating successful negotiation strategies and how to navigate the interests of varied stakeholders; identifying the interplay of politics and timing; engaging media in amplifying advocacy efforts; and defending victories when success is achieved.

This course will also provide an understanding of how legislative advocacy skills can be applied across multiple subject matter areas and integrated with other essential lawyering skills including investigation, research and writing, legal and policy analysis, statutory drafting, negotiation, and persuasive oral and written advocacy.

Students will meet with legislators and staff as guest speakers, and will either remotely attend a legislative hearing taking place in the State Capitol in Sacramento or watch an archived hearing. Students will also meet with movement building organizations led by impacted people who are or will be the subject of legislative efforts. For a final project, students will design a legislative advocacy plan and present it to the class.

Instructor

Norma P. Garcia is an award-winning attorney and public policy expert who worked as a Senior Attorney with Consumers Union (now Consumer Reports) for nearly 25 years. At CU, she led groundbreaking legislative and regulatory campaigns on behalf of low-to-moderate income communities and engaged in complex litigation impacting millions of consumers. She has also served as Policy Counsel and Director of Advocacy for Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA), a trailblazing nonprofit dedicated to building equity by promoting Latino prosperity, community ownership and civic power in San Francisco's Mission District, her neighborhood of origin. At MEDA, she ran key programmatic and legislative initiatives to strengthen inclusion and social justice for culturally diverse communities driving greater access to affordable housing, healthcare, education, workforce training and small business development.

Textbook/Course Materials

Course Textbook

Advocacy for Public Health Policy Change: An Urgent Imperative 1st Edition

by Harry M. Snyder (Author), M.D. Iton, Anthony B. (Author)

The advocacy tools presented in this textbook are universal in their application and extend beyond public health policy. Written by expert consumer protection attorneys, the book includes strategies and exercises that are directly applicable to advancing consumer protection and economic justice before legislative bodies.

Any additional readings will be posted to the course site several days in advance of class.

bCourses

Our class bCourse site is <https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1556078>
Please check our class bCourse site for relevant announcements, assignments, or updates.

Berkeley Law Learning Outcomes

I expect you to achieve the following Berkeley Law Learning Outcomes in this course (in addition to the course-specific learning outcomes noted below):

- (a) Knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law;
- (b) Legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and written and oral communication in the legal context;
- (c) Exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system;
- (d) Other professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession;
- (e) Ability to critically assess laws and legal institutions, including the ways in which they shape and are shaped by racism and other forms of systemic inequality; and
- (f) Using the law to solve real-world problems and to create a more just society.

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Articulate and make use of the process of lawmaking before the California Legislature – i.e, how a bill becomes law (from concept to statutory law);
- Deploy cogent legal, public policy analysis, and advocacy skills to help resolve societal problems and address public policy concerns through legislation, particularly as applied to issues of consumer protection and economic justice;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role and importance of legislators, their staff, policy committees and their jurisdiction, committee staff, state agencies and the governor's office in lawmaking;
- Know and apply the main components of ethical and successful lobbying, i.e., working with legislators and their staff;
- Create a power map to analyze strengths and challenges in advancing a legislative idea;
- Draft sample bill language, a persuasive fact sheet, and a media release for a bill;
- Derive and demonstrate successful negotiation strategies and how to navigate the interests of varied stakeholders;
- Articulate strategies for preserving and defending victories and advocating for implementation when success is achieved;
- Create and present a legislative advocacy campaign plan (final project).

Assignments/Exams/Experiential Exercises/Papers/Projects

Grading and Evaluation

The course will be graded on the NC/PC/P/H/HH system – Pass (50%), Honors (30%), and High Honors (20%). Due dates are detailed in the calendar sections of this syllabus. Your final grade will be determined based on the following elements and percentages:

- In class participation: 20%, as detailed below. (ongoing throughout the semester)
- Drafting sample bill language, one-page maximum (research and writing): 10% (due Monday, 9/14, 11:59 p.m.)
- Drafting a one to two page Fact Sheet (research and writing): 10% (due Monday, 9/28 by 11:59 p.m.)
- Drafting a one to two page Media Release: 10% (due Monday, 10/19 by 11:59 p.m.)
- Final project: Create a final legislative advocacy campaign plan packet consisting of 10 Powerpoint slides with Notes, (attach final versions of sample bill language, Media Release, and Fact Sheet).
 - First Draft of Powerpoint slides with Notes: 10% (due Tuesday, 10/13 by 11:59 p.m.)
 - Final Draft of Powerpoint slides with Notes: 25% (due Monday, 11/02 by 11:59 p.m.)
 - Presentation of Final Project Powerpoint slides: 15% Each student will give a 10-minute Powerpoint presentation to the class, followed by a 5 minute question and answer period. Students sign up for the presentation dates as noted below.

Presentations will take place during class sessions on 11/03, 11/10, and 11/17. Presentation dates may change depending on class enrollment.

In-Class Participation

Each student should complete reading assignments for class, attend every class, and participate as an active listener and contributor. You are encouraged to volunteer answers and to ask questions. You are encouraged to listen attentively and engage with our guest speakers after they present. Sometimes, I will have to postpone answering certain questions to keep the class moving at an appropriate pace but I am happy to discuss any remaining questions during office hours.

Late Assignment Policy

Timely submission of assignments is an important part of professionalism. As such, I expect you to submit each assignment by the due date. I understand, though, that extenuating circumstances may sometimes prevent you from doing so. If you need to submit an assignment late for a valid reason (e.g. illness or family emergency), please email me before the due date (or as soon as possible in light of the circumstances). I will be happy to provide you with an extension if necessary. However, if you fail to communicate with me, unexcused late or incomplete assignments will result in reduced points on the assignment.

Preserving the Integrity of Your Work Product

Each student should be familiar with and adhere to the [Berkeley Law Generative AI Policy, effective Summer 2026](#). Your work must be totally your own, without reliance, input, or assistance from any other person, and you may not use Generative AI tools (like ChatGPT) or materials generated by such tools in this class. You may use grammar and spell-checking software, and Lexis and Westlaw. Any violation of this policy will be strictly reviewed and can result in an honor code violation and a failing grade in this class. If you have any questions about whether a particular use may violate this policy, please see me before engaging in the use.

The Success of our Learning Environment Depends on Civility and Respect

When discussing issues related to economic justice, sensitive topics may arise during the class including those dealing with issues of poverty, racism, cultural erasure, systemic exclusion from opportunity and power, sexism and more. We will often discuss big questions raised by the materials, and the class will have differing views. I encourage thoughtfulness for others who may have experienced stress or anxiety related to these issues. When done with civility and respect, everyone will benefit from the airing of those views, and I encourage you to articulate your views in class, with full support from me in doing so, regardless of whether you think others agree with you.

Legislative Advocacy for Economic Justice Fall 2026 Schedule

Note: Any additional readings will be posted to the course site several days in advance of class.

Class date #	Topic	Reading/Assignment	Relevant Course-Specific Learning Outcomes
1 (8/18)	Introduction/Course Overview Discussion: Berkeley Law, Advocates in Action, AB 747 (Kalra), Reforming Service of Process, (SPARE Act)	Read: Textbook: Preface, Acknowledgments, Chapter One Article: California state Capitol: How your government works - CalMatters California Constitution , Article IV, pages 180 - 193, (pdf pages 194-210)	• Articulate the genesis of legislative power in California government; • Ability to critically assess laws and legal institutions, including the ways in which they shape and are shaped by racism and other forms of systemic inequality; • Understand how legislative advocacy is an essential pathway for using the law to solve real-world problems and to create a more just society.
2 (8/25)	How a Bill Becomes Law From concept to statutory law, understanding the path	Read: Textbook, Chapter 6	• Deploy cogent legal, public policy analysis, and advocacy skills to help resolve societal

	for how a consumer protection bill becomes law in California is essential for successfully navigating the legislative process. This includes reviewing the role of administrative agencies in effectuating and enforcing statutory law. Connecting the Dots; Consumer Rights are Civil Rights Guest Speaker: Shelmun Dashan, JD Policy Director Center for Consumer Law and Economic Justice Berkeley Law Final Project topics discussion	Article: Which of these 2025 California bills did Gavin Newsom sign into law September 29, 2025, Updated March 27, 2026	problems and address public policy concerns; • Derive and demonstrate successful negotiation strategies and how to navigate the interests of varied stakeholder; • Articulate strategies for preserving and defending victories. • Ability to critically assess laws and legal institutions, including the ways in which they shape and are shaped by racism and other forms of systemic inequality • Using the law to solve real world problems and to create a more just society.
3 (9/1)	Under the Dome Decision-Makers: Members of the California Legislature, the Governor, and Staff Invited Guest Speakers: Senator Ben Allen, JD Shoshana Levy, MPAA	Review class project topic list to be posted on bCourse. Sign up for a topic. Obtain instructor approval for a topic not on the list. Review: California State Senate Roster California State Assembly Roster Office of Governor Gavin Newsom - Organizational Chart Office of Governor Gavin Newsom - Legislative Affairs Issues Chart	• Demonstrate an understanding of the role and importance of legislators, their staff, policy committees and their jurisdiction, committee staff, state agencies and the governor's office in lawmaking; • Be able to research and identify members of the California Legislature (both Senate and Assembly); • Deploy cogent legal, public policy analysis, and advocacy skills to help resolve societal problems and address public policy concerns through legislation, particularly as applied to issues of consumer protection and economic justice; • Derive and demonstrate successful negotiation strategies and how to navigate the interests of varied stakeholders;

			Articulate strategies for preserving and defending victories and advocating for implementation when success is achieved.
4 (9/8)	Designing a Legislative Consumer Advocacy Campaign- The Basics California Codes and Legislative Committee Jurisdiction over Consumer Protection Issues Bill Drafting Basics Guest Speaker: Jessica Gosney, JD Attorney IV, California Franchise Tax Board	Read: Textbook, Chapters 2, 3 Review: Senate Committees Committees California State Senate Assembly Committees Committees California State Assembly Engage in substantive factual and legal research on your Final Project topic.	- Identify the key components of a winning legislative advocacy campaign; - Develop proficiency in the mechanics of drafting a one to two-page Fact Sheet. - Understand the intersection between bill subject matter, choosing an author and committee jurisdiction; - Research and identify the appropriate policy committee(s) with jurisdiction over a bill and the implications of such. - Effectively research and identify the appropriate California Code sections for amendment and drafting simple bill language.
5 (9/15)	Lobbying Basics Lobbying Law and Ethics Overview Guest Speaker: Brian Augusta, JD Public Interest Advocates	Due by Monday, September 14, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Deadline to submit sample bill language for your Final Project issue. Read: Textbook, focus on pp. 56, 86, 87 Personal visits to decision makers - lobbying. FPPC Lobbying Disclosure Information Manual, Chapters 1& 7: Chapter 1 - Lobbying Filer: Qualification Rules(PDF) Chapter 7 - Restrictions(PDF)	- Know and apply the main components of successful lobbying, i.e., working with legislators and their staff; - Identify legal and ethical obligations relating to lawyers who lobby.

6 (9/22)	Advancing Community Voices Coalition and Stakeholder Engagement Guest Speaker: Graciela Aponte-Diaz Strategic Consultant Center for Consumer Law and Economic Justice Berkeley Law Power Mapping: Assessing Power Dynamics as an Advocacy Strategy	Read: Textbook, Chapter 5 Review: Washington State Department of Health Community Engagement Guide	• Ability to critically assess laws and legal institutions, including the ways in which they shape and are shaped by racism and other forms of systemic inequality; and • Using the law to solve real-world problems and to create a more just society. • Derive and demonstrate successful negotiation strategies and how to navigate the interests of varied stakeholders • Create a power map to analyze strengths and challenges of a legislative idea;
7 (9/29)	Remote “Field Trip” to the State Capitol Demystifying testimony in Sacramento	Due by Monday, September 28, 2026, by 11:59 p.m., deadline to submit a one to two page Fact Sheet on your Final Project issue. Due by the beginning of today’s class session: Locate and read the following documents related to the “Remote Field Trip” bill, to be assigned. • Bill Language • Committee Analysis • Bill Status	• Demonstrated understanding of the role and importance of legislators, their staff, policy committees and committee staff in lawmaking; • Familiarity with legislative hearing procedures, including offering testimony, the significance of a bill’s analysis, and responding to member questions from the dais. • Students are prepared to deploy their advocacy skills at a hearing.
8 (10/6)	Communicating the Message and Media Advocacy Guest Speaker: Michael McCauley Former Associate Director, Strategic Communications Consumer Reports	Read: Textbook, Chapter 4 Article by Roy Peter Clark What makes a story good? Lessons for all public writers In preparation for submitting the first draft of your Final	• Identify the purpose of media in advancing an advocacy campaign; • Identify strategies to engage social and traditional media in amplifying advocacy efforts; • Draft brief content for social media dissemination; • Articulate elements for a persuasive Media Release • Understanding what makes a story compelling from a

		Project PowerPoint, due Tuesday, 10/13, continue to engage in substantive factual and legal research on your final project issue.	journalist's perspective
9 (10/13)	Identifying Priority Consumer Protection and Economic Justice Issues for Legislative Action Guest Speaker: Professor Ted Mermin, JD Director, Center for Consumer Law and Economic Justice Berkeley Law	Due, Tuesday, October 13, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. Deadline to submit <u>first draft</u> of Final Project PowerPoint slide deck (minus Media advocacy slide). Review web pages: California Low Income Consumer Coalition Consumer Federation of California Releases 2025 Legislative Scorecard December 23, 2025 Consumer Attorneys of California Legislation	Identify priority consumer protection and economic justice bills under consideration and issues that may require future action.
10 (10/20)	How Administrative Agencies Implement and Enforce Consumer Protection and Economic Justice Laws Invited Guest Speaker: Suzanne Martindale, JD Chief Deputy Commissioner, California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI)	Due: Monday, October 19, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. Deadline to submit one to two page Media Release related to your Final Project Read: Textbook: pp 89 - 91, (Understand the Interplay Between Legislation, Courts, Administration, and Direct Action) Textbook: Chapters 7, 8	- Deploy cogent legal, public policy analysis, and advocacy skills to help resolve societal problems and address public policy concerns through legislation, particularly as applied to issues of consumer protection and economic justice - Ability to critically assess laws and legal institutions, including the ways in which they shape and are shaped by racism and other forms of systemic inequality; and - Using the law to solve real-world problems and to create a more just society.
11 (10/27)	Building Resiliency and Defending Your Victories	Read: UCSF Human Resources:	Articulate strategies for preserving and defending

	In-Class Final Project Preparation Time Guest Speaker: Anthony B. Iton, M.D., J.D., MPH. CEO, The Health Trust, Lecturer & Impact Fellow at UC Berkeley, School of Public Health	Tips for Managing Political Stress Textbook, Chapter 12	victories and advocating for implementation when success is achieved. • Instructor and peer support for project design. • Create and present a legislative advocacy campaign plan (final project). • Deploy cogent legal, public policy analysis, and advocacy skills to help resolve societal problems and address public policy concerns through legislation, particularly as applied to issues of consumer protection and economic justice; • Demonstrate an understanding of the role and importance of legislators, their staff, policy committees and their jurisdiction, committee staff, state agencies and the governor's office in lawmaking;
12 (11/3)	Final Project Presentations 1-6 Format: each presentation = 10 slides, 10 minutes, Q & A, 5 minutes.	Due for ALL STUDENTS:: Monday, November 2, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. Deadline to submit Final Project Packet (includes Final PowerPoint slide deck with Notes, Sample Bill Language, Fact Sheet, and Media Release) Students 1 - 6 presenting	• Create and present a legislative advocacy campaign plan (final project). • Students are prepared to deploy critical advocacy skills they have developed in the course, in order to help resolve societal problems and address public policy concerns through legislation, particularly as applied to issues of consumer protection and economic justice.
13 (11/10)	Final Project Presentations 7 - 13 Format: each presentation = 10 slides, 10 minutes, Q & A, 5 minutes.	Students 7 - 13 presenting	Same as Week 12
14 (11/17)	Final Project Presentations 14 - 20	Students 14 - 20 presenting	Same as Week 12

LAST CLASS	Format: each presentation = 10 slides, 10 minutes, Q & A, 5 minutes. Complete course evaluations.		
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School-wide Policies and Resources

1) A “credit hour” at Berkeley Law is an amount of work that reasonably approximates three to four hours of work per week for 15 weeks, including a) classroom time, b) time spent preparing for class, c) time spent in review sessions and studying and taking, final exams, d) time spent researching, writing, and revising papers and other written work, and e) time spent preparing for and completing any other final project, presentation, or performance. For these calculations, 50 minutes of classroom instruction counts as one hour, and the 15 weeks include the exam period. You can expect to spend this amount of time per unit per week on in-class and out-of-class, course-related work as described above. (Note that this total workload will be distributed differently in classes that only meet for part of the semester.)

2) Students who need accommodations for disability or pregnancy or want to discuss the implementation of their accommodations, including accommodated exams, should contact [Chelsea Yuan](#), Director for Student Academic Advising & Support Services, Accessible Education.

Student Academic Advising & Support Services schedules all exams, including accommodated exams, as the law school is committed to anonymous grading. PROFESSORS DO NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO RESCHEDULE EXAMS.

3) Class may be recorded by audio and/or video at the professor's discretion and/or pursuant to a disability-related accommodation authorized by the Law School. By enrollment in this course, each student consents to the recording and use described above. Pursuant to Berkeley Law Academic Rule 7, “Students shall not post online or otherwise distribute video or audio, chat transcripts, screenshots, or other types of class recordings for any reason unless authorized in connection with a disability accommodation.”

4) The [Academic Honor Code](#) governs the conduct of all students during examinations and in all other academic and pre-professional activities at Berkeley Law. We expect students to adhere to this code scrupulously. If you have any questions about whether your conduct may violate the code, please contact your professor or the Dean of Students before you act. You may face severe consequences, including a failing grade in this class or removal from the program, and the Bar will receive notification of your conduct.

5) [Berkeley Law Academic Skills Program](#). The Academic Skills Program helps students learn and hone core law school skills such as time management, reading cases, outlining, and taking law school exams. If you have questions or just want to check in, you can [schedule a meeting](#)

with a member of the ASP team. For handouts, online study aids, practice exam information, and more, please bookmark [the Academic Skills Program website](#).

6) Student Technology Help As a Berkeley Law student, you are entitled to general software support for your computer from the law school, and certain free software downloads from UC Berkeley, while enrolled. If you have issues with internet access or computer equipment required to participate in classes remotely, contact studentcomputing@law.berkeley.edu. Information, links, and instructions for many common computer/technical questions can be found in the [law library's online computing guide](#). For bCourses, Zoom, and technical support questions, please email studentcomputing@law.berkeley.edu or you can use the [Student Computing chat](#). In both cases, someone will respond to you during our regular business hours.

If you have research-related questions, please contact the reference librarians by filling out the [reference request form](#). You can also reach reference librarians during business hours by using the [law library's chat service](#).

7) If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find basic needs information [here](#). You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via [CalFresh](#) or our Food Assistance Program. If you need food immediately, please visit our [UC Berkeley Food Pantry](#).

8) The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community dedicated to the advancement, application, and transmission of knowledge and creative endeavors through academic excellence, where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Every member of the community should be aware that the University prohibits sexual violence and sexual harassment, retaliation, and other prohibited behavior ("Prohibited Conduct") that violates the law and/or University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of Prohibited Conduct and will take appropriate action to prevent, correct, and when necessary, to discipline behavior that violates this policy. For the complete UC Policy, definitions, compliance, and procedures, please access the [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy](#).

Resources: If you have further questions or concerns about reporting behavior related to sexual harassment, sexual violence, and/or protected category discrimination, please contact the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD) by phone 510-643-7985 or email ask_ophd@berkeley.edu.

1. [Path to Care Center](#) Confidential Advocates provide affirming, empowering, and confidential support for those that have experienced gendered violence, including sexual harassment, emotional abuse, dating, and intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sexual exploitation. Advocates bring a non-judgmental, caring approach to exploring all options, rights, and resources. They can be reached by phone at (510) 642-1988.