

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2025-2026 Ethics and Policy Student Fellows

The California Center for Ethics and Policy (CCEP) is a university center dedicated to fostering engaged and informed dialogue concerning ethics and policy challenges where California has the opportunity to exercise national and global leadership and develop evidence-based solutions. CCEP organizes its programs and events around annual themes. The 2025-2026 theme is:

## **The Future(s) of Work: Building Worker Power in Southern California's Low-Wage Industries**

Central to CCEP's mission is its Ethics and Policy Student Fellows program. As a part of this program, student fellows:

- **Enroll in an intensive Ethics and Policy Seminar (CLS 4990, which will meet in Spring 2026, Wednesdays 3:30-4:35pm and is a hybrid asynchronous course)** dedicated to the investigation of CCEP's annual theme (see the next page for a description of the Spring 2026 seminar).
- **Interact with visiting experts** whose research engages with CCEP's annual theme.
- **Participate in a student conference** in Spring 2026 at which seminar final projects are presented and discussed.
- **Are strongly encouraged to take a leadership role in the activities of the Center,** including:
  - CCEP's Public Events.
  - The [CCEP Podcast](#). Some examples of past student-developed episodes:
    - *Uncertain Forecast, Episode 1* – [What is Plastic?](#)
    - *Securing Justice, Episode 3* – [Moving Forward in Affordable Housing: The Role of Architects](#)

■ *Securing Justice, Episode 7 – [Reflections on Housing and Home](#)*

This is a **funded fellowship opportunity**. Thanks in large part to a generous donation from alum Michael ('72) and his wife Jeanette Bidart, students who are accepted as Ethics and Policy Fellows will have the opportunity to apply for additional scholarships and fellowships, with **awards ranging from \$100 to \$1,000**.

CCEP invites all interested Cal Poly Pomona undergraduate students to apply to the 2025-26 Student Fellows program. Eligible students should have junior status or higher.

To apply, students should:

(a) **E-mail a statement of interest** (approximately 500 words) outlining their academic and co-curricular background relevant to this year's CCEP theme and describing how serving as a Student Fellow would advance their personal or professional goals. This statement should also include:

- Bronco ID number
- Major, minor (if any)
- A description of any leadership roles, internships, jobs, or coursework broadly related to this year's theme.

Submit the statement as a Word or PDF document to CCEP Director Dr. Brady Collins ([bjcollins@cpp.edu](mailto:bjcollins@cpp.edu)).

(b) **Arrange for a short e-mail recommendation** from a university faculty member familiar with the applicant's background, skills, and potential, to be e-mailed directly to Dr. Collins.

Both documents must be received by Friday, October 3rd. Applicants will be notified regarding their acceptance by the end of the month.

Applicants and letter writers are encouraged to visit the CCEP website (<https://www.cpp.edu/ethics-and-policy>) for further information.

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## **ETHICS AND POLICY SEMINAR (CLS 4990)**

# **Spring 2026 | Hybrid Async: In person Wed 3:30-4:45pm | 3 Units**

## **The Future(s) of Work: Building Worker Power in Southern California's Low-Wage Industries**

### **Course Description & Objectives:**

In recent years academics, media pundits, CEOs, and politicians have all shared concern and hope for the “future of work.” This term is often discussed as it relates to technological innovation, namely the challenges and opportunities of integrating and regulating artificial intelligence (AI). However, these debates often overlook those sectors of our economy that have and will likely remain reliant on human labor in the face of growing automation and AI. In California, these sectors are predominantly composed of young people, women, and people of color, and are the backbone of our state's economy: hospitality, healthcare, restaurants, supermarkets, agriculture, domestic care, and warehousing. Nevertheless, shifts in the post-industrial economy and attacks on organized labor continue to dramatically reshape working conditions in these industries. In these industries workers face long hours, extreme heat and exhaustion, wage theft, retaliation, and discrimination at higher rates than other sectors. Despite the vulnerability of their workforces, these industries are also sites of historical and ongoing worker organizing and unionization fights. Today in California, unions, worker centers, and community organizers are in a constant struggle with business associations and trade lobbyists to reimagine and redefine what the potential *futures* of work in California could be. In this course, students will investigate how battles are playing out in Southern California. More specifically, students will explore:

- The history of and development of these seven key industries in California
- The unique forms of exploitation workers face in each sector and how it impacts their job, community, and the economy
- How technology and policy are reshaping working conditions in Southern California's low-wage industries
- The role of worker organizing and coalition building in responding to these emerging challenges

The seminar will actively center the lived experiences of students, positioning them as scholars, storytellers, and subjects. Today, rising tuition, living expenses, and reduced financial aid have made college far less accessible, meaning many students are forced to work to help support their education. At Cal Poly Pomona, these “workers and learners” make up an ever-increasing proportion of the student body. Through intensive mentorship, creative learning strategies, and community engagement opportunities, students in this course will also investigate how the future of work impacts their own lives and the lives of their peers. By the end of the course, students will have:

1. Gained a holistic understanding of low-wage industries and their workforces.
2. Examined their own experiences as workers and learners within broader societal and economic shifts.
3. Networked with unions, worker centers, and other organizations advocating for workers' rights.
4. Developed and published Digital Humanities projects, including podcasts and/or StoryMaps, to disseminate their research to the public.

## Course Structure & Expectations:

The seminar will be taught by **Dr. Brady Collins**, Associate Professor of Political Science at Cal Poly Pomona, whose teaching and research specialize in labor studies, urban politics, and qualitative methodologies. Dr. Collins brings extensive experience in examining and participating in California's labor movement.

The course will feature:

- In-person seminar meetings for discussion, training, and collaborative work on Wednesdays, along with asynchronous assignments.
- Guest lectures and expert panels featuring scholars, union organizers, and community advocates.
- Field trips to workplaces, worker centers/unions, and City Council meetings to engage with organizing campaigns on the ground.

Students are expected to attend all components of the seminar and produce a **creative final project** using Digital Humanities tools to tell the story of the future of work from the perspective of Southern California's frontline industries. Projects may include podcasts, digital exhibits, story maps, and/or video interviews.

This course welcomes and supports diverse forms of student creativity and aims to empower students to critically connect their personal experiences with broader economic and political transformations.