POS 3122W State Government

Fall 2012 Syllabus

Contact Information

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Course Description

State Government examines politics in the American states focusing on foundations, institutions, processes and policy. We look at the demographic and economic environment of the states as well as state constitutions and the role of states in the federal system. We examine participation in state and local politics, the role of political parties and the conduct of state and local elections. We explore state institutions including the legislature, executive branch, bureaucracy, and courts. We also investigate the structure, function, governance and challenges facing local government in the US. Finally we analyze and evaluate state and local policy including criminal justice, land use, economic development, civil rights, education, health, welfare and taxation.

Goals

1. Knowledge: Students should understand basic facts and concepts related to state politics and policy.

2. Comparative Approach: Students will engage in the comparative analytical approach: examining political institutions and behaviors across states in order to identify and explain similarities and differences.

3. Public Policy: Students will evaluate the role of state government in managing conflict over what values should be implemented as public policy in a variety of areas.

4. Florida: Students will focus on Florida to see how and why politics and policy operate as they do in our own state contrasted to others.

5. Diversity: Students will explore how diversity impacts state politics and policy focusing on contemporary minority American culture as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, social and economic class, age, sexual orientation and physical ability.

Required Texts

1. Thomas R. Dye and Susan A. MacManus, *Politics in States and Communities*, 14th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2012. (D&M)

2. Bruce Stinebrickner, ed. *Annual Editions: State and Local Government*, 15th ed. New York: McGraw Hill. 2012. (SLG)

Evaluation

<u>8 Modules – 80% of your total grade</u>. Each module consists of 2 graded activities: Chapter Quiz and Compare, Contrast, Update & Discuss. Each module will usually cover 2 chapters from the Dye and MacManus text (the last module has 3 chapters) and 6-7 articles from the SLG reader.

Chapter Quiz – 35% of total grade. Each quiz will usually have 50 questions covering material from Dye and MacManus and from the SLG articles. You will normally have 60 minutes to take the quiz. You may take the quiz a second time to improve your score. If you pass the first quiz with at least a 60 or higher and choose to take the quiz a second time I will take the higher score of the two attempts as your grade for the quiz. If you score less than 60 on the first attempt and take the quiz a second time I will take the average of the two attempts as your grade for the quiz. You should read the chapters and articles and study before starting the quiz as you will not have time to look up every answer.

Compare, Contrast, Update & Discuss – 45% of total grade. I will put you in small groups for the online discussion based on your last name. Compare, Contrast, Update & Discuss will include several steps. First you will compare and contrast state or local governments by looking up information online and writing a 700-1000 word essay. Next you will update information from the readings by looking up and writing a 350-500 word current event. You will upload this paper (the compare and contrast and current event) using the assignment function and also paste it into your discussion group. Finally you must engage in discussion with your fellow classmates by responding to their comparisons and contrast and current event. The discussion will require a minimum of three postings each module: the initial posting of your paper and then at least two postings responding to your fellow students. You should attempt to engage in professional college level discussion with your classmates. Highest grades go to students who exceed my expectations for quantity and quality of their papers and their discussion with classmates. Two additional postings is the minimum to get a C on that part of the assignment. You will need 8 or more (depending on quality and length) additional postings to get the highest possible score on discussing with class mates.

To grade discussion I have developed a rubric (scoring guidelines). Each discussion is worth up to 100 points: 50 points are possible for comparing and contrasting, 30 points for the current event, and 20 points for discussing things with your classmates. In addition there will be a 10 point penalty for each day the initial posting is late. So 10 points off for one day late and 20 points off for two days late etc. until the module closes. Once the module closes you will not be able to post further and I will not accept your postings.

Final Exam - 20% of your total grade. This is a cumulative essay exam and will be due on Saturday December 8th by 11:00 pm. Exams should be 3500 to 4500 words long double-spaced with Times New Roman font. I will post the final exam question and more details approximately three weeks before the end of the class to give you adequate time to work on it.

Policies

1. If you have questions about the course of a general nature do not e-mail me initially. Instead post your question in the Discussions section of the web site. Once in Discussions section select the topic “Questions for Professor Jewett” and then hit “Create Message,” type in your question and then hit “post.” Wait 48 hours for a response. You should review this section before asking your question as someone else may have already asked it. Of course if your problem is personal (grade related for instance) or involves not being able to get on the site (and hence unable to get to Discussions) feel free to e-mail me at my normal e-mail address - I do not use course mail!

2. If you would like to seek the help of fellow students go to Discussions and select the topic “Students Seeking Help from Students” and post your question as above. This can be a technical question about computer problems or a subject matter question. I will give extra credit to students who help others!

3. Online courses require students to be self-motivated and do work on a regular basis without being reminded of assignments and due dates. The average student can expect to put in at least 8-10 hours a week on this course if they want to do well. You will be reading 2 chapters from the main text and 6-7 articles from the reader each module. You can also expect that you will write 1500-2000 words for each module (counting initial postings and discussions with others) if you want to do well.

4. Late assignments will not be accepted once a quiz, discussion or module closes (as mentioned above I will take your initial paper posting on discussion late with a 10 point per day penalty but once the module closes that will be it). Do not wait until the last minute to do assignments. Computer problems and Internet connection problems will happen. They are not acceptable excuses for missing due dates and deadlines.

5. I will drop you lowest quiz score and lowest compare, contrast, update & discuss score when I compute your final grade - this may occur in the same week and module

or it could be a quiz from one week or module and a compare, contrast, update & discuss from another. Since I am not accepting late assignments after a module closes this will provide you a measure of protection should something happen that prevents you from doing a module or part of a module (computer glitch, illness, vacation etc.). And if you are happy with your grade on the first seven modules you can skip the last one – however the final exam will require you to use information from Module 8 so you should still read that material.

Grading Scale

This class is on a 10 point grading scale with no plus minus grades.

100-90 A (Outstanding or excellent work)

89-80 B (Good, above average work)

79-70 C (Average work)

69-60 D (Below average, poor work)

59-0 F (Unacceptable work or missed assignment)

Assignment Due Dates

Module 1 State Politics, Democracy and Constitutions: Quiz due by Friday 8/31 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Saturday 9/1 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Wednesday 9/5 11:00 pm

For Module 1 please read:

D & M chapters 1 Politics in the States and 2 Democracy & Constitutions

State and Local Gvt (SLG) articles 1 Federalist 17, 2 Federalist 45, 3 Nature of the American State, 13 California Here We Come, 14 Taking the Initiative, 48 California, There it Went

Module 2 Federalism and Participation in State Politics: Quiz due by Tuesday 9/11 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Wednesday 9/12 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Sunday 9/16 11:00 pm

For Module 2 please read:

D & M chapters 3 Federalism and 4 Participation

SLG articles 6 Demographics and Destiny, 7 Taking Stock, 9 Devolution's Double Standard, 10 On the Oregon Trail, 12 The No-Tax Pledge, 42 Nothing Ventured

Module 3 State Parties, Campaigns and Legislatures: Quiz due by Saturday 9/22 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Sunday 9/23 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 9/27 11:00 pm

For Module 3 please read:

D & M chapters 5 Parties and Campaigns and 6 Legislators

SLG articles 16 Reloading the Statehouse, 17 Bloggers Press for Power, 20 A Shift of Substance, 21 The Legislature as Sausage Factory, 22 Termed Out, 23 What Legislatures Need to Know, 26 The Private Life of E-Mail

Module 4 State Governors and Bureaucracy: Quiz due by Wednesday 10/3 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Thursday 10/4 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Monday 10/8 11:00 pm

For Module 4 please read:

D & M chapters 7 Governors and 8 Bureaucracy

SLG articles 27 When I Run Out of Fights to Have, 28 The Badgered State, 30 Counter Cultures, 31 Rise of the Generals, 37 The Sentient City, 47 Fixing the Rotten Corporate Barrel

Module 5 State Courts, Criminal Justice and Civil Rights: Quiz due by Sunday 10/14 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Monday 10/15 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Friday 10/19 11:00 pm

For Module 5 please read:

D & M chapters 9 State Courts and Criminal Justice and 15 Politics and Civil Rights

SLG articles 11 Caperton’s Coal, 19 Cross Examination, 32 Justice by the Numbers, 33 Kids Not Cases, 44 Same Sex Redux, 49 Prison Break

Withdrawal Deadline Monday 10/29

Module 6 Local Governance and Participation: Quiz due by Thursday 10/25 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Friday 10/26 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Tuesday 10/30 11:00 pm

For Module 6 please read:

D & M chapters 10 Governing America's Communities and 11 Participation in Community Politics

SLG articles 4 The American System of Townships, 5 Local Government: Observations, 15 Public Meetings and the Democratic Process, 24 Are City Councils Relics of the Past, 29 If He Can Make it There, 38 267 Years and Counting

Module 7 Metropolitan Politics and Community Power: Quiz due by Monday 11/5 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 11/6 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Saturday 11/10 11:00 pm

For Module 7 please read:

D & M chapters 12 Metropolitics: Conflict in the Metropolis and 13 Community Power and Land Use

SLG articles 8 Eminent Domain, 18 Cities without Newspapers, 34 How to Save our Shrinking Cities, 35 The Big Apple, 36 Unscrambling the City, 40 The Rise of the Creative Class

Module 8 State Taxation, Education, Health and Welfare: Quiz due by Friday 11/16 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Saturday 11/17 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Wednesday 11/21 11:00 pm

For Module 8 please read D & M chapters 14 Financing and Taxation, 16 Education and 17 Poverty, Welfare and Health

SLG articles 25 First Kill all the School Boards, 39 Two Cheers for the Property Tax, 41 Broke Town USA, 43 Lackluster Lotteries, 45 One Size Doesn't Fit All, 46 Giving Teens a Brake

Essay Final Exam Due by Saturday 12/8 11:00 pm

Getting Started

To begin the course, go back to the home page and then click on Learning Modules and then read and follow the instructions for Module 1.