POS 3122W State Government
Fall 2015 Syllabus

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Aubrey Jewett

Office: Phillips Hall 302 E

Office Hours: Online by e-mail or in person T or R 9:00 a.m. to12:00 p.m.

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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, growth management, environment, civil rights, education, health, welfare and taxation.

Goals

1. Knowledge: Students will understand the political foundations, institutions, and processes of state government.

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.

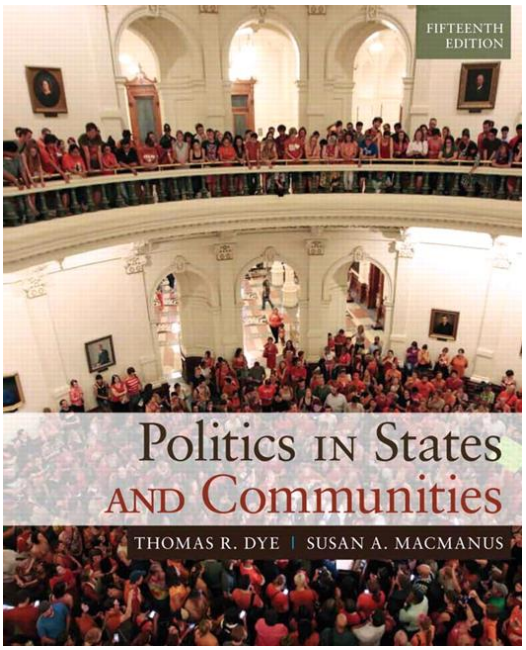
5. Diversity: Students will explore how diversity impacts state politics and policy focusing on contemporary minority American culture as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, social and economic class, age, sexual orientation and physical ability.

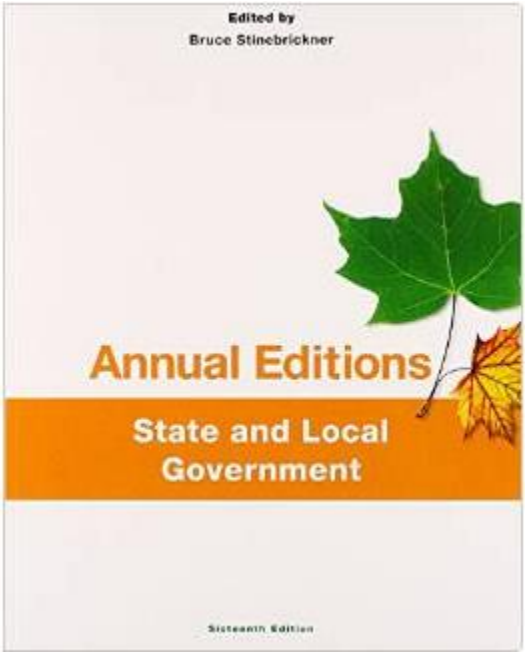
6. Current Issues: Students will find, discuss, and express thoughtful opinions about current state politics and policy.

Required Texts

1. Thomas R. Dye and Susan A. MacManus, *Politics in States and Communities*, 15th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2015. (D&M)

2. Bruce Stinebrickner, ed. *Annual Editions: State and Local Government*, 16th ed. New York: McGraw Hill. 2015. (SLG)





We will be using two books for this class and both are available new, used or for rent (and as e-books if you want instant access and a cheaper price). They should both be available at the on campus and off campus book stores and online. If you wish to get your book from an online retailer here are some options (these are just suggestions – you may get your book wherever you like).

For *Politics in States and Communities*:

To buy directly from the publisher (Pearson) – either a new hard copy or e-book go to http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/politics-in-states-and-communities-9780205994724?xid=PSED

Amazon has options for new or used purchase or rent and a Kindle version (with free software to use Kindle on non-Kindle devices): http://www.amazon.com/Politics-States-Communities-15th-Edition/dp/0205994725

Barnes and Noble has new, used and rental: http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/politics-in-states-and-communities-thomas-r-dye/1119330388?ean=9780205994724

For *Annual Editions State and Local Government*:

To buy directly from the publisher (McGraw Hill) – a new hard copy go to: http://shop.mheducation.com/highered/product.M1259175448.html

You can also buy a custom e-version of the SLG from McGraw Hill: https://create.mheducation.com/shop/#/catalog/details/?isbn=9781308101651

Amazon has new and used for purchase: http://www.amazon.com/Annual-Editions-State-Local-Government/dp/1259175448

Barnes and Noble has new, used and rental: http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/annual-editions-bruce-stinebrickner/1119703436?ean=9781259175442&itm=1&usri=annual+editions+bruce+stinebrickner

Evaluation

8 Modules – 100% of your total grade. 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. Since this course is over the Summer D term you will have about a week to do each module.

Chapter Quiz – 40% 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. The questions are drawn from a larger quiz bank I have constructed so while a few questions may be the same on a 2nd attempt, most will be different. You should read the chapters and articles and study before starting the quiz as you will not have time to look up every answer. All 8 quizzes count towards your final grade and except for extraordinary circumstances, no late quizzes will be accepted once the quiz closes.

Compare, Contrast, Update & Discuss – 60% 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 900-1200 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 week: 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 simple rubric (scoring guideline). Each compare, contrast, update and discuss 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.

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 select the topic “Questions for Professor Jewett” and then click in the “Reply” box and type in your question and then hit “Post Reply.” You may have to wait up to 48 hours for a response but I am usually much quicker than that. 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.

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 12-15 hours a module 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 2000 words or more 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. Due times for graded assignments are usually 11 pm Eastern Standard Time. I give a 59 minute grace period until 11:59 pm before I start assessing the late penalty.

5. I will drop your two lowest Compare, Contrast, Update & Discuss scores when I compute your final grade. 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 writing a paper (computer glitch, illness, vacation etc.) or should you do poorly on a paper and want to improve. I will not drop any quiz scores, so you must do all 8 quizzes.

6. I follow and enforce the UCF policies pertaining to academic honesty and integrity and expect professional student conduct. See the UCF policies established in the Golden Rule (http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/) if you are unfamiliar (particularly the section on Academic Conduct).

7. Students registered with UCF Disability Services (http://sds.sdes.ucf.edu/) will be given accommodation as determined by UCF Disability Services.

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

Academic Engagement Assignment Required by Federal Government Regulations:

Pretest due by Friday 8/28 at 5:00 pm EST.

Faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity by the end of the first week of classes, or as soon as possible after adding the course, but no later than Friday August 28th 5:00 pm EST. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Go to Quizzes and click on “Pretest” and then “Take the Quiz.” You have 1 hour to take the pretest. Please do not study beforehand or look up answers when taking the pretest – if you do not know the answer then just make your best guess. I want to get an honest assessment of how much you know about the course material before we get started (so please do not just take 2 minutes for the whole quiz and randomly hit answers either – actually read the questions and see if you know the answer). Once you answer all the questions hit “Submit Quiz.”

Module 1 State Politics, Democracy and Constitutions: Quiz due by Monday 8/31 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 9/1 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 9/3 11:00 pm

For Module 1 please read:

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

State and Local Gvt (SLG) articles 1 Federalist 17, 2 Federalist 45, 3 Nature of the American State, 15 The Progressive Tax Rebellion, 16 Portland Fluoride, 38 267 Years and Counting

Module 2 Federalism and Participation in State Politics: Quiz due by Monday 9/14 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 9/15 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 9/17 11:00 pm

For Module 2 please read:

D & M chapters 3 American Federalism and 4 Participation in State Politics

SLG articles 6 Taking Stock, 7 The United States of America, 8 States vs Feds, 9 Devolution and Arrogance, 10 Voting Matters, 13 The No-Tax Pledge,

Module 3 State Parties, Campaigns and Legislatures: Quiz due by Monday 9/28 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 9/29 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 10/1 11:00 pm

For Module 3 please read:

D & M chapters 5 State Parties and Campaigns and 6 Legislators in State Politics

SLG articles 11 Five Trends Shaping Redistricting, 14 States of Conservatism, 20 Ready, Set, PAN, 21 The Legislature as Sausage Factory, 22 What Legislatures Need Now, 23 Legislatures: All Over the Map, 24 Newbies,

Module 4 State Governors and Bureaucracy: Quiz due by Monday 10/12 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 10/13 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 10/15 11:00 pm

For Module 4 please read:

D & M chapters 7 Governors and 8 Bureaucratic Politics in States and Communities

SLG articles 27 Altered States, 28 The Last Democrat in Dixie, 29 The Badgered State, 30 Counter Cultures, 36 The Sentient City, 49 Fixing the Rotten Corporate Barrel

Module 5 State Courts, Criminal Justice and Civil Rights: Quiz due by Monday 10/26 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 10/27 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 10/29 11:00 pm

For Module 5 please read:

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

SLG articles 12 Caperton's Coal, 19 Cross Examination, 33 Justice by the Numbers, 34 Under the Gaydar, 47 License to Kill, 48 The Conservative War on Prisons

Withdrawal Deadline Monday 11/2 11:59 p.m.

Module 6 Local Governance and Participation: Quiz due by Monday 11/9 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 11/10 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 11/12 11:00 pm

PLEASE NOTE: JUST BECAUSE SOME DUE DATE FALLS OVER THE VETERANS' DAY HOLIDAY DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THEN TO DO THE ASSIGNMENT!

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, 17 Public Meetings and the Democratic Process, 25 Are City Councils Relics of the Past, 31 The Life of the Mayor for Life, 32 The Millennials in the Mayor's Seat

Module 7 Metropolitan Politics and Community Power: Quiz due by Monday 11/23 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 11/24 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 11/26 11:00 pm

PLEASE NOTE: JUST BECAUSE SOME MODULE DUE DATES MAY FALL OVER THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THEN TO DO THE ASSIGNMENT!

For Module 7 please read:

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

SLG articles 18 Embracing the Future, 35 Merger Inertia, 37 Rebel Towns, 41 The (New) Rules of the Road, 42 Snookered, 43 The Enticement Window, 44 The Secret Tax Explosion,

Module 8 State Taxation, Education, Health and Welfare: Quiz due by Monday 11/7 at 11 pm; Initial discussion posting due by Tuesday 11/8 at 11 pm; additional postings due by, and module closes on, Thursday 11/10 11:00 pm

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

SLG articles 26 Should School Boards be Expelled, 39 The ‘B’ Word, 40 Two Cheers for the Property Tax, 45 Raising Children, 46 One Size Doesn’t Fit All, 50 Gagging on the Ag-Gag Laws

Fall Term Ends: Tuesday December 15

Getting Started

Go to the home page, go to Quizzes and click on “Pretest” and then “Take the Quiz” (as described above to document your participation in the course). After that, to begin the academic part of the course, click on Modules and then read and follow the instructions for Module 1: Politics in the States and Democracy and Constitutions.