POS3112, State and Local Government and Public Policy

(January 12 – May 5)

(Traditional/ Lecture Course Format)

(Tuesday & Thursday, 4:30 P.M. – 5:50 PM., CB1 309)

(3 Credit hours)

Part 1: General Course Information.

Instructor: Alvin (AJ) Quackenbush

Email: alvin.quackenbush@ucf.edu

Office Hours: Spring 2026

On Campus: Faculty Center, Classroom Building 1 (CB1), room 207: Tuesday from 12 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. and Thursday from 3:45 P.M. - 4:15 P.M.

Students can also contact me via the WebCourses message system and I can make myself available via the Chat function.

Political Science Department Office: Howard Phillips Hall, Room 302

Phone: (407) 823-2608

Website: https://sciences.ucf.edu/politics/

Course Description: (3 Credits)

A comparative study of American state governments, political processes, and public policies, with emphasis on Florida.

Required Materials: "*Governing States and Localities*," Smith and Greenblat, 9th ed., Paperback ISBN: 9781071901830 or Electronic: ISBN: 9781071901854.

**I do NOT recommend using an old edition because there have been significant changes. Copies of the text are available for use on RESERVE in the East and West campus libraries, but cannot be checked out.

Major Topics/Concepts/Skills:

- Federalism: Shared Governance
- State and Local Governing Power
- Direct and Representative Democracy
- Diversity in American communities
- Consolidated and Fragmented governments
- Political Participation in state and local communities
- General Purpose and Special Purpose governments
- Land Use and Eminent Domain
- State Tax Systems
- Education Policies and Reform
- Expanded Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- The State Judiciary
- Interest Groups
- The U.S. Constitution and 50 State Constitutions
- The Media

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of Federalism by describing the similarities and differences between the U.S. Constitution and the 50 state constitutions.
- Students will be able to identify the structure and unique characteristics of state and local governments.

- Students will be able to develop an understanding of the creation of public policy by state and/or local government and the impact of these policies on the community.

Topics and Discussion:

Please keep in mind that in this course we will be analyzing and debating topics that are current, relevant, political, and sometimes controversial. Some students may find that certain topics hard to discuss and there may be a level of discomfort. Please keep in mind that the intent is to promote critical thinking, present alternative ideas, challenge preconceptions, and deepen important conversations.

It is natural for students to sometimes feel overwhelmed. If this happens, please advise me in class or afterwards via email. As always, the goal is to maintain a safe space for learning.

Part 2: Classroom Policies.

Attendance: Regular class attendance is expected. There is a direct correlation between class attendance and overall success in the course. Attendance will be taken for Extra Credit purposes. This will be the only extra credit offered in the course.

Tardiness: Students are expected to be on time for class. Students who are tardy disrupt other students and the overall learning environment, so tardiness is not acceptable. Students who are late on Exam days will not receive extra time for their assessments.

Email: It is the policy of this professor to communicate with you via UCF email or the WebCourses message system. Failure to check for e-mail messages will not be accepted as an excuse for missed work.

Cell Phone**:** Students are expected to turn off or make silent all cell phones and electronic devices before the beginning of class because they can disrupt the learning environment. If a cell phone vibrates or is audible, the student may be asked to leave for the remainder of the class. If there is an emergency situation warranting the use of a cell phone during class time, the student must notify the professor in writing prior to the beginning of class. During a testing situation, if a cell phone vibrates or is audible, the student's test or examination will be collected and the student will be asked to leave without an option for completion.

Laptop Computers: Students may use their laptop, tablet, or "mini-computer' (smart phone) during class to take notes or to access the Internet for research. A student who

uses this freedom in an inappropriate fashion may be asked to leave the class for that day or to turn off their laptop or phone.

Student Recordings: Students may record video and/or audio of class lectures for their personal use. Recordings may be a useful tool to support your learning and provide a resource for review. It is important to be respectful of your peers' rights to privacy; with that in mind, please refrain from recording your peers during lectures. You may not record class discussions, student presentations, labs, group work, and private conversations. Further, you may not publish or share recordings without my written consent, nor may you provide recordings to classmates as a substitution for class participation and attendance. If necessary, I will handle violations of this section through the College's Student Code of Conduct.

Protected Course Learning Materials: All course learning materials are protected information and cannot be shared via social media or outside of the class canvas page. In order to maintain a comfortable and private learning environment, students should not take screen shots of the course website. This is to protect the privacy rights of you and your fellow students. Such conduct may be determined to be a violation of college policy and the student code of conduct.

Part 3: Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Evaluation: Your grade will be determined by grades on a Syllabus Quiz, 15 Quizzes, 6 Discussion Posts, 3 Exams, and a Written Assignment.

Syllabus Quiz: 10 points.

Quizzes: 20 points each (300 Total)

Discussion Posts: 25 points each (150 Total)

Exams: 100 points each (300 Total)

Written Assignment: 150 Points.

Total Points: 910

Syllabus Quiz: There will be a short syllabus quiz due on Friday, January 16th at 5 pm. during the first week of the semester to ensure student attendance in the course

Weekly Quizzes: There will be 15 short chapter quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will consist of 20 multiple choice questions and you will be given 30 minutes to complete these assignments. You can access the quizzes on the dates indicated in the syllabus and course calendar.

Discussions: During the semester there will be 6 discussion posts related to current events, the media, and course outcomes. Each is worth 25 points. The discussions will be completed in webcourses on our course page and will be graded according to the attached rubric. Due dates and specific directions can be found on webcourses.

Written Assignment: During the semester you will be required to write one short research paper. The assignment will be worth 150 points and graded according to the attached rubric. The assignment will be type written and will be at least 2000 words (based upon the word count in Microsoft word), not including titles and work cited. Papers that do not meet the minimum word count will not be accepted and no partial credit will be given to short papers. The paper assignment will be posted on webcourses during the semester with specific details. The due date will be included in the assignment and is listed in the course schedule at the bottom of the syllabus. Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to make sure that your paper is attached correctly.

Examinations: There will be Three exams in this course during the semester. The tests will consist of fill in the blank, multiple choice and true/false questions. The dates are listed in the schedule at the bottom of the course syllabus. Any student not completing the examination will receive 0 of those possible points, and this will impact the final average in the course.

Extra Credit: There will **NOT** be any specific assignments for extra credit; however, attendance will be taken from time to time on lecture days and points will be added for extra credit.

Late Work Policy: You can submit late online work (syllabus quiz, discussions, or the written assignment) with a 20% penalty per day. See the course schedule for all due dates.

All graded materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time using the Grades section of Webcourses@UCF. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades.

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% to94%
A-	< 94%to90%
B+	< 90%to87%
B	< 87%to84%
B-	< 84%to80%
C+	< 80%to77%
C	< 77%to74%
C-	< 74%to70%
D+	< 70%to67%
D	< 67%to64%
D-	< 64%to61%
F	< 61%to0%

Part 4: University Policies.

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers

experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

1. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.
2. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
3. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.
4. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – Office of Institutional Equity& askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services& sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement(including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office& complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Officeis a safe place to discuss concerns.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty of staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online formLinks to an external site.. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide**posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video hereLinks to an external site.to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to dateLinks to an external site..

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Disclaimer: Changes in the syllabus and/or schedule may be made at any time during the term by announcement of the professor. It is your responsibility to stay informed of any changes.

Part 5: Course Schedule.

All the dates and assignments listed below are tentative and can be changed at the discretion of the professor with proper notification via UCF email.

Week 1: (January 12 - 18), **Drop/Swap Deadline - January 16.**

Topic: **Introduction -** Chapter 1, Intro to State and Local Government

Assignments: Syllabus Quiz due by 5:00 pm, on Friday, January 16 and Chapter 1 Quiz due Sunday, January 18.

Week 2: (January 19 - 25), **MLK - Monday, January 19, no classes.**

Topic: Chapter 2 - Federalism

Assignments: Chapter 2 Quiz and Discussion 1 due Sunday, January 25.

Week 3: (January 26 - February 1)

Topic: Chapter 3 - Constitutions

Assignments: Chapter 3 Quiz due Sunday, February 1.

Week 4: (February 2 - 8)

Topic: Chapter 4 – Finance

Assignments: Chapter 4 Quiz and Discussion 2 due February 8.

Week 5: (February 9 - 15)

Topic: Chapter 5 - Political Attitudes and Participation

Assignments: Chapter 5 Quiz and Discussion 3 due February 15.

Week 6: (February 16 - 22)

Exam 1: in class on Tuesday, February 17.

Topic: Chapter 6 - Parties and Interest Groups

Assignments: Chapter 6 Quiz due February 22.

Week 7: (February 23 - March 1)

Topic: Chapter 7 - Legislatures

Assignments: Chapter 7 Quiz and Discussion 4 due March 1.

Week 8: (March 2 - 8)

Topic: Chapter 8 - Governors and Executives

Assignments: Chapter 8 Quiz due March 8.

Week 9: (March 9 - 15)

Topic: Reading: Chapter 9 - Courts

Assignments: Chapter 9 Quiz due March 15.

Week 10: (March 16 - 22), **Spring Break: no classes.**

Assignments: None.

Week 11: (March 23 - 29)

Topic: Chapter 10 - Bureaucracy.

Assignments: Chapter 10 Quiz due March 29.

Week 12: (March 30 - April 5), **Withdrawal Deadline - April 3**

Exam 2: in class on Tuesday, March 31.

Topic: Chapter 11 - Local Government

Assignments: Chapter 11 Quiz due April 5.

Week 13: (April 6 - 12)

Topic: Chapter 13 – Education and Chapter 14 - Crime and Punishment

Assignments: Chapters 13 and 14 Quizzes and Discussion 5 due April 12.

Week 14: (April 13 - 19)

Topic: Chapter 15 - Health and Welfare

Assignments: Chapter 15 Quiz and Written Assignment due April 19

Week 15: (April 20 - 26)

Topic: Chapter 16 - Environment and Climate Change.

Assignments: Chapter 16 Quiz and Discussion 6 due April 26.

Week 16: (April 27 - May 5), **Tuesday, April 28 - Study Day, no classes.**

Exam 3: in class on Thursday, April 30, at 4:00 PM