

Syllabus for PLS 3220, Section 01
State Government
Fall 2015
MWF 1:25PM-2:20 PM, 399 Millett Hall

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Course Description: While our attention is most often drawn to the political events in Washington, D.C., a great deal of the policymaking that impacts our daily lives occurs in statehouses across the 50 states. Indeed, state governments legislate on issues including welfare, healthcare, social policies, education, criminal law, infrastructure, and many others. Understanding how state institutions and behavior shape policy outcomes is substantively interesting, but the states also provide political scientists with opportunities to examine larger questions, including power, representation, and responsiveness. They do so by providing a comparative context for testing how variation in institutions and political behavior relate to these broader concepts. This course will address both how the states themselves are substantively interesting, as well as how they are used to understand broader issues in political science.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

- Goal 1: Students will learn how to use the states to comparatively study broader topics in political science.
 - Objective 1.A: Students will be able to read and interpret scholarly articles that use the states for comparative analysis
 - Objective 1.B: Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, and report differences in state policy and their causes and effects
 - Objective 1.C: Students will be able to identify basic differences in state institutions
- Goal 2: Students will learn how state politics affect the daily lives of citizens
 - Objective 2.A: Students will be able to find, read, and evaluate news articles about state politics
 - Objective 2.B: Students will be able to compare and contrast how state governments and the federal government interact with citizens

Methods for Learning and Teaching: This course will contain a mix of lecture, class discussion, and in-class exercises. It is vital for your own comprehension of the course material that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to participate in class exercises.

PLS 3220 is designated an “Integrated Writing” (IW) course, designed to meet WSU guidelines for developing effective writing skills. Students will be expected to produce writing that:

- Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- Demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and
- Shows competency in standard edited American English.

Effective writing counts toward the final course grade. Students will meet IW requirements in a number of ways. These include two current events essays that require the student connect the course material to the larger content, exams with short answer and essay components, and daily responses to the reading.

Expectations

Attendance: Your attendance in class is always expected. Attending class will allow you to keep up with the rapid pace of a summer session course and will provide for meaningful discussion as a class. I will take attendance as a way to get to know you. You have up to 5 unexcused absences in this class (I will start taking attendance after the second week). Please contact me via e-mail if you are unable to attend class. We follow the University’s attendance policy regarding excused absences. See [Wright State’s Add/Drop Policy](#) and [Wright State’s Excused Absence Policy](#).

Preparation and Participation: I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read in class. You will fill out a [Google Form](#) on a daily basis that allows you to report what you learned and to ask clarifying questions. There are 31 reading assignments over the course of the semester, you must sufficiently complete 21 of these for full credit. Contributing to class discussion will make the course more interesting and will enhance your understanding of the material. Some of the articles I ask you to read are dense and statistically complex. In such cases, I will provide specific directions to help maximize comprehension.

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Please consult the [Code of Student Conduct](#) for academic integrity.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you of any changes made throughout the course.

Cell Phones and Laptops: Please be respectful of your fellow students and me by silencing your cell phone during class and limiting laptop use to only class-related activity.

Current Events: We will spend a few minutes each day discussing current political events both at the national and state levels and applying them to material we are learning in class.

E-mail Policy: I will work to respond to e-mails within 24 hours.

Readings

The following book is required for the course:

Donovan, Todd, Daniel A. Smith, Tracy Osborn, and Christopher Z. Mooney. 2015 *State & Local Politics: Institutions and Reform*. Fourth Edition, Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning. ISBN:978-1-285-44140-5.

There are also required readings listed for most class meetings. Readings are drawn from academic journals and news sources. News sources are linked within the syllabus. Book chapters and academic articles will be posted on Pilot.

Assignments

I give you a number of assignments in order to allow you multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning. I will try to grade and return each assignment within a week.

Current Events Essays (20% of final grade) These assignments require you to take any article from a valid news source and connect it to the literature and research we have covered in the course. In these assignments you will have an opportunity to apply concepts we are learning in class to the real-life political arena. We will have 2 of these over the term worth 10% each (no more than 2 single-spaced pages - Rubric on Pilot).

Midterm Exam (25% of final grade) The midterm exam material will be drawn from class discussions and the readings. The exam is intended to assess your knowledge of class content and your ability to apply relevant concepts. The exam will include short answer and essay questions.

Final Exam (25% of final grade) The final exam material will be drawn from class discussions and the readings from the second half of class (not cumulative). The exam is intended to assess your knowledge of class content and your ability to apply relevant concepts. The exam will include short answer and essay questions.

Reading Responses (15% of final grade) There will be a [Google Form](#) posted on Pilot that asks a few basic questions about the readings. I will use these to prepare the course and to motivate you to complete the readings. There are 31 reading assignments over the course of the semester, you must sufficiently complete 21 of these for full credit.

Attendance (15% of final grade) I will take attendance every day. I always appreciate an email notification if you cannot attend.

Grading

Below I list each assignment, the due date (also marked on course calendar), and the weight it receives in the final calculation of your grade:

Assignment	Due Date	% of Grade
Current Events Essay 1	September 18	10%
Midterm Exam	October 14	25%
Current Events Essay 2	November 13	10%
Final Exam	December 14 (12:30PM)	25%
Reading Questions	Daily	15%
Attendance	Daily	15%

Make-Up Grades: You are allowed to make up academic work only in the case of excused absences. These absences may include missing class for a University-sanctioned activity (with proper documentation), illness, religious observance, or family emergency. If you know in advance that you are going to miss class, please contact me before the absence to make arrangements for completing the work. If you are absent for an unexpected reason, please check in with me as soon as possible. You will have one week from the day of your return to class to make up a missed assignment.

Late Work Policy: Assignments turned in late will be penalized 5% per day.

Disability

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. It is your responsibility to notify me during the first week of the semester if such accommodations are needed. If you have questions about this, contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) at 937-775-5680 or disability_services@wright.edu.

Course Schedule

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible, but we may take more time on some concepts and less time on others. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class or via e-mail. Required course readings are listed below. Note that all class readings are posted on Pilot. If you have trouble accessing an article, please do not hesitate to e-mail me. The abbreviation DSOM refers to the Donovan, Smith, Osborn, and Mooney textbook.

NOTE: Readings are expected to be completed on the date they are posted. On days with multiple readings, readings are listed in the order that we will cover them. I expect you to read all of the required readings. I have included suggested readings for students interested in learning more about specific topics and posted them on Pilot. I will typically reference the suggested readings in lectures but you are not required to read ahead.

Week 1

August 31 (M): Syllabus Day. Why care about state politics?

Suggested Readings:

-Fuller, Jaime. 2014. [“John Oliver Spent 20 Minutes Talking About State Legislatures Sunday Night.”](#) *The Washington Post*, November 3, 2014.

September 2 (W): The Scientific Study of the American States

- DSOM Chapter 1 (pp. 3-16)

Suggested Readings:

-Jewell, Malcolm E. 1982. “The Neglected World of State Politics.” *Journal of Politics* 44(3): 638-657.

September 4 (F): Socioeconomic and Political Context of the States

- DSOM Chapter 1 (pp. 17-37)
- Mooney, Christopher Z. 2001. “*State Politics & Policy Quarterly* and the Study of State Politics: The Editor’s Introduction.” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 1(1):1-4.

Suggested Readings:

-Gray, Virginia. 1999. “The Socioeconomic and Political Context of States.” Chapter 1 in *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, 7th ed., Virginia Gray, Russell L. Hanson, and Herbert Jacob (eds.). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

-Elazar, Daniel J. 1994. *The American Mosaic: The Impact of Space, Time, and Culture on American Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Chapter 1.

Week 2

September 7 (M): Labor Day - No class.

September 9 (W): Federalism - Constitutional and Historical Foundations

- DSOM Chapter 2 (pp. 38-56)
- Douglas-Gabriel, Danielle. 2015. “[How Student Debt Became a Presidential Campaign Issue.](#)” *The Washington Post* May 24, 2015.

September 11 (F): Umpiring Federalism - The Courts and Federalism

- DSOM Chapter 2 (pp. 38-56)

Week 3

September 14 (M): State Politics Research 1: Federalism and Emergency Responsiveness

- Birkland, Thomas and Sarah Waterman. 2008. “Is Federalism the Reason for Policy Failure in Hurricane Katrina?” *Publius* 38(4): 692-714.

September 16 (W): State Political Culture - Political Participation

- DSOM Chapter 3 (pp. 72-91)

September 18 (F): State Political Culture - Voting Reforms

- DSOM Chapter 2 (pp. 91-105)
- “[Not running, but fleeing.](#)” *The Economist* May 16, 2015.

Assignment: **Current Events Essay #1 due at 5:00 PM (Pilot).**

Week 4

September 21 (M): Institutional Differences in the States: Direct Democracy

- DSOM Chapter 4 (pp. 108-123)
- “Special Report: Democracy in California.” *The Economist* April 20, 2011. (posted on Pilot)

September 23 (W): Direct Democracy: Citizen Legislators

- DSOM Chapter 4 (pp. 123-140)
- Lupia, Arthur and John G. Matsusaka. 2004. “Direct Democracy: New Approaches to Old Questions.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 463-482.

September 25 (F): No class.

Week 5

September 28 (M): State Politics Research 2: Spillover Effects of Direct Democracy

- Smith, Daniel, Matthew DeSantis, and Jason Kassel. 2006. “Same-sex Marriage Ballot Measures and the 2004 Presidential Election.” *State & Local Government Review* 38(2): 78-91.

September 30 (W): Political Parties in the States

- DSOM Chapter 5 (pp.142-159)
- Putnam, Josh. 2015. “[Everything You Need to Know About How the Presidential Primary Works.](#)” *The Washington Post* May 12, 2015.

October 2 (F): Political Parties in the Electorate

- DSOM Chapter 5 (pp.159-175)

Week 6

October 5 (M): Institutional Differences: State Legislatures

- DSOM Chapter 7 (pp.234-251)

Suggested Reading:

-Squire, Peverill. 2007. "Measuring State Legislative Professionalism: The Squire Index Revisited." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 7(2): 211-227.

October 7 (W): State Politics Research 3: Legislative Professionalism

- Maestas, Cherie D., Sarah Fulton, L. Sandy Maisel, and Walter J. Stone. 2006. "When to Risk It? Institutions, Ambitions, and the Decision to Run for the U.S. House." *American Political Science Review* 100(2): 195-208.

October 9 (F): State Legislatures and Districting

- Cohn, Nate. 2014 [Blaming Gerrymandering Has Its Limits, as Pennsylvania Shows.](#) *The New York Times*. September 8, 2014.

Week 7

October 12 (M): Midterm Exam Review

October 14 (W): **Midterm Exam**

October 16 (F): State Public Policy: Why do states adopt certain laws?

- Gray, Virginia. 1994. "Competition, Emulation, and Policy Innovation." In *New Perspectives on American Politics*. Lawrence C. Dodd and Calvin Jillson eds. Washington, DC: CQ Press. pp. 231-248

Week 8

October 19 (M): The Diffusion of State Policies

- Karch, Andrew. 2007. "Emerging Issues and Future Directions in State Policy Diffusion Research." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 7(1):54-80.
- Cope, Cassie. 2015. ["How South Carolina Won Volvo."](#) *The State* May 17, 2015.

October 21 (W): Real Research: Diffusion of Medical Marijuana Laws

- Reading TBA

October 23 (F): State Politics Research 3: Policy Diffusion

- Berry, Francis S. and William D. Berry. 1990. "State Lottery Adoptions as Policy Innovations: An Event History Analysis." *The American Political Science Review* 84(2):395-415.

Week 9

October 26 (M): Governors and the State Bureaucracy

- DSOM Chapter 8 (pp. 254-270)

October 28 (W): The Four Jobs of Governors

- DSOM Chapter 8 (pp. 270-293)

October 30 (F): Interest Groups in the States

- DSOM Chapter 6 (pp.176-191)

Week 10

November 2 (M): Statewide Elections Preview

- Reading TBA

November 4 (W): Interest Groups and Issue Advocacy

- DSOM Chapter 6 (pp.192-210)

November 6 (F): State Courts and the Criminal Justice System

- DSOM Chapter 9 (pp. 296-341)

Suggested Reading:

-Nicholson-Crotty, Sean. 2004. "The Politics and Administration of Privatization: Contracting Out for Corrections Management in the United States." *Policy Studies Journal* 32(1): 41-57.

Assignment: **Current Events Essay #2 due at 5:00 PM (Pilot).**

Week 11

November 9 (M): State Courts and the Criminal Justice System

Late Drop Deadline

- DSOM Chapter 9 (pp. 296-341)

Suggested Reading:

-Nicholson-Crotty, Sean. 2004. "The Politics and Administration of Privatization: Contracting Out for Corrections Management in the United States." *Policy Studies Journal* 32(1): 41-57.

November 11 (W): Veterans Day - No class.

November 13 (F): Municipal Governance

- DSOM Chapter 11 (pp. 381-411)

Week 12

November 16 (M): Breakdowns in Municipal Governance and Criminal Policy

- Hayward, Clarissa. 2014. "After Ferguson." *The Washington Post* November 25, 2014.
- Farrell, Henry. 2015. "Ferguson's Government Was Run Like a Racket." *The Washington Post* March 4, 2015.
- Balko, Radley. 2014. "How Municipalities in St. Louis County, Mo. Profit from Poverty." *The Washington Post* September 3, 2014.
- Deets, Stephen. 2015. "Baltimore is Not Ferguson." *The Washington Post* April 30, 2015.

November 18 (W): State Politics Research 4: Bottom-up Federalism

- Shipan, Charles R. and Craig T. Volden. 2006. "Bottom-up Federalism: The Diffusion of Antismoking Policies from U.S. Cities to States." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(4): 825-843.

November 20 (F): Paying the Bills: State Fiscal Policy

- DSOM Chapter 10 (pp.344-362)
- Young, Bob. 2015. "A Year In, Taxes on Legal Weed yet to Yield Big Windfall for State." *The Seattle Times* July 7, 2015.

Week 13

November 23 (M): State Fiscal Policy: Fiscal Federalism and Health Care

- DSOM Chapter 10 (pp.362-380)

November 25 (W) and November 27 (F): Thanksgiving break - No class.

Week 14

November 30 (M): Social Welfare and Health Care Policy

- DSOM Chapter 14 (pp.486-503)

December 2 (W): Social Welfare and Health Care Policy

- DSOM Chapter 14 (pp.503-522)

December 4 (F): Course Wrap-up and Final Exam Review

Week 15

December 14 (M): Final Exam 12:30PM - 2:30PM in 399 Millett