

State Government

Syllabus for PLS 3220-01/URS 4900-02

Spring 2019

MWF 1:25PM-2:20 PM, 158 Rike 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 about topics such as 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 and governance.

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 answering questions related to research, completing a policy brief, and exams with short answer and essay components.

Expectations

Attendance: Your attendance in class is always expected. Attending class will allow you to keep up with the pace of the course and will provide for meaningful discussion as a class. 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: It is expected that you have read the course material before that day’s class. Participation does not entail attending class but spending time off task, tuned out, or distracting others, nor does participation entail attending class for the sole purpose of espousing opinions and/or provoking others (see civility).

Civility: Each of us in the classroom will have differing opinions about the candidates standing for election. And given recent elections and events, it’s likely that many of these races will become negative and personal. Regardless, class discussions should be conducted with civility. Feel free to disagree with others, but personal attacks on your classmates will not be tolerated. “Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected.”*

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely

*Source: <https://civility.utk.edu/principles/>

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 - especially with the likelihood of winter weather. 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.

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

Readings

The following book is required for the course:

Smith, Alan and Kevin B. Smith. (2018). *Governing States and Localities*. Sixth Edition, Los Angeles: Sage. 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 available through the library will be linked in the syllabus. If unavailable through the library, I will post a PDF on Pilot.

Assignments

I give you a number of assignments in order to allow you multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning.

State Politics Research Questions (15% of final grade) We will dedicate four class periods to going over recent publications in state politics. You will have questions related to the article due before the class period.

Policy Brief (15% of final grade) This assignment requires you to write a short, evidence-based summary of a public policy of your choice. In this assignment you will have an opportunity to apply concepts we are learning in class to the real-life political arena (no more than 2 single-spaced pages - Rubric on Pilot).

Midterm Exam (30% 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 (30% 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.

Attendance and Participation (10% 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
State Politics Research Questions	Multiple	15%
Midterm Exam	February 22	30%
Policy Brief	April 8	15%
Final Exam	April 29	30%
Attendance and Participation	Daily	10%

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 linked in the syllabus. If you have trouble accessing an article, please do not hesitate to e-mail me.

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.

Week 1

January 14 (M): Syllabus Day. Why care about state politics?

- News Staff. (2019). “[18 of the Biggest Policies and Problems Legislatures Will Confront in 2019.](#)” *Governing Magazine*.

January 16 (W): The Scientific Study of the American States

- Text Chapter 1

January (F): The Scientific Study of the American States

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

Week 2

January 21 (M): Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No class.

January 23 (W): Federalism - Constitutional and Historical Foundations

- Text Chapter 2 (pp. 26-49)
- Gerken, Heather. (20 January 2017). “[We’re about to see states’ rights used defensively against Trump.](#)” *Vox*.

January 25 (F): Umpiring Federalism - The Courts and Federalism

- Text Chapter 2 (pp. 49-57)

Week 3

January 28 (M): State Politics Research 1: Marijuana Policies in the States[†]

- Hannah, A. Lee and Daniel J. Mallinson. (2018). “[Defiant Innovation: The Adoption of Medical Marijuana Laws in the American States.](#)” *Policy Studies Journal*, 46(2): 402-423.

January 30 (W): State Constitutions

- Text Chapter 3 (pp. 59-72)

February 1 (F): Evolution of Constitutions

- Text Chapter 3 (pp. 73-86)
- Skim the [Ohio Constitution](#).

Week 4

February 4 (M): Financing State Governments

- Text Chapter 4 (pp. 89-100)

February 6 (W): Financing State Governments

- Text Chapter 4 (pp. 100-112)

February 8 (F): State and Local Government Budget Challenges

- Cope, Cassie. (17 May 2015). “[How South Carolina Won Volvo.](#)” *The State*.
- Story, Louise (1 December 2012). “[As Companies Seek Tax Deals, Government Pay High Price.](#)” *New York Times*.

[†]Research questions due before class. Post on Dropbox.

- Malanga, Steven. (13 August 2017). “[When Will States Get Smart and Stop Subsidizing Movies?](#)” The Manhattan Institute.
- Goldstein, Dana. (4 January 2019). “[The Fight to Keep Teachers in Tech Hubs From Being Priced Out.](#)” *New York Times*.
- Luckerson, Victor. (30 November 2018). “[The Cities that Amazon HQ2 Left Behind.](#)” *The Ringer*.

Week 5

February 11 (M): Voting in the States

- Text Chapter 5 (pp.117-130)

February 13 (W): Voting in the States

- Text Chapter 5 (pp.131-139)

February 15 (F): Political Attitudes and Participation

- Text Chapter 5 (pp.140-151)

Week 6

February 18 (M): State Politics Research 2: Public Opinion in the States[‡]

- Pacheco, Julianna. (2014). “[Measuring and Evaluating Changes in State Opinion across Eight Issues.](#)” *American Politics Research*, 42(6), 986-1009.

February 20 (W): Catch-up and Midterm Exam Review

February 22 (F): **Midterm Exam**

Week 7

February 25 (M): Political Parties in the States

- Text Chapter 6 (pp. 153-177)

[‡]Research questions due before class. Post on Dropbox.

February 27 (W): Interest Groups

- Text Chapter 6 (pp. 178-191)

March 1 (F): State Legislatures

- Text Chapter 7 (pp. 195-210)

Spring Break - March 4 - 9

Week 8

March 11 (M): State Legislatures

- Text Chapter 7 (pp. 211-220)

March 13 (W): State Legislators

- Text Chapter 7 (pp. 220-237)

March 15 (F): State Politics Research 3: Conflicts in State and Local Government[§]

- Riverstone-Newell, Lori. (2017). “[The Rise of State Preemption Laws in Response to Local Policy Adoption.](#)” *Publius*, 47(3):403-425.

Week 9

March 18 (M): Governors and Their Formal Powers

- Text Chapter 8 (pp. 239-252)

March 20 (W): Governors and Other Executive Offices

- DSOM Chapter 8 (pp. 252-279)

[§]Research questions due before class. Post on Dropbox.

March 22 (F): State Bureaucracies

- Text Chapter 10 (pp. 319-328)

Week 10

March 25 (M): Evolution of State Bureaucracies

- Text Chapter 10 (pp. 329-344)

March 27 (W): Local Government

- Text Chapter 11 (pp.347-360)
- Jan, Tracy. (28 March 2018). “[Redlining was banned 50 years ago. It’s still hurting minorities today.](#)” *The Washington Post*.

March 29 (F): Local Governments

- Text Chapter 11 (pp.361-376)
- Marlowe, Justin. (December 2018). “[It’s Hard to Get Cities to Share Services. States Can Help.](#)” *Governing Magazine*.

Week 11

April 1 (M): 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.

April 3 (W): Metropolitics

- Text Chapter 12 (pp.379-391)
- Charles, J. Brian. (21 December 2018). “[To Fight Blight, One City Turned to Courts.](#)” *Governing Magazine*.

[¶]Research questions due before class. Post on Dropbox.

April 5 (F): Metropolitcs: Consolidation

- Text Chapter 12 (pp.392-405)

Week 12

April 8 (M): The State Courts

- Text Chapter 9 (pp.281-300)

Assignment: **Policy Brief due at 5:00 PM (Pilot).**

April 10 (W): A Bar Fight Walks Into the Justice Center

- Text Chapter 9 (pp.300-317)

April 12 (F): Breakdowns in Municipal Governance and Criminal Policy

- Text Chapter 14 (pp.435-449)

Week 13

April 15 (M): Education in the States

- Text Chapter 13 (pp.407-433)

April 17 (W) Higher Education in the States

- Webber, Doug. (2016 September 13). “Fancy Dorms Aren’t the Main Reason Tuition Is Skyrocketing.” *FiveThirtyEight*.
- Hoffower, Hillary. (8 July 2018). “College is more expensive than it’s ever been, and the 5 reasons why suggest it’s only going to get worse.” *Business Insider*.
- Berman, Jillian (19 November 2018). “Here’s what it would take to make college tuition-free.” *MarketWatch*.

April 19 (F): Public Health

- Goodnough, Abby. (25 November 2018). “[This City’s Overdose Deaths Have Plunged. Can Others Learn From It?](#)” *New York Times*.
- Welch, Erin. (10 January 2019). “[A Community of Recovery: Dayton, Ohio’s Compassionate, Collective Approach to the Opioid Crisis.](#)” Report by Center for American Progress.

Week 14

April 22 (M): Public Health - Medicaid

- Text Chapter 15 (pp.467-480)

April 24 (W): Health and the Welfare State

- Text Chapter 15 (pp.480-500)

April 26 (F): Course Wrap-Up and Exam Review

April (M): Final Exam 12:30PM-2:30PM in 301 Millett