



State & Local Politics
POLS 3212
CRN: 80745
Fall 2017

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Text: State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reforms. 4e. Donovan/Mooney/Smith

Pre-Requisites:

POLS 1101 – D

Course Description and Objectives:

Much has been made in recent popular press about the importance of the political-geographic boundary of States in election outcomes. Before there was a “United” States, there were simply States. Before people were Americans, they were Virginians and New Yorkers. State identity was the first forged American political identity, and has been instrumental in shaping the institutions and dynamics of American politics.

The initial debate over the proper organization of the infant country centered around States. States, States-rights, and their relationship with the national government were the centerpieces of the Civil War. State jurisdiction is what the Civil Rights movement was about. States elect Presidents, States garner equal representation in the Senate, and States are typically leaders in political reform, from issues like stem-cell research to parental consent abortion laws, to gay marriage, to welfare reform. A person is more likely to be affected by state government on a daily basis than the federal government.

Interestingly enough, however, when most people think about politics, they think in terms of national political figures and events. This is just one of the conundrums we will take up in this course.

This is a course about States – about their institutional structure, purpose and foundation. This is a course about how States are similar and different, and how States affect our political experiences. At the same time, this course is not about any one particular state – this is not a course in Georgia politics (or California, Texas, or New York politics). We will focus on the comparative method of learning about state politics by examining the institutional, demographic and experiential similarities and differences that exist.

We will pay special attention to one of the most fascinating institutional differences among the States – the use of direct democratic means of lawmaking, currently practiced in most large cities and in about half of all States. Finally, we will cover topics relating to what state experiences and socialization mean for our national political behavior.

Course Tasks, Expectations, and Grading:

Task 1: It is imperative that students complete all assigned readings each week and be prepared to discuss the material, as participation will count for 90 points of your grade. At the start of each week, a Discussion topic will be posted that will be relevant to the course reading for that week. Each student must post a response to the topic each week, which must be completed by 9:00 p.m. on Friday. Responses will be graded on a 10-point scale. If you simply comment on the discussion, you will receive 3 points. In order to get the full 10 points, you will need to write something that is original and thoughtful, which adds something of value to the discussion, and references the textbook material. Statements such as “I agree with (person who commented previously)” will not earn you full credit. See the Discussion Post Rubric Posted on D2L for more information. The discussion boards will account for 120 points of your grade.

Task 2: Each week, students will be required to watch a video that will be posted online and will pertain to that week’s class topic.

Task 3: Every week, students will be required to take a short quiz starting on Friday and due by 9 p.m. on Sunday. Each quiz will be comprised of either 10 multiple choice questions or 1 long answer question, which will cover material from the assigned reading, PowerPoint presentations, and videos that are to be watched. You will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz. The quizzes will account for 120 points of your grade.

Task 4: Students will participate in three (4) exams throughout this course. The exams will include information covered in the assigned readings as well as PowerPoint presentations. Students will have 75 minutes to complete each exam. None of the exams will be cumulative. Each exam will count as 100 points toward your grade for the course, totaling 400 points of your course grade.

Task 5: There will be one paper assignment this semester. It will be short, 8-10 pages, and will be in response to specific questions that will be given the week of the assignment. The paper will be worth 100 points of your final grade for the course.

Task 6: *Extra Credit:* Students will have the opportunity to complete **one** extra credit assignment this semester. For this assignment, you will respond to the question you did not answer for the writing assignment. This response should be no more than 5 pages, double-spaced, but no less than 3 pages. You can earn up to 20 extra points. See the extra credit assignment link on D2L for more information.

Expectation 1: You are a responsible adult and a professional (see definition of professional behavior at the end of this syllabus). Just as you will have an occupation when you graduate, being a student, actively engaged in your own learning is your current occupation. It is expected that you will conduct yourself as such both in and out of the classroom. You and I, and your classmates, are a team and together we will seek answers to the questions in the course description, hence your attendance is important. Your questions, comments, and other contributions help the learning of others in the room and if you’re not there, they suffer.

Expectation 2: In this class you are in the academic discipline of Political Science and, regardless of your major, are expected to perform as a political scientist in training. This means applying critical thinking to political questions, asking for and evaluating evidence, and applying the standards of the discipline to your work. It also means asking questions in class, it means questioning your own beliefs before you question those of others (**regardless of your philosophy**), and it means paying attention to details like the appropriate way to cite the work of others (that is, use the APSA style guide in all written work for the course).

<http://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/APSA%20Files/publications/APSAStyleManual2006.pdf>

Grading: Final grades will be determined based on the following formula: Discussion boards: 120 points, Quizzes: 120 points, Exams: 100 points each, totaling 400 points, Paper: 100 points, overall = 740 points.

Letter Grades

740 Total points.

663 – 740 = A

441 – 514 = D

589 – 662 = B

0 – 440 = F

515 – 587 = C

Policy and Procedures

General Policy

Students must abide by policies in the Clayton State University Student Handbook, and the [Basic Undergraduate Student Responsibilities](#). The Student Handbook is part of the [Academic Catalog and Student Handbook](#).

University Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class meeting. Instructors establish specific policies relating to absences in their courses and communicate these policies to the students through the course syllabi. Individual instructors, based upon the nature of the course, determine what effect excused and unexcused absences have in determining grades and upon students' ability to remain enrolled in their courses. The university reserves the right to determine that excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient cause for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

Course Attendance Policy

Online attendance is expected for 6 hours a week for this course. Attending the course for fewer than 6 hours a week will have an adverse affect on your grade and material comprehension.

Missed Work or Late Work

Without a valid excuse (medical, etc.) a grade of zero points will be assigned for the missed or late work. If a valid excuse is provided:

- Make-up papers and examinations will have a due date which will be decided by the instructor.
- Students missing the Exam 4 should contact their instructor concerning the applicability of an [Incomplete grade](#).

Academic Dishonesty

Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. The most common forms of academic misconduct are cheating and plagiarism. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the work involved. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#). Judicial procedures are described in the section of the [Academic Catalog and Student Handbook](#) titled, Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Academic Conduct Infractions.

Plagiarism Detection Software.

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You should submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included.

Disruption of the Learning Environment

Behavior which disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not be tolerated. While a variety of behaviors can be disruptive in a classroom setting, more serious examples include belligerent, abusive, profane, and/or threatening behavior. A student who fails to respond to reasonable faculty direction regarding classroom behavior and/or behavior while participating in classroom activities may be dismissed from class. A student who is dismissed is entitled to due process and will be afforded such rights as soon as possible following dismissal. If found in violation, a student may be administratively withdrawn and may receive a grade of WF.

More detailed descriptions of examples of disruptive behavior are provided in the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures section the Clayton State University [Academic Catalog and Student Handbook](#).

Center for Academic Success

The Center for Academic Success (CAS) provides personalized one-on-one peer and professional staff tutoring in over 100 core subjects. The Center is located in Edgewater Hall Suite 276. The CAS also offers moderated study groups, informal study sessions, a comfortable study environment, a student study lounge, *and it's all free!* Use the CAS if you need help; become a tutor if you don't. For more information you can e-mail the center at thecas@clayton.edu

Writing Assistance

The goal of the Writers' Studio is to give rise to better writers, not just to better writing. People who love to write, people who struggle mightily with it, and people who fall anywhere else on the spectrum can find a place at The Writers' Studio—a place for students to come for writing guidance and feedback.

Each student may receive up to 90 minutes of assistance per day and 3 hours per week. Furthermore, both appointments and walk-ins are welcome. Here's The Writers' Studio's contact information:

Location: Arts & Sciences Building, Room G-224
Phone: 678.466.4728
Email: ws224@clayton.edu
Website: <http://clayton.edu/writersstudio>

Visit The Writers' Studio at <http://clayton.edu/writersstudio> or schedule your appointment online at <http://clayton.mywconline.com> (Note: first-time users need to complete a one-time registration prior to using the online appointment website).

Weapons on Campus

Clayton State University is committed to providing a safe environment for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Information on laws and policies regulating weapons on campus are available at

<http://www.clayton.edu/public-safety/Safety-Security/Weapons>

Computer Requirement:

Each CSU student is required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student's academic program. Students will sign a statement attesting to such access. For further information on CSU's Official Notebook Computer Policy, please go to

<http://www.clayton.edu/hub/itpchoice/notebookcomputerpolicy>.

Software Requirement:

To properly access the course content you will need to download the following free software:

- Adobe Reader (needed to access files in PDF format): <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
- Adobe Flash (needed to access video content): <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>

Computer Skill Prerequisites:

- Able to use the Windows™ operating system
- Able to use Microsoft Word™ word processing
- Able to send and receive e-mail using Outlook™

Only use your CSU e-mail account to communicate academic information to your instructor.

- Able to attach and retrieve attached files via email
- Able to use a Web browser.

In-class Use of Student Notebook Computers:

N/A

Desire2Learn (Online Classroom):

On-line activity will take place in Desire2Learn, the virtual classroom for the course. Posting of your work in D2L is a course requirement.

You can gain access to Desire2Learn, by signing on to the SWAN portal and selecting: "D2L" on the top right side. If you experience any difficulties in Desire2Learn, please email or call The HUB at TheHub@mail.clayton.edu or (678) 466-HELP. You will need to provide the date and time of the problem, your SWAN username, the name of the course that you are attempting to access, and your instructor's name.

Program Learning Outcomes:

General education outcomes:

The Clayton State University Core Curriculum outcomes (see Area D) are located in the Graduate Requirement section of the [Academic Catalog and Student Handbook](#).

Political Science outcomes:

Graduating political science majors should:

Outcome 1: Explain the United States Constitution and the United States political institutions and processes.

Outcome 2: Recognize the importance of political geography.

Outcome 3: Assess and compare how other national political systems and international political organizations differ from the United States political system.

Outcome 4: Understand the accepted practices of political science research.

Outcome 5: Apply material learned in political science to real life experiences gained by working in a political science or related organization.

Outcome 6: Critically evaluate the major themes of political science.

Assessments Methods/Types of Evidence

- POLS 2101 Pre and Post Assessment Test
- POLS 2401 Political Geography Test
- POLS 3000-4000 Term Papers
- POLS 4490 Internship Coordinator and Site Supervisor Evaluation
- POLS 4500 Senior Capstone Research Paper

Professional Behavior Further Defined: Being a student is your *job*. I expect, and your classmates count on you to conduct yourself as a professional; with each of us (you, me, and your classmates) contributing to the learning environment in and out of the classroom. In order to contribute to that environment, while in the classroom your cell phone should be turned off (if you are expecting an important call, place it on vibrate and sit near the door and take your call outside) including for text messaging. You are no longer in high school, you are an adult and should have no need to “pass notes” during class, make excessive trips to the restroom, carry on conversations that are not related to the work at hand or the material under discussion in the class. If you have stayed up too late (obviously working on this or some other course) or are feeling ill do not view the shared environment of the classroom as your supplemental bedroom – go back to your room and get the necessary rest. Just as sleeping on the job will have dire consequences in your future, sleeping in class will not help you maintain a professional level of performance. In short, use common courtesy, common decency, and common sense.

Political Science Program Research Paper Rubric

Research Paper Assignment

	Exceeds Standards	Meets Standards	Fails to Meet Standards
CRITERIA			
<i>Evidence</i>	Accurately identifies all or almost all of the relevant factual information.	Generally, identifies the relevant factual information.	Identifies little or no relevant factual information, opinion based, or is vague.
	40-26 pts	25-11 pts	10-0 pts
<i>Logic and Analysis</i>	Uses evidence with precision, interprets it soundly, and presents it in an organized way to support main ideas rigorously.	Uses evidence generally, interprets it basically, and organizes the work to support main idea.	Minimal use of evidence, with little or no interpretation, or incorrect interpretation, presented in unorganized way.
	40-26 pts	25-11 pts	10-0 pts
<i>Writing and Grammar (APSA Citation)</i>	No or very few grammatical, spelling, or citation errors.	A number of grammatical, spelling, or citation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, citation errors; paper difficult to understand.
	20-15 pts	14-10	9-0 pts
<i>Score</i>	A: 100 – 90 points	B: 89 – 80 points	C: 79 – 70 points
	D: 69 - 60 points	F: 59 points and below	

Approximate* Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Material Covered	Notes/Comments / Other
Week 1 8/14	Orientation & Intro	Chapter 1 Quiz 1 – Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	Complete Syllabus Quiz for NO SHOW!
Week 2 8/21	Federalism: State and Local Politics within a Federal System	Chapter 2 Quiz 2 – Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 3 8/28	Participation, Elections, and Representation	Chapter 3 Quiz 3 – Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 4 9/5	Exam 1	Chapters 1 -3 Review all lectures, chapters, and quizzes.	Exam 1 open 9/5 – 9/10 Due by 9/10 at 9 p.m.
Week 5 9/11	State and Local Direct Democracy	Chapter 4 Quiz 4 – Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 6 9/18	Political Parties	Chapter 5 Quiz 5 – Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 7 9/25	Interest Groups	Chapter 6 Quiz 6 – Friday	
Week 8 10/2	Exam 2	Chapters 4-6 Review all lectures, chapters, and quizzes.	Exam 2 open 10/2 – 10/06 Due by 10/06 at 9 p.m.
10/7 - 10/10	Fall Break	No Classes	
Week 9 10/11	Writing Assignment		Writing Assignment - Due 10/15 at 9 p.m.
Week 10 10/16	State Legislatures	Chapter 7 Quiz 7 – Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 11 10/23	Governors and State Bureaucracy	Chapter 8 Quiz 8 – Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	

Week 12 10/30	The Structure of Local Governments	Chapter 11 Quiz 9 - Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 13 11/06	Exam 3	Chapters 7, 8, & 11 Review all lectures, chapters, and quizzes.	Exam 3 open 11/06 – 11/12 Due by 11/12 at 9 p.m.
Week 14 11/13	Morality Politics	Chapter 13 Quiz 10 - Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 15 11/20	Social Welfare & Health Care Policy	Chapter 14 Quiz 11 - Opens Friday, due by 9 p.m. on Sunday.	
Week 16 11/27 – 12/04	Exam 4	Chapters 13-14 Review all lectures, chapters, and quizzes.	Extra Credit – Due 12/04 at 9 p.m.

Approximate means, the syllabus is subject to change due to online discussion and speed of material coverage. If syllabus changes, I will give students **at least 24 hours notice and will post an updated syllabus on D2L.*