

State & Local Government – Spring 2019
PS 2130, Section 102
TR 11:00a.m. – 12:15p.m.
Room: BH 110

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. William D. Hicks
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Office Hours: 12:15p.m.-3:00p.m., Tues & Thur

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course introduces students to the politics, institutions, and policy processes of sub-national governments in the United States. Beyond simply levying taxes, these governments play pivotal policy roles in health care, education, corrections, economic development, environmental protection, and welfare, to name a few. State and local governments are a permanent fixture in the lives of all people living in the United States, and their programmatic and fiscal roles have increased substantially relative to that of the federal government over the past 25 years. For this reason alone, it is useful for students to gain an intimate understanding of state and local government.

However, state and local governments are also an important venue for students to learn something about politics and policymaking that applies to governments in other places and times. By comparing the similarities and differences between state and local governments, we are better able to understand how (and if) citizens' attitudes shape the policies and political institutions that governments adopt. At the same time, we are also better able to understand how (and if) different policies and political institutions shape citizens' attitudes. This course, therefore, also teaches students how political scientists uncover and explain general principles and patterns of politics and government.

Required Texts and Materials

Donovan, Todd, Daniel A. Smith, Tracy Osborn, and Christopher Z. Mooney. 2014. State & Local Politics: Institutions and Reform. **Fourth Edition**. Cengage Learning. ISBN: 978-1-285-44140-5

Exams & Graded Activities

Exams: 75% of each student's grade is based on his or her performance on three non-cumulative exams. These exams are comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions.

Participation: 25% of each student's grade is based on his or her participation. I derive each student's participation grade from three separate activities: (1) attendance, (2) in-class discussion, and (3) pop-quizzes. I expect students to attend every class, and participate meaningfully in classroom discussions.

Course Grades

<i>Grading Scale</i>			<i>Grade Requirements</i>		
A	94-100	C	74-76	Exam 1	25%
A-	90-93	C-	70-73	Exam 2	25%
B+	87-89	D+	67-69	Exam 3	25%
B	84-86	D	64-66	Participation	25%
B-	80-83	D-	60-63		
C+	77-79	F	0-59		

Absence Policies

I will not take attendance everyday. That said, I will have pop-quizzes, which I usually administer at the end of class. Students who are not present will earn a zero on these quizzes. As such, attendance will strongly shape students' grades directly via their participation grade. Additionally, attendance in my classes always positively shapes students' scores on the exams.

Student Conduct

As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site:

Statement on Student Engagement with Courses

In its mission statement, Appalachian State University aims at “providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers” as well as “maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students.” Such rigor means that the foremost activity of Appalachian students is an intense engagement with their courses. In practical terms, students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time. Hence, a fifteen-hour academic load might reasonably require between 30 and 45 hours per week of out-of-class work.

Disability Support Services

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://www.ods.appstate.edu/> or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

Religious Observances Policy

Faculty members are required to make reasonable accommodations for students requesting to miss class due to the observance of religious holidays. All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term “religious observance” to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student’s faith that require absence from class. Faculty, at their discretion, may include class attendance as a criterion in determining a student’s final grade in the course. On the first day of class, faculty must inform students of their class attendance policy and the effect of that policy on their final grade; both policies must be clearly stated in the class syllabus.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Course Schedule

January 15

Course Introduction

January 17

Why States: Donovan et al., Ch. 1

January 22

Federalism: Donovan et al., Ch. 2

January 24

Federalism: Donovan et al., Ch. 2

January 29

Elections: Donovan et al., Ch. 3

January 31

Elections: Donovan et al., Ch. 3

February 5

Direct Democracy: Donovan et al., Ch. 4

February 7

Direct Democracy: Donovan et al., Ch. 4

February 12

Parties: Donovan et al., Ch. 5

February 14

Parties: Donovan et al., Ch. 5

February 19

Catch-up/Review

February 21

Exam 1

February 26

Legislatures: Donovan et al., Ch. 7

February 28

Legislatures: Donovan et al., Ch. 7

March 5 - NO CLASS

March 7 - NO CLASS

March 12

Governors: Donovan et al., Ch. 8

March 14

Governors: Donovan et al., Ch. 8

March 19

Courts: Donovan et al., Ch. 9

March 21

Courts: Donovan et al., Ch. 9

March 26

Catch-up/Review

March 28

Exam 2

April 2

Interest Groups: Donovan et al., Ch. 6

April 4

Interest Groups: Donovan et al., Ch. 6

April 9

Fiscal Policy: Donovan et al., Ch. 10

April 11

Fiscal Policy: Donovan et al., Ch. 10

April 16

Morality Policy: Donovan et al., Ch. 13

April 18

Morality Policy: Donovan et al., Ch. 13

April 23 - NO CLASS

April 25

Health & Welfare Policy: Donovan et al., Ch. 14

April 30

Health & Welfare Policy: Donovan et al., Ch. 14

May 7

Final Exam (at 11:00am)