

State & Local Government – Spring 2025  
PS 2130, Section 102  
MWF 10:00a.m. – 10:50a.m.  
Room: BH 238

## Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. William D. Hicks  
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Office Hours: 11:00-12:00, MWF  
Make appointment here: [Google Calendar](#)  
Meet here: [Zoom Link](#)

## 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

Smith, Kevin B. and Alan Greenblatt. 2021. Governing States and Localities. 8th Edition. Sage/CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1071839829

## 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.

AsU Learn Quizzes: This course will include roughly 1 quiz per week about the class lectures. These quizzes will be short answer and consist of no more than a handful of short questions. The purpose of these quizzes is to encourage students to keep up with the class. The questions are not designed to be difficult, but rather should be very easy for students who have engaged the reading. All quizzes will be accessible on AsU Learn, and are due by the end of the week.

## 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	Quizzes	25%
B-	80-83	D-	60-63		
C+	77-79	F	0-59		

## Policies about Absences & Illness

**If you miss a scheduled exam**, you have 24 hours after the start of the exam to provide me with documentation excusing the absence (if you would like to schedule a makeup). Failure to do this within 24 hours will result in a 0 for the exam.

If you feel sick, please stay home. Send me an email before you miss class, and I will do my utmost to help you get the material you missed.

## 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:

[www.studentconduct.appstate.edu](http://www.studentconduct.appstate.edu).

## **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 13**

Course Introduction

#### **January 15**

Course Introduction: Why States?

#### **January 17**

Federalism: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 2

#### **January 20**

[NO CLASS]

#### **January 22**

Federalism: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 2

#### **January 24**

Federalism: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 2

#### **January 27**

Elections: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 5

#### **January 29**

Elections: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 5

#### **January 31**

Elections: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 5

### **February 3**

Direct Democracy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 5

### **February 5**

Direct Democracy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 5

### **February 7**

Direct Democracy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 5

### **February 10**

Political Parties: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 6

### **February 12**

Political Parties: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 6

### **February 14**

Political Parties: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 6

### **February 17**

Review & Catchup

### **February 19**

**Exam 1**

### **February 21**

Legislatures: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 7

### **February 24**

Legislatures: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 7

**February 26**

Legislatures: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 7

**February 28**

Governors: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 8

**March 3**

Governors: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 8

**March 5**

Governors: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 8

**March 7**

Courts: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 9

**March 10**

**NO CLASS**

**March 12**

**NO CLASS**

**March 14**

**NO CLASS**

**March 17**

Courts: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 9

**March 19**

Courts: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 9

**March 21**

**Exam 2**

**March 24**

Groups: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 6, review

**March 26**

Groups: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 6, review

**March 28**

Groups: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 6, review

**March 31**

Fiscal Policy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 4

**April 2**

Fiscal Policy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 4

**April 4**

Fiscal Policy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 4

**April 7**

Crime & Punishment: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 14

**April 9**

Crime & Punishment: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 14

**April 11**

Crime & Punishment: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 14

**April 14**

Health & Welfare Policy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 15

**April 16**

Health & Welfare Policy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 15

**April 18**

[NO CLASS]

**April 21**

[NO CLASS]

**April 23**

[NO CLASS]

**April 25**

Health & Welfare Policy: Smith & Greenblatt., Ch. 15

**April 28**

SPECIAL TOPIC, Catch-up, Review

**April 30**

SPECIAL TOPIC, Catch-up, Review

**May 7**

**Final Exam, 8:00a.m.**