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**State and Local Politics
Government 222
Fall 2008**

Introduction

State and local governments touch our lives everyday. They pick up our garbage, educate us, keep us safe from criminals, and perform a whole host of other vital services. They regulate a wide range of business activities, from generating electric power to cutting hair. State governments are also the single largest employer in every state. But state and local government is not in the forefront of the minds of the U.S. public. While most people can name the president and perhaps a few U.S. senators, fewer can name their governor or mayor, and far fewer can even recognize the names of their state legislators and city councilpersons. It is the purpose of this course to introduce you to these important arenas of government so that you may participate in them more knowledgeably, whether as a citizen, an elected official, or at some level in-between.

There are three basic themes in this course:

- 1.) Diversity among the states- What are the differences among the states and what difference do these differences make?
- 2.) Revitalization of state governments- How have state government institutions enhanced their capacity to govern in the past 30 years?
- 3.) Institutions affect policy- How does the way state government and political organizations are set up and operate affect public policy?

This course also has three ulterior motives. First, I want to develop your appreciation of state and local government and hopefully stimulate your interest in the process by bringing in a series of guest speakers from various political institutions. Secondly, I want to encourage you to think clearly and systematically about political phenomena, to think theoretically and focus on explanations, and to understand the importance of empirical verification. Third, I emphasize your ability to work collaboratively and communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, regarding political issues. These skills will serve you in good stead in other courses and careers long after you have forgotten most of the specifics of state politics you have learned in my course.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

As befitting your status at one of the “New Ivies”, I have high expectations of student performance. Grades will be determined by student performance on all of the following:

1. Class Presentation Assignments (24% of course grade)
2. Midterm (14% of course grade)
3. Research Paper (37% of course grade)
4. Final Exam (25% of course grade)

Course Absences

A well functioning class that promotes learning requires good attendance. Students should inform me prior to class if they must miss class on a specific day. You are allowed two personal days (absences), after that I will deduct 2.5% from your final grade. For example, you receive a 90% as your final grade, but have missed four classes; your final grade is an 85%. I stress attendance not only for your benefit, but also for the benefit of your classmates.

Books and Readings

1. Ronald Weber and Paul Brace editors, American State and Local Politics: Directions for the 21st Century.
2. Alan Rosenthal, Heavy Lifting: The Job of the American Legislature, CQ Press, 2004
3. Reading Packet of articles

Schedule—THIS WILL CHANGE TO ACCOMMODATE GUEST SPEAKERS

Sep 3 Introduction

Alan Ehrenhalt, Out in the States, It’s Not the 1930s Anymore

Hal Hovey, The Challenges of Flexibility

NCSL: States Legislatures Face Unsettled Conditions in 2008, p. 1-5

FEDERALISM

Sep 5 Historical and Constitutional Issues

The Federalist, No. 17, Alexander Hamilton, The Federalist Papers, 1787.

The Federalist, No. 45, James Madison, The Federalist Papers, 1788.

Nature of the American State, James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, 1888

Weber and Brace, Chapter 1, State and Localities Transformed, p. 1-9

Sep 8 A Devolution Revolution?

The Devil in Devolution, John D. Donahue, *The American Prospect*, May/June 1997

Power Grab, Eliza Newlin Carney, *National Journal*, April 11, 1998.

Dilger, RJ The Study of American Federalism at the Turn of the Century, State and Local

Government Review 32, 98-107.

Richard P. Nathan, There will always be a New Federalism, Rockefeller Institute.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EXPLANATIONS OF POLICY-MAKING

Sep 10 The Socioeconomic and Political Culture Arguments

Virginia Gray, The Socioeconomic and Political Context of the States, Chapter 1, p. 1-22
Daniel Elazar, The Three Political Cultures in American Federalism, A View from the States

Sep 12 The Social Diversity Argument

Rodney Hero and Caroline Tolbert, A Racial/Ethnic Diversity Interpretation of Politics and Policy in the States of the US, *AJPS*, Aug 1996, p. 851-71.

Sep 15 Demographic/Socio-economic/Political/Cultural Presentations

Class Presentation #1: Socio-Economic and Demographic Analysis

Electoral Competition

Sep 17 State Elections

Brace and Ward, Ch 10, Charles Bullock, The Opening Up of State and Local Election Processes

Joseph Zimmerman, Alternative Local Elections, p. 134-45.

Sep 19 State Political Parties

Brace and Ward, Chapter 9, State and Local Parties in a Candidate Centered Age

Sep 22 Theorizing about Interparty Competition

VO Key, *Southern Politics* (1949), p 15-19, 298-314, 664-675

Egan, T. In Idaho, the Poor Fear They Will Go the Way of State's Democrats, NYT

Sep 24 Excel and Powerpoint Day

Class in Library BI Room

Sep 26 Inter-Party Competition

Class Presentation #2: The Causes and Consequences of Interparty Competition

Sep 29 Interest Groups

Brace and Ward, Ch. 11, Virginia Gray and David Lowery, Interest Representation in the States

Charles Mahtesian, The Lure of the Cards, *Governing* 16-21

Charles Mahtesian, The Uprising of the Prison Guards, *Governing*, August 1996, 38-40

Thomas and Hrebenar, Who's Got Clout, NCSL

Oct 1 Interest Groups- theorizing about interest group power

Class Presentation: Who is powerful and why? Who are the 600-pound gorillas in your state?

Oct 3 Guest Lecturer

Barbara Bartoletti, Lobbyist, NY League of Women Voters

Alana Jeydel, *The Business of Lobbying in New York Reform in New York: 10 Steps on the Path to Change Albany*, Oct 2004, Common Cause, Sections on Campaign Finance and Lobbying

Oct 6 Midterm Exam

Oct 8 Research Design Day

Stonecash, J. "Field Assessment: State Politics Literature" (*Polity* 28: 1996).
Nicholson-Crotty and Meier, "Size Doesn't Matter: In Defense of Single-State Studies," *SPPQ* (2002): 411-422.

STATE INSTITUTIONS

Oct 10 State Legislatures- The Professionalization Movement

Brace and Ward, Chap 4, *The Institutionalized Legislature and the Rise of the Anti-Politics Era*

Ehrenhalt, *The New Governing Class, The United States of Ambition*, p. 125-142

Bledsoe, *I Spent a Winter in Politics: Confessions of a Farmer after his First Season in a Statehouse*

Mahtesian, *The Sick Legislature Syndrome and How to Avoid It, Governing*, February 1997

Senate. Flake, *Effects of Term Limits in AZ: Irreparable Damages, Spectrum*, 2005

Greenblatt, *The Truth About Term Limits, 67-71, Governing* Jan 2006

Oct 13—Term Limits

Marjorie Sarbaugh-Thompson et al, *Democracy among Strangers: Term Limits' Effects on Relationships between State Legislators in Michigan, SPPQ*, Winter 2006

Kousser, Thad. *The Limited Impact of Term Limits: Contingent Effects on the Complexity and Breadth of Laws, SPPQ*, Winter 2006

Oct 15 State Legislature

Guest Speaker Assemblyman Tedesco

Oct 17 State Legislature Presentations

Class Presentation: State Legislatures

Oct 20 Lawmaking- Representation

Rosenthal, *Heavy Lifting*, Chapters 1-3

Oct 22 Lawmaking

Rosenthal, *Heavy Lifting*, Chapters 4-7

Oct 24 Lawmaking

Alan Rosenthal, *Heavy Lifting*, Chapter 10, 11

Oct 27 Governors—Historical Evolution of the Office

Weber and Brace, Chapter 6. *The Governors*

Oct 29 The Legislative – Governor Relationship

Alan Rosenthal, Heavy Lifting, Ch 8-9

Oct 31 Governors – What Make a Governor Powerful

Eichstaedt, No, No, Two Hundred Times No, *State Legislatures* 21:7, 1995, 46-49.

Ehrenhalt, It Pays to Know Where the Bodies Are Buried, *Governing*, June 1998. 104-5

Donald F. Kettl, The Gulf of Government, *Governing*, April 1998.

Crew and Hill, Gubernatorial Influence in State Government Policy-Making

Jonathan Walters, The Taming of Texas

Nov 3 Governor Presentations

Nov 5 State Supreme Courts

Weber and Brace, Chapter 7. Courts: Politics and the Judicial Process

Nov 7 Judiciary Selection Methods

Hall, State Supreme Courts in American Democracy, *APSR*, June 2001, 315-330

Mahtesian, Bench Press

Mathew Manweller, The “Angriest Crocodile”: Information Costs, Direct Democracy

Activists, and the Politicization of State Judicial Elections

Nov 10 Understanding Your State Judiciary

Nov 12 New York Court of Appeals

Trip to Judith Kaye. Albany

The Direct Democracy Challenge

Nov 14-17 Initiative

Gerber, Stealing the Initiative: How State Government Responds to Direct Democracy

Social Welfare Policy

Nov 19 Explaining State Welfare Choice

Joe Soss, Setting the Terms of Relief: Explaining State Policy Choices in the Devolution Revolution, *American Journal of Political Science*, 2001

Nov 21 Implementation of the Personal Responsibility Act of 1996

Thomas L. Gais, Welfare Reform Findings in Brief, Rockefeller Institute March 2002

Cathy Marie Johnson, Thomas L. Gais and Catherine Lawrence, Children and Welfare Reform: What Policy Theories Are Being Implemented in States Where Most Poor Children Live?

Morality Policy

Nov 24 The case of gay marriage

The Politics of Gay and Lesbian Rights: Expanding the Scope of the Conflict

Donald P. Haider-Markel; Kenneth J. Meier *The Journal of Politics*, p. 332-349.

Haider-Markel, Donald P. "Policy diffusion as a geographical expansion of the scope of political conflict: same-sex marriage bans in the 1990s". *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 5-26.

Local Government: Saratoga Springs

Dec 1 Mayoral Politics

Guest Lecturer Scott Johnson

James Svara, Institutional Powers and Mayoral Leadership

Nobody in Charge, Rob Gurwitt, *Governing*, September 1997.106-9

Dec 3 City Council

Guest Lecturer, Members of City Council

Susan McManus, Chapter 8, The Resurgent City Councils 166-185

Wilttrout, Playing the Political Game

Mahtesian, The Politics of Ugliness

Dec 5 Local Government

Susan McManus, Chapter 8, The Resurgent City Councils 185-193

Alan Hertke, My Life as a School Board Candidate: Lesson Learned in Local Politics

Dec 8-10 Conclusion