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**State and Local Politics
Government 222
Fall 2010**

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. Reading Packet of articles- to be provided

Schedule—THIS WILL CHANGE TO ACCOMMODATE GUEST SPEAKERS

Sep 7 Introduction

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

National Conference of State Legislatures: NCSL Annual Forecast, Construction Continues on Repairing State Budgets 2010. Dec 17, 2009, <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=19397>

Socio-Economic And Political Explanations Of Policy-Making

Sep 9 The Socioeconomic, Political Culture, and Diversity 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 14 Demographic/Socio-economic/Political/Cultural Presentations

Class Presentation #1: Socio-Economic and Demographic Analysis

FEDERALISM

Sep 16 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

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

Nathan, Richard. Updating Theories of American Federalism, from Intergovernmental Management for the 21st Century, Brookings Institution, 2008. p. 13-22

Sep 21 A Devolution Revolution?

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

Peter Harkness, Washington Plays Catch Up On Climate Change, January 2010

Peter Harkness, Devolution? What's That? July 2009

Peter Harkness, Education Reform is the New Game in Town, May 2009

Suzanne Weiss, Facing off with the Feds, <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=19576>

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, Journal of Public Administration and Theory 2006; 16: 499-510.

Sep 23 Health Care Reform and the States- Guest Lecturer, Courtney Burke, Director of the Rockefeller Institute's New York State Health Policy Research Center

Frank J. Thompson and Courtney Burke. "Executive Federalism and Medicaid Demonstration Waivers: Implications for Policy and Democratic Process, 2007

What Federal Health Reform Means for the States, An Interview with Courtney Burke

Electoral Competition

Sep 28 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 30 State Political Parties

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

Oct 5 Excel and Powerpoint Day

Class in Library BI Room

Oct 7 Inter-Party Competition

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

Oct 12 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 14 Interest Groups- theorizing about interest group power

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

Oct 19 Midterm Exam

Oct 21 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 26 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 28 Term Limits

Bruce E. Cain and Thad Kousser. Adapting to Term Limits in California: Recent Experiences and New Directions, http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_1104BCR.pdf Portions Only

Nov 2 State Legislature Presentations

Class Presentation: State Legislatures

Nov 4 Governors—Historical Evolution of the Office

Weber and Brace, Chapter 6. The Governors

Nov 9 Governors – What Make a Governor Powerful

Eichstaedt, No, No, Two Hundred Times No, *State Legislatures* 21:7, , 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 11 Governor Presentations

Class Presentation: Governors

Nov 16 State Supreme Courts

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

Nov 18 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 23 Understanding Your State Judiciary

Class Presentation: Judiciary

The Direct Democracy Challenge

Nov 30- Dec 2 Initiative

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

Morality Policy

Dec 7 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.

Dec 9 Conclusion