

# **POLS 2201: State & Local Government**

**Fall, 2009**  
**Section 01**  
**MWF: 12-12:50**  
**Pafford 107**

Dr. Paul Rutledge  
Office: Pafford 119  
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## Course Description

POLS 2201 is an introductory survey of state and local politics in the United States. The course is designed to help students better understand the political institutions and processes of regional governments. These governments have vastly increased their policy responsibilities since the 1980s and are the most involved in their citizens' day-to-day lives. The general approach to this topic is comparative in nature, that is, the focus is on the variation among regional governments in an attempt to come to some understanding of why these differences exist and what effect they have on government decision making.

## Course Objectives

Relating to the description of the course, the instructor will consider this course a success if students walk away from the course at the end of the semester with a fundamental understanding of how state and local government works, but more importantly, how the government operations on these levels and the associated policy outcomes effect our lives as citizens of this nation on a daily basis. It is the instructor's intent not to convince you of any partisan dispositions or policy objectives, but rather to attempt to foster the student's understanding of American state and local politics while stressing the importance of civic involvement among citizens.

## Required Texts:

Smith, Greenblatt, and Mariani. *Governing States and Localities*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. CQ Press. (text)  
Smith. *State and Local Government*. 2009-2010 edition. CQ Press. (reader)

## Course Evaluation

**Exams:** There will be three exams throughout the course of the semester. Exams will consist of 40 multiple choice questions and 1 essay question. Each exam will be worth 20% of your final grade, for a total of 60% of the course grade.

**Final Paper:** Students will be expected to write a final paper on some topic relating to state or local government. Students will select a topic of their choice, some possibilities include a government institution or actor, a policy sector, or other topic, and should examine several states using the comparative method. The topic must be discussed with the instructor first prior to the deadline listed below. The length of the paper should be at least five double-spaced pages in

length, and will be evaluated according to the quality of the topic, the depth of the investigation, the consultation of effective sources, and the quality of the writing in general. More details on the paper will be discussed in class throughout the semester. The paper will constitute 30% of the final grade. **The paper is due November 24, 4pm. Late papers will not be accepted.**

**Participation:** The remaining 10% of the course grade will be based on the student's participation in class. Students are expected to come to class having done the assigned readings and be prepared to participate fully in discussions we will be having in class. Students who consistently miss class, without documented proof of emergency circumstances, will be shown no mercy in this course. Participation will not only be worth ten percent of the final grade, but also will be the basis on which borderline grades are determined at the end of the semester.

**Related Expectations:** Students will also be expected to adhere to the following related expectations.

- 1) When engaging in class discussion, students will be respectful of the opinions of others and will treat each other professionally. Foul or harmful language directed at any other individual in the room will result in your removal from the course and you will not be welcome back.
- 2) Students are not to use their cell phones or other electronic devices during class. If you are caught using your cell phones during class, you will be asked to leave, not welcomed back, and you will get a zero for participation in this course.
- 3) Do assigned readings prior to coming to class. You will need to do so in order to effectively participate in the discussion or follow the lecture.
- 4) Get to class on time.

#### Grading Procedures:

Students will be evaluated by their individual performance on the three exams, final paper, and their class participation. Students will be assigned one of the following letter grades based on their points earned out of the total possible points:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 0-59%

#### Academic Dishonesty:

I take academic dishonesty very seriously, as does the University. As such, any cheating or suspicion of cheating on any assignment for this course will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent, including those authorities above me. Cheating will result in a failing grade for the course, no exceptions.

#### Make up assignments:

Students are expected to take exams in class at the time they are scheduled. Students will only be allowed to make up or reschedule examinations or any other assigned aspect of the course in the most extreme circumstances and providing full documentation where applicable.

### Students with disabilities:

Any student with a disability who requires any accommodation should notify me as early in the semester as possible and the instructor certainly will work with you to the greatest extent of his abilities.

### Social Justice Policy:

The instructor and the University take social justice very seriously. To that end, no students will be discriminated against in this class for any reason, including race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or height, weight, age or appearance for that matter by the instructor or any of the students. Students who make insensitive, inappropriate, or offensive comments in class relating to any of these criteria will face disciplinary action. Students are encouraged to participate fully but professionally in class discussions, and no student should be made to feel too uncomfortable to do so.

## **Course Schedule**

**Student Assignments will be denoted in bold. Text refers to the text, reader refers to the reader.**

### Week 1: (August 14) Introduction

- Students will receive the syllabus and expectations will be discussed in class.

### Week 2: (August 17-21) Introduction/Federalism

- **Read text Chapter 1**
- **Read text Chapter 2**

### Week 3: (August 24-28) Federalism (continued)

- **Read Chapters 1-5 in reader.**

### Week 4: (August 31-September 4) Constitutions

- **Read text Chapter 3**
- **Read Constitution of Georgia**  
([http://sos.georgia.gov/ELECTIONS/constitution\\_2007.pdf](http://sos.georgia.gov/ELECTIONS/constitution_2007.pdf)) Also available on WebCT

### Week 5: (September 9-11) Political Participation

- **Read text Chapter 4**
- **Read Chapter 6-9 in reader.**
- **Turn in 1 page final paper proposal September 11 in class.**
- No class September 7 in observation of Labor Day.

### Week 6: (September 14-18) Political Parties and Interest Groups

- **Read text Chapter 5**
- **Read Chapter 10-12 in reader.**

Week 7: (September 21-25) Legislatures

- **Exam I: Monday, September 21**
- **Read Text Chapter 6**

Week 8: (September 28-October 2) Legislatures (continued) and Governors

- **Read Chapters 13-15 in reader.**
- **Read Text Chapter 7.**

Week 9: (October 5-9) Governors (continued) and Courts

- **Read Chapters 16-18 in reader.**
- **Read Text Chapter 8.**

Week 10: (October 12-14) Courts (continued)

- **Read Chapters 19-21 in reader.**
- **Rough (rough) draft of final paper due October 14 in class.**
- No class October 16, Fall Break.

Week 11: (October 19-23) Bureaucracy

- **Read Text Chapter 9**
- **Read Chapters 22-25 in reader.**

Week 12: (October 26-30) Exam II/Local

- **Exam II: Monday, October 26**
- **Read Text Chapter 10**
- **Read Chapters 26-28 in reader.**

Week 13: (November 2-6) Metro government/Fiscal Federalism

- **Read Text Chapter 11-12**
- **Read Chapter 29 in reader.**

Week 14: (November 9-13) Fiscal Federalism (continued)/Policy problems

- **Read Chapters 30-33 in reader.**
- No class November 13 due to GPSA annual meeting.

Week 15: (November 16-20) Public Policy Problems/Education Policy

- **Read Chapters 34-37**
- **Read Text Chapter 13**

Week 16: (November 23) Crime and Punishment

- **Read Text Chapter 14**
- **Final Paper Due November 24, 4pm.**
- No class November 25-27 in observance of Thanksgiving holiday.

Week 17: (November 30-December 4) Health Care Policy

- **Read Text Chapter 15**

**Final Examination (Exam III): Wednesday, December 9; 11:00am-1:00pm  
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