

The University of West Georgia

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**POLS 2201: STATE AND LOCAL POLITICS
Summer 2007**

Course Description and Objectives

POLS 221 are 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.

Required Texts

Smith, Kevin B., Alan Greenblatt, and John Buntin. *Governing States and Localities*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005.

Grades

Grades are assigned on a points basis. There are a total of 250 possible points for the course, assigned on the following basis:

Test 1	30 points
Class participation	10 points
Homework/ Assignment	20 points
Final	40 points

The tests will be in-class examinations covering both reading and lecture material. The format for these tests includes multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer. Test 1 is comprehensive. The final *is* comprehensive, that is, it will be based on all of the lecture and reading material covered in class to that point. The purpose of all examinations is to assess students' grasp of the primary elements of the course.

In addition to completing one exams and the final, students are expected to do various homework assignments throughout the summer session. Each of the (4) assignment is worth 5 points.

All students are expected to participate in class discussions, and this is a graded portion of the course. In addition to daily lectures, student assignments provide an excellent opportunity for students to engage in informal debate.

Class Schedule and Assigned Readings

The following provides a basic outline for the course. The lectures parallel the topics in the assigned readings, but they are not substitutes for them. The readings are a prerequisite for the lectures and should be completed on the earliest date (both the main text and those assigned from *Governing.com*). Readings from *Governing.com* are required readings and are subject to examination.

Week 1

Tuesday and Wednesday

Chapter 1; Smith et al.; Introduction
Governing; Government Performance Project
 (www.governing.com/gpp/2001/gp1intro.htm)
 Chapter 2; Smith et al.; Federalism
Governing; “Radical Federalist”
 (www.governing.com/articles/8poto.htm)

Thursday and Friday

Chapter 3; Smith et al.; Constitutions
 : Chapter 4; Smith et al.; Political Culture
Governing; “Urban Notebook”
 (www.governing.com/notebook/today.htm)

Homework Assignment--#1

Week 2

Monday and Tuesday

Chapter 5; Smith et al.; Political Parties and Interest Groups
Governing; “Politics 2004: Campaign Events and News”
 (www.governing.com/politics.htm)
 Chapter 6; Smith et al.; Legislatures
Governing; “Legislatures 2004: Statehouse News”
 (www.governing.com/legis.htm)

Wednesday and Thursday

Chapter 7; Smith et al.; Governors
Governing; “2004 Governors Election Guide/Politics 2004”
 (www.governing.com/gov2004/guide.htm)
 (www.governing.com/politics.htm)
 Chapter 8; Smith et al.; Courts

Friday Homework Assignment --#2

Week 3

Monday and Tuesday

Chapter 9; Smith et al.; Bureaucracy
Governing; “Grading the states/counties/cities” and “House of Loopholes”
 (www.governing.com/gpp/2001/gp1intro.htm)
 (www.governing.com/articles/11poto.htm)
 Chapter 10 Smith et al.; Local Government

Wednesday and Thursday

Chapter 11; Smith et al.; Finance
 (www.governing.com/articles/1poto.htm)
 (www.governing.com/articles/7poto.htm)
 Chapter 12; Smith et al.; Education
 (www.governing.com/articles/2poto.htm)

Friday Homework Assignment--#3

Week 4:

Monday and Tuesday

Chapter 13; Smith et al.; Crime and Punishment

Chapter 14; Smith et al.; Health and Welfare

Wednesday Homework Assignment--#4

Friday COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

CLASS POLICIES:

- No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from involvement or participation in, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by State University of West Georgia.
- State University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies designed to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.
- Students must abide by policies in the College Catalog, Student Handbook, and if applicable, program handbook. The Instructor cannot change school policies.
- If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and require assistance of support services, please seek assistance through the Center for Disability Services. A CDS counselor will coordinate those services.
- Attendance is expected at all classes. If a student misses a class, the student should at least get the notes for that day from another student. Tape recorders are permitted. Roll will be taken. All tests must be taken on the scheduled day. No make-up tests will be given.
- Students will be courteous to each other and the instructor. Do not talk to your friends during class. If you are late to class try to enter and be seated quietly. Turn off any cellular phones and pagers while in class. If you disrupt the class you will be dismissed.
- Any attempt to defraud, deceive, or mislead the instructor in determining a grade for a student by cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. See the Student Handbook.
- Students are encouraged to take an active interest in the class. You are welcome to ask questions and express your opinions on the material covered in class. The exceptions to this are racially or sexually discriminatory comments.
- Students should inform the instructor anytime they have a situation that will create a problem for the student in the class. Most problems can be resolved if they are dealt with in advance.

The Grade scale will be as follows:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

65-69 = D

64- less = F

NEWS AND GENERAL INFORMATION:

Keeping up with current events helps to understand the material in this class. Read a newspaper like New York Times or USA Today or magazines like Newsweek and Time. Watch the national news on one of the major TV networks and/or listen to National Public Radio news analysis (6:00-9:00am and 4:00-6:30pm) on WABE 90.1FM.

***Current event pop quizzes will be given throughout the semester.

