

POS 3122:0001 | STATE POLITICS

Meeting Place: RBA - 0209 | **Meeting ☉:** TR 11:00am-12:15pm

Instructor: Matthew J. Uttermark | ✉: mju14@my.fsu.edu

Office: Bellamy 550 | **Office Hours ☉:** Tu 12:30pm-1:30pm

Introduction

“To stay experimentation in things social and economic is a grave responsibility. Denial of the right to experiment may be fraught with serious consequences to the nation. It is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous State may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country.” – Louis Brandeis

This course is designed to introduce students to the operation, structure, and policy-relevance of American state government. States play an integral role in the lives of American citizens: financing education, providing transportation and health services, overseeing elections and the workings of state parties, establishing and overseeing local governments, regulating business activities, occupations and health practices, and otherwise assuring the health, safety and equal protection of their citizens. States work closely with federal and local officials to implement national policies and in recent years have taken on more and more responsibilities once primarily the domain of the federal government. Understanding state politics and policy is key to being an engaged and informed citizen.

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- 1) Be able to explain the ways states are organized and the key institutional actors and processes they employ.
- 2) Be able to demonstrate general knowledge of the role of political parties, direct democracy, interest groups, federalism and intergovernmental relations in the American states and how Florida compares to other states in those areas.
- 3) Have the skills to interpret data on state institutions and processes and fiscal conditions.
- 4) Have developed the analytical and critical skills to understand primary literature in state politics and policy.

In addition to gaining a substantive understanding about state politics in this course, we are also going to try something new, writing a quantitative research paper in this class. The goal of this assignment is two-fold: 1) to provide you with a professional, polished writing sample for future career and school applications (e.g. law school, grad school, research positions) and 2) to help demystify what it is professors are looking for when assigning a research paper. Therefore, we will also be reading and learning about how to craft an upper-division research paper in political science. I have assigned a series of writing prompts and a final paper to help you build a paper step-by-step. This project represents the majority of the grade in the class.

Required Text

Donovan, Todd, Daniel A. Smith, Tracy Osborn, and Christopher Z. Mooney 2015. *State & Local Politics Institutions and Reform 4th* Edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Electronic copies of the textbook are available, and can be used in this class.

This book should be available for purchase in the campus bookstore, Amazon.com and Chegg.com, among other sites. In the reading schedule, this book is referred to as **SLP**.

Baglione, Lisa A. 2016. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods* 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Sage Publications.

An electronic copy of the book will be made available on Canvas.

In the reading schedule, this book is referred to as **WaRP**.

Other readings (book chapters, journal articles) will be made available on Canvas.

Evaluation and Grading[†]

A*	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59

[†]Note: Grades within less than 0.5% of a higher letter grade will be rounded up.

Ex: If you have an 89.5% (B+), I will round your grade up to a 90% (A-).

* An A is the highest grade you can receive in the course.

Class Engagement (20% total or 4% per each): Throughout the course there will be unannounced quizzes. Quizzes can be administered in-class or via Canvas, etcetera. Quizzes will be between around 10 questions and will focus on reading and lecture comprehension questions from recently covered material. I will hold a minimum of six quizzes throughout the course. You will be graded on the first five quizzes that you participate in and complete. Each graded activity will constitute 4% of your final grade for the class. I reserve the right to lower this grade if a student has unacceptable/unbecoming behavior in this course.

Presentation on WaRP (20%): Students will work in groups to present a section of Baglione's *Writing a Research Paper*. A rubric is available on Canvas. Students will prepare a 30 minute presentation on one to two chapters of the book. The group will email me their slides at least **12 hours** prior to the start of class. The class is expected to have read the relevant chapters at the time of each presentation. The goal of these presentations is to effectively summarize and explain the material covered in the text to aid fellow students on their writing assignments.

Writing Assignments (25% total 10% for Assignment Three 4% all others): There are a series of five writing prompts that are assigned throughout the semester. These prompts are designed to help you draft a research paper step-by-step over the semester. Writing prompts for each assignment are provided in a folder under the 'Files' tab on Canvas. Each writing prompt counts for 4 percent of the final grade – with the exception of writing assignment three which accounts for 9 percent of our final grade plus one percent extra credit bump. *In order to receive credit for the assignment, students are expected to turn a hard copy of each prompt in-class on the day it is due, and remain in class to participate in self/peer evaluation.* I will not accept late writing prompts, except for assignment three which may be turned in one class period late and receive up to half credit.

Research Paper (35%): The final paper for the class will constitute 35% of the final grade for the course. The research paper will identify a quantitative political or public policy question in the area of U.S. state politics. Students will write a roughly 15 page research paper which combines and builds off of the

writing assignments completed throughout the class. A rubric and final paper prompt as well as an example paper are provided on Canvas. This paper is due **April 18th at the start of class**. The final grade for the paper will be deducted by 20% for each day it is late.

Class Policies

Makeup Work Except for the already discussed assignments above, no make-up work will be accepted in this course, unless the student has a university approved absence or the student has an agreement with the instructor. University approved absences include:

- A documented illness (or serious illness of a dependent child).
- A death in the family.
- Call to active military duty.
- Jury duty.
- A religious or work-restricted holy days.
- Official university activities (i.e. student athlete competing in a meet).

It is your responsibility to inform me and get documentation **before** the absence occurs. For example, if you are ill the day of an assignment, I require a signed note from a medical doctor dated the day of the exam. I will then work to determine how to make-up the assignment. Unless otherwise noted in the Evaluation and Grading section, late work receives a zero.

Incomplete Grades I do not expect to hand out a grade of “Incomplete” to any student in this course. However, a grade of “Incomplete” will only be given if there is an agreement between the instructor and the student prior to the end of the semester. The instructor reserves the right to determine a legitimate reason for assigning an incomplete grade.

Email Policy Do not email the instructor with questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus. The instructor will not reply to such emails. This document contains information on how your grade is calculated and what is covered each day in class. Additionally, if you wish to set up an appointment with the instructor outside of office hours, please provide a list of times to meet in the first email sent to the instructor. If a student habitually fails to follow the basics of email etiquette, I reserve the right to reflect the student’s lack of common sense in their class engagement grade.

Technology in the Classroom While technology has made our lives easier, the classroom is not the place to attempt to update Instagram. To facilitate learning, and to be respectful to other classmate’s learning, please refrain from using cell phones and media devices in the classroom. Keep phones on silent and go into the hallway if you must take a phone call.

I strongly encourage you to take notes the traditional way (pen and paper), however I do allow students to use laptops to take notes in the classroom. The first two rows of desks in the classroom are a laptop-free zone so that students who wish not to be distracted have a space to learn efficiently. Stay off social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.) while in class.

If your behavior is a distraction to the class, I reserve the right to tell a student to put their electronic devices away for the remainder of the class. If the problem is habitual I reserve the right to reflect the student’s lack of decorum in their final grade.

Maintaining a Respectful Classroom Environment Florida State University is committed to providing and maintaining a respectful environment that is conducive to safe working, learning, and living for all members of the institutional community. It is expected that all students will respect each other in their personal interactions, inside and outside of the classroom. Acts of violence, threats of violence, derogatory comments, and behavior meant to intimidate others is prohibited.

I reserve the right to have a student escorted from the classroom for persistent violations of this policy and the students final grade will reflect their lack of decorum.

Plagiarism Any form of cheating will NOT be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing any written work you will receive an automatic zero on the assignment and will be reported to the university in accordance with FSU policy. The FSU History department defines plagiarism as “handing in a paper you did not write, attempting to pass of someone else’s work as your own, or using your own ideas, information, or phraseology of other writers without giving proper credit in your text.” Self-plagiarism, handing the same written assignment for multiple courses, is also prohibited. See the university honor code details below for more information.

FSU’s Academic Honor Code “The academic honor system of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility: (1) To uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work. (2) To refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community, and (3) To foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community.”

I expect students to bring possible violations of the honor code to my attention as soon as possible, so that the violation may be resolved. Violations included, but are not limited to, plagiarism of work, assisting a student in obtaining unauthorized information for an assignment, project or test. A complete list of violations can be found in FSU Student Handbook. Violation of the Academic honor code lead, but is not limited to, a lower/failing grade on the assignment or a lower/failing grade in the course. The university may take additional measures including, formal reprimand, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university.

For more information on FSU’s Honor Code, visit:

<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>

Americans with Disabilities Act Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation must (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), and (2) bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating that you need academic accommodations. This must be done within the first week of class. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact.

Student Disability Resource Center
847 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-6504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

Course Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary over the course of the semester. Regularly check Canvas and your e-mail for updates on any changes.

Jan 8th

Syllabus Day / Introduction

Jan 10th

SLP, Chapter 1: Introduction to State and Local Politics

Jan 15th

SLP, Chapter 2: Federalism

Jan 17th

INSTRUCTOR AT CONFERENCE: NO CLASS

Jan 22nd

Federalism

WaRP- Presentation I (On Chapters 1 and 2)

Jan 24th

Federalism & Participation **SLP**, Chapter 3: Participation, Elections, and Representation

Jan 29th

Participation

Research Paper – Assignment I Due

Jan 31st

Participation

WaRP- Presentation II (On Chapters 3 and 4)

Feb 5th

Participation

Feb 7th

SLP, Chapter 4: State Direct Democracy
Representation & Direct Democracy

Feb 12th

Direct Democracy

Research Paper – Assignment II Due

Feb 14th

Direct Democracy

Feb 19th

SLP, Chapter 5: Political Parties

WaRP- Presentation III (On Chapters 5 and 6)

Feb 21st

Political Parties

Feb 26th

Political Parties & Interest Groups

SLP, Chapter 6: Interest Groups

Feb 28th

Note: Research Paper – Assignment 3 Due

March 5th

Interest Groups

WaRP- Presentation IV (on Chapter 7)

March 7th

Interest Groups & State Legislatures

SLP, Chapter 7: State Legislatures

March 12th

State Legislatures

March 14th

State Legislatures

Research Paper – Assignment IV Due

March 19th

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

March 21st

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

March 26th

State Legislatures

March 28th

State Legislatures & Governors

SLP, Chapter 8: Governors and the Bureaucracy

April 2nd

Governors

WaRP- Presentation V (On chapters 8 [pg.155; 163-end] and 9 [skip 181-185])

April 4th

Governors

April 9th

Governors & Courts **SLP**, Chapter 9: State Courts and the Criminal Justice System

Research Paper – Assignment V Due

April 11th

Courts

April 16th

Courts & Local Government

SLP, Chapter 11: The Structure of Local Governments

April 18th

Local Government

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

April 23rd

Local Government

April 25th

TBD

April 29th – May 3rd

FINALS WEEK

Syllabus Change Policy: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.