

## State and Local Government

*M/W 2-3:15, HSS 3005*

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*“State governments have more power and more money than ever before...Everyone—political parties, academics, trade organizations, labor unions, corporations—has discovered this.”*  
-Jennifer Dorrah, “State House Exodus”

### Course Overview

In this course, we will cover an introduction to state politics. Throughout the course we will look at the importance of state government and how it connects to our daily life. Among the topics we will discuss are the governor, legislature, court systems, and direct democracy.

There are 3 goals for this course. First, students will learn about the structure of state governments. Second, students will develop a strong understanding of the legislative and policy-making process in the states. Third, students will become an expert on a state. Using what they have learned in class, students will become an expert on the political institutions in their state, as well as the policy-making process. Students will spend the last two weeks of class presenting on their state.

Note, this syllabus is subject to change depending on both the class and time.

### Textbook

- Moncrief, Gary and Peverill Squire. 2013. *Why States Matter: An Introduction to State Politics*. Rowman and Littlefield. (**WSM**)
- Smith et al. readings
- Additional Readings Posted to Blackboard (**BB Reading** Under Content)

### Expectations

Students should attend all in-person classes and do the assigned readings. Our class meetings depend on student participation—reflected in the make-up of the class. Students are expected to come to class prepared each day to discuss the material. Students are expected to keep up with their work and complete their readings before coming to class. All assignments are expected to be done on time. If there are concerns about missing class or an deadline, contact the professor **before the due date**. On days where we do activities computers and phones are allowed, within reason.

## **Students With Disabilities**

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her/them from fully participating in this course should contact A&AS (870-972-3964) as soon as possible, so we can make the necessary accommodations to facilitate your educational opportunity.

## **Attendance**

Students should attend every lecture, recitation and laboratory session of every course in which they are enrolled. Students who miss a class session should expect to make up missed work or receive a failing grade on missed work. (See the student bulletin for more information.)

## **Academic Misconduct**

Arkansas State University enthusiastically promotes academic integrity and professional ethics among all members of the A-State academic community. Violations of this policy are considered as serious misconduct and may result in severe penalties.

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

## **Sexual Misconduct**

Arkansas State works to provide a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and university policy prohibit sexual discrimination, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Sexual discrimination can undermine students' academic success.

If you have been sexually assaulted, you can immediately speak with someone at NEARK's Family Crisis Center's 24-hour Sexual Assault Line: (870) 933-9449. Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University Police Department: (870) 972-2093

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, support can be provided from the Counseling Center and Pack Support. The Student Health Center provides Sexual Assault resources. Alleged violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Title IX and Institutional Equity office. It provides local, state and national resources for counseling, law enforcement, medical treatment, financial assistance, and legal services.

Perdeta Bush  
Title IX Coordinator

Phone: 870-972-2015  
Fax: 870-972-3337

## **Intellectual Pluralism**

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the instructor or departmental chair.

All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

## **Makeup Work**

Students will be allowed to makeup work at the discretion of the instructor when there is a reasonable excuse to miss. Simply forgetting an assignment will not be an acceptable excuse. In the case of extra curriculars, illness, or family-related emergencies students will be allowed to make up the exams/papers at a different time.

## **About the Course**

### **Grades**

Students will be assessed on their ability to analyze, explain, and apply knowledge. An **A** grade in this course will require more than summaries and regurgitating information. Students will be required to think critically about the information that they learn to produce new ideas and theories.

There is a 24-hour rule to contest grades. A student wishing to discuss exam or project grades must wait 24-hours after the assignment has been returned before they can discuss with the professor. Extra credit will be given at the discretion of the instructor.

Grades will be based on:

- State project final- 100 points
- 4 Quizzes- 25 points each
- Short Writing Assignments- 25 points each
- Participation- 50
- Attendance- 25

## **Quizzes**

There will be 4 quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz is worth 25 points and are not cumulative. These quizzes are meant to test basic knowledge of course material including terms, phrases, and important variations among the states.

## **Short Writing Assignments**

In place of exams there will be 4 (6 for honors) short writing assignments throughout the semester. These writing assignments are designed to assist students in developing the ability to condense and synthesize information. Students will be asked to think critically about the material they have learned, rather than regurgitate information from class.

## **State Project**

At the beginning of the semester students will select a state that they will become an expert in throughout the semester. Students will be expected to know their state government, this includes the governor, legislature, court system, rules for direct democracy, voting and elections, population make up, and more. For those who select a city, students will become experts on the mayor, city council, city planner, city attorney, and more. They must also know the local court system, elections, city population, and how the city runs.

At the end of the semester students will create some medium that provides important information about their state. The end result of this assignment should be informative enough that it could be used as a handout/informational material for your state's Capitol or history museum. At the end of the semester each student will share their assignment with the class with a 10 minute presentation.

1. Must include: history, constitution, political culture, local parties, voting, important interest groups
2. Must include: Legislature, internal structure, voting, who gets elected
3. Must include: Executive, courts, direct democracy standards, current policy pushes

Students have 3 options for how to format their state project:

1. A blog post (2,000 words)
2. A YouTube video/Mini Movie (10 minutes)
3. A podcast (10 minutes)

## **Participation**

Participation means active participation. Students must attend class and actively participate in discussion. If a student attends every class but does not actively participate they will not receive full credit. Throughout the course there are a number of small group discussion days, students are expected to thoughtfully participate in each discussion.

## Attendance

Students are expected to show up to class for each meeting. When students are unable to attend class due to illness or campus events they *must* notify the instructor.

## Course Outline

### *Overview and Development of the States*

#### **Week 1: January 9-13**

- No Classes

#### **Week 2: January 18**

- *No class Monday*
- Syllabus & Introductions
- Historical Development of the States

#### **Week 3: January 23-27**

- Overview of the States
  - \*
  - \* WSM ch 1
- Making a Case for The States Activity
  - \* Small Group Discussions
  - \* Smith Readings Ch 1-4 (pick 2)

#### **Week 4: January 30- February 3**

- States and the Federal System
  - \*
  - \* WSM Chapter 2
- Activity
  - \* Constitutional Amendments

### *State Institutions*

#### **Week 5: February 6-10**

- State Legislatures
  - \* SLT Online Reading
- Legislatures Continued
  - \* Smith Small Group Discussions, ch 13-16 (pick 2)

- Quiz 1 **In Class February 6**
- Writing Assignment 1 **DUE Feb. 8**

### **Week 6: February 13-17**

- State Legislatures Part 2
- Discussion- In-Depth Topic Analysis (choose 1 subject below and read all in that group)
  1. Diversity in State Legislatures
    - \* Reingold 2019, *Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Representation in State Legislatures*
    - \* Shah, Scott, and Juenke 2019, *Women of color candidates: examining emergence and success in state legislative elections*
  2. Careers of Lawmakers
    - \* Mooney 2009, *Term Limits as a Boon to Legislative Scholarship: A Review*
    - \* Krupnikov and Shipan 2020, *Voter uncertainty, political institutions, and legislative turnover*
  3. The Budget Process
    - \* White 2017, *State Budget Processes: A Comparative Analysis*
    - \* Kiewiet and McCubbins 2014, *State and Local Government Finance: The New Fiscal Ice Age*

### **Week 7: February 20-24**

- Governors
  - \* BB Reading
- Smith Small Group Discussion (choose 1 from each)
  - \* Governors: ch 17-20
  - \* Bureaucracy: ch 25-27

### **Week 8: February 27- March**

- State Courts
  - \* BB Reading
- Smith Small Group Discussion (choose 2)
  - \* Ch 21-24
- Quiz 2

### ***Policy & Participation***

### **Week 9: March 6-10**

- Parties, Participation, Voting
  - \* **WSM** ch 8
- Full Class Debate on Participation
  - \* Smith ch 8
- Writing Assignment 2 **Due March 6**

**Week 10: March 13-17**

- Election Activity
- Voting Activity

**Week 11: March 20-24**

- **Spring Break**

**Week 12: March 27-31**

- Interest Groups
  - \* Smith ch 11-12
- Interest Group Activity
- Writing Assignment 3 **Due March 27**
- Quiz 3 **March 29**

**Week 13: April 3-7**

- Policymakers
  - \* WSM 4 & 5
  - \* In class debate of policymaker roles
- Policy Challenges
  - \* Smith small Group Discussions 35-38

**Week 14: April 10-14**

- Direct Democracy
  - \* BB reading
- TBD
  - \* **WSM** ch 9
- Quiz 4

**Week 15: April 17-21**

- Presentations

**Week 16: April 24**

- Presentations
- Writing Assignment 4
- *State Project Due Friday April 28 by Midnight*