



POLS 3030: State and Local Government

Fall 2022

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| Professor: | Dr. Zoe Nemerever |
| Meeting Time: | Monday Wednesday Friday 10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m. |
| Location: | Clarke Building 416 |
| E-Mail | zoe.nemerever@uvu.edu |
| Office Hours: | Monday and Wednesday 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. in Clarke Building 203G |

Course Overview and Aims

While issues of national policy often capture the public’s attention and local government invites citizens to engage in topics of immediate concern to their communities, states have been characterized as the “invisible layer of government.” This course is designed to illuminate the increasingly important role that states are playing in crafting and implementing public policy. We will take a primarily comparative perspective in this course as we attempt to understand one over-arching puzzle: Why do states pursue and implement different public policies? There are three overarching themes to this course. First, how do the different institutions and actors in and around state government yield the important public services we get from these governments? Second, what are the differences among the states, and what are the causes and effects of these differences? Finally, how does the arrangement and organization of state government and political organizations affect public services and public policy?

By the end of this course, you will be able to (1) understand and use appropriately a variety of concepts necessary to describe, interpret, and explain the differences of politics, policy, and government institutions around the country; (2) use these concepts to describe and analyze the effects of these differences among the states; and (3) demonstrate a complex understanding of the relationships among social, economic, cultural, and political groups in the United States.

Required Text and Other Readings

The textbook for this course is *Governing States and Localities* (8th edition) by Kevin B. Smith and Alan Greenblatt. All students are encouraged to purchase a copy of the textbook as it will be indispensable to your mastery of the course. I recommend either renting the book or buying a used copy if possible. If a previous edition is used, the student is required to calibrate her or his new copy; they will still be held accountable for all material in the current edition (the 8th edition is what I officially assign, but I can confirm that the 6th and 7th editions are essentially identical in all meaningful ways, so feel free to buy one of those). All other readings are posted on Canvas for you to download for free.

Assessments and Grading

Policy Project (40% of Course Grade): You will examine a current public policy issue from a comparative perspective by looking at how a variety of states (minimum 2, maximum 4) have dealt with similar public policy issues but have come to different conclusions on how to handle them. The paper will argue how state preferences, institutions, and contexts have led different states to different resolutions of a contemporary public policy. The project includes both a written paper and in-class presentation.

Exams (30% each, 60% total of Course Grade): There will be a midterm and a final exam. Both exams will be conducted remotely on Canvas. Exams will contain a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Course Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages. Grades will not be rounded up. For example, if your final percentage is 89.9, your course grade will be a B+.

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| A | 93-100 | B | 83-86.9 | C | 73-76.9 | D | 63-66.9 |
| A- | 90-92.9 | B- | 80-82.9 | C- | 70-72.9 | D- | 60-62.9 |
| B+ | 87-89.9 | C+ | 77-79.9 | D+ | 67-69.9 | F | below 60 |

Late Policy: Late assignments will *not* be accepted.

Extra Credit: There will be no extra credit in this course. If you are concerned about your grade or have questions about class material, you should email and/or visit office hours. Do not wait until the end of the term to seek assistance as that will be too late to make a difference.

Grade Appeals: I discourage requests for regrade, except in circumstances of clerical or procedural error. To appeal your grade, submit to the instructor a one-page, double-spaced explanation of why you think your work merits a higher grade within one week of the date the assignment was returned. Your grade can go up, stay the same, or go down on the re-grade.

My Expectations: This class will be challenging, but I am confident that you can succeed if you take the assignments seriously, actively engage with the material—and each other—in class. My goal is to make this course, including lectures and assignments, worth your time. I expect that you read the assigned material before the beginning of class. If at any point you feel that you are falling behind in the course, I encourage—and expect—you to talk with me so that we can work out a solution together. The sooner you come to me, the better I will be able to help you.

Academic Honesty: All students are required to abide by the academic honesty guidelines of Utah Valley University. Among other things, this means: (1) Students must submit only their own work in fulfillment of course requirements; (2) Consulted works must be cited using an accepted documentation style; and (3) Students must provide truthful representation to the professor on issues such as reasons for missing class. I impose the maximum possible sanction: a zero on the assignment, which generally leads to a failing course grade.

University Policies

Resources for Students with Disabilities: The Accessibility Services Department serves Utah Valley University students and the community by providing access to the campus and curriculum for individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the Accessibility Services Department, please do so as soon as possible. Their office is located in LC 312 and more information can be found at <http://www.uvu.edu/asd> or by calling 801-863-8747.

Accessibility: Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibit Utah Valley University from engaging in discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity. Discrimination is also prohibited in all aspects of employment against persons with disabilities who, with reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a job. Students who believe s/he has been denied program access or otherwise discriminated against because of a disability is encouraged to initiate a grievance by contacting the Accessibility Services Director, Sherry Page at 801-863-8747. Employees can contact the ADA Coordinator, Irene Whittier at 801-863-8389. Upon request, this information is available in alternative formats, such as mp3, Braille, or large print. To request this format, email asd@uvu.edu.

Religious Accommodations: UVU values and acknowledges a wide range of faiths and religions as part of our student body, and as such provides accommodations for students. Religious belief includes the student's faith or conscience as well as the student's participation in an organized activity conducted under the auspices of the student's religious tradition or religious organization. The accommodations include reasonable student absences from scheduled examinations or academic requirements if they create an undue hardship for sincerely held religious beliefs. For this to occur, the student must provide a written notice to the instructor of the course for which the student seeks said accommodation prior to the event. The UVU campus has [places](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of individual religious expression.

Title IX: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has experienced or experiences harassment or sexual assault including, dating and domestic violence, stalking or sexual exploitation, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, BA-203, (801) 863-7999. Please be aware that all faculty members and university employees are considered "Responsible Employees" and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and relationship violence and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. Please know that you can seek confidential resources at UVU Student Health Services, SC-221, (801) 863-8876. Please visit [this link](#) for more information.

Commitment to Inclusive Excellence: Utah Valley University (UVU) recognizes that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. In this class, political disagreement is inevitable; nevertheless, people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientation, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from the UVU community or if you have a need of any specific accommodations, please speak with me early in the semester about your concerns to discuss what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community.

Schedule of Readings and Assessments

Week 1: August 22nd – 26th

- Textbook, Chapter 1 (Introduction)

Week 2: August 29th – September 2nd

- Textbook, Chapter 2 (Federalism)

Week 3: September 5th – 9th (No Class on Labor Day 9/5)

- Textbook, Chapter 3 (Constitutions)

Week 4: September 12th – 16th

- Textbook, Chapter 7 (Legislatures)

Week 5: September 19th – 23rd

- Textbook, Chapter 8 (Governors and Executives)

Week 6: September 26th – 30th

- Textbook, Chapter 10 (Bureaucracy)

Week 7: October 3rd – 7th

- Textbook, Chapter 9 (Courts)

Week 8: October 10th – 14th (No class 10/14 for Fall Break)

- No readings – Review Session on 10/10, Midterm Exam on 10/12

Week 9: October 17th – 21st

- Textbook, Chapter 4 (Finance)

Week 10: October 24th – 28th

- Textbook, Chapter 11 (Local Government)

Week 11: October 31st – November 4th

- Textbook, Chapter 6 (Parties and Interest Groups)

Week 12: November 7th – 11th

- Textbook, Chapter 5 (Attitudes and Participation)

Week 13: November 14th – 18th

- Devon Caughey and Chris Warshaw, "Policy Preferences and Policy Change"
- Jeffrey Lax and Justin Phillips, "The Democratic Deficit in the States"

Week 14: November 21st – 25th (No class this week for the Thanksgiving holiday)

Week 15: November 28th – December 2nd

- Elizabeth Rigby and Gerald Wright, "Political Parties and Representation of the Poor"
- Gerald Gamm and Thad Kousser, "Life, Literacy, and the Pursuit of Prosperity"

Week 16: December 5th – 9th

- Student Presentations

Notes for the SPPC Syllabus Archive:

I have taught this class once at an institution where it is very difficult to assign students peer-reviewed research, so others may find this syllabus too simplistic for their needs. Below are notes to myself on changes I would like to make the next time I teach it (Fall 2024). If anyone would like to see my slides or exams (or an updated syllabus once that happens), feel free to email me at zoenemerever@uvu.edu.

Signed,

Zoe Nemerever 10/26/23

State and Local Changes

Assign next year:

1. The Consequences of Legislative Professionalism in U.S. State Legislatures: A Review in *State and Local Government Review*
2. Add Franko and Witko article on economic populism with these discussion questions: Which periods in U.S. history had strong state influence in economic policymaking, and which had strong federal influence? What factors contribute to making one or the other more powerful? What actions could states take today to tackle economic policy?
3. Assign Steve Rogers book.

Midterm

1. Remove unfunded mandates question from midterm

Videos

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpdMYOtAmKY>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIMgfBZrrZ8>
3. Rob Sand The Office campaign advertisement

Final Essay

1. Make the final essay just about Utah and one other state