POLI 101-1
State and Local Governments in the United States
Spring Semester 2011

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Sections: 604, 607, 608

Textbook (required): Bowman & Kearney, State and Local Government, 8th ed. Readings are either in Course Documents section (BB) or accessible through External Links of Blackboard.

Websites: Please consult the class site at <blackboard.unc.edu> where you will find the syllabus, announcements, external links, etc.
Also you may consult the publisher’s website for students at <http://www.wadsworth.com/cgiwadsworth/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M20b&product_isbn_issn=9780495802655&discipline_number=20&token=>, in the search options at top of page enter “Bowman and Kearney” and click on “higher education catalog” and then click “search.” On the book’s page, click on 8th edition, then on right-hand side of next page, click on “student access free.” Once on the student page, click on “access now” on left-hand side of page. Finally you have arrived: you will find practice quizzes, crossword puzzles, and other helpful material organized by chapter. Note on right-hand side of page that you can get content delivered on your phone.

Also you may find the Writing Center’s handout “Writing In Political Science” http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/polisci.html helpful in writing your term paper. For help with citation form, please consult the library’s citation tutorial at http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/. In political science we use the APA style.

Course Description: We will study political behavior and processes, governmental institutions, and public policies at the subnational level within a comparitive framework. This course is concerned with the general structure of state and local government within a federal system and with similarities and differences among all 50 states in both politics and government. It is not a course on North Carolina, though it will help you understand this state’s politics. Each student will follow a state throughout the course, and write a paper on it, so that you can become knowledgeable about the politics of a state different from your own. In this spirit, you cannot choose the state of NC as the topic of your paper.
Format of the Course:

Lecture: The class will meet twice a week for lectures. An outline of the day’s lecture will be posted on Blackboard, usually the night before. Students are expected to attend lecture and to complete the assigned reading before coming to class. Periodically there will be participatory activities during class—small group discussions, writing assignments, or even something fun; this work will be collected and recorded, but not graded. Please put section # on your paper and hand it to your TA before leaving class. There will be 11 such exercises, 10 of which will count, i.e., you can drop one time without penalty. Otherwise, there are no make-ups, no excused absences, no late papers accepted. This is the policy for in-class exercises only.

Section: Once a week students will meet in small recitation sections with a TA. The sections may involve additional assignments, including a required 10 page term paper based upon the state you are following for the course, as well as debate and discussion. The ten pages of writing are required for any course that counts for a General Education requirement. You must be registered for a recitation section numbered 600 thru 608 in addition to the class 101-1. Regular attendance is expected in the section; more than one absence will lower your grade. The TAs will establish policies for late papers in their sections. Sections will not meet the first week of class.

Classroom Expectations: We will endeavor to start and end class on time; please make every effort to do the same. If you do happen to come in late, please find a seat (they are always available on the front row!); sitting on the floor at the back is not allowed. Please refrain from distracting behaviors such as texting on your cell phone, reading the DTH or any other material, talking to each other, as such activities not only affect your attention negatively but diminish the learning environment for all. Laptops should be used only for taking class notes, not for any other purpose; students violating this policy will find themselves taking notes by hand. I encourage questions during lecture (and indeed asking a question is a sure-fire way to avoid falling asleep!). If you don’t understand something, please ask, or if you have an example to contribute, please speak up.

Grading: The midterm exams each count 20% of the final course grade, the final exam 25%, in-class exercises 10%, and the section grade 25%. The section grade is based primarily upon the required 10 page term paper plus section participation. Grades are recorded on Blackboard, which you can access at any time; please do not wait until the end of the semester to complain about a discrepancy in the recording of your grades. Students are expected to take all exams at the scheduled time. If a medical emergency occurs that prevents your taking the exam, please contact the instructor (stating the name of your TA) or the TA before the exam. Make-up exams will be arranged for students with valid medical excuses. Plan to take the final exam at the time and date stated on the schedule below. An individual’s final exam time can be changed only with the approval from the dean.

The first midterm exam will consist of multiple choice questions, “define and give the significance of” questions, and a paragraph essay question. The second midterm exam will consist of multiple choice questions and a short focused essay question. The final exam will consist of multiple choice questions covering the material since the second midterm, regular essay questions (models will be provided a week in advance), and a required application question. All material in lecture, section, textbook, and outside reading is fair game for exams.

Academic achievement at UNC is graded on the following basis:

A Outstanding mastery of the course materials; students have exhibited performance far above that required for the course and far above that usually seen in the course.
B Superior mastery of the course materials; students have exhibited performance that is strong and very clearly above what is required in the course.

C Satisfactory mastery of the course materials; students have exhibited performance that clearly meets the course requirements in all respects.

D Poor mastery of the course materials; students have exhibited performance that is below the course requirements, but still worthy of credit.

F Unsatisfactory mastery of the course materials; students have exhibited performance that fails to meet the requirements of the course.

The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at http://instrument.unc.edu. If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask me or the TAs about the Code’s application. All exams and papers must be submitted with a statement that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the submitted work.

Communicating with the Professor: When you communicate with the instructor about a grade, assignment, or makeup exam, please include the name of your TA and copy him/her on all such correspondence. Otherwise, I will just have to write you back to get this information which will slow down communication. Also please use your official UNC email account for this class; all class emails will be sent to that address.

Disability Accommodation: Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should (1) contact the office of Learning Disabilities at UNC (http://www.unc.edu/depts/lds/index.html); (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

Outline and Reading Assignments: The textbook is on sale in the bookstore.

Jan.10 Introduction to the Class

Jan. 12 Why and How to Study States

Jan. 17 NO CLASS MLK HOLIDAY

Jan. 19 Federalism: Constitutional & Fiscal Issues
Read: Bowman & Kearney, ch. 2;

Jan. 24 Federalism (continued)

Jan. 26 State Constitutions
Read: Bowman & Kearney, ch. 3;

Jan. 31 Political Culture

Feb. 2 Political Participation

Feb. 7 Direct Democracy

Feb. 9 Political Parties

Feb. 14 Media

Feb. 16 Interest Groups and Lobbying

Feb. 21 MIDTERM EXAM 1

Feb. 23 Legislatures

Feb. 28 Legislatures (continued)

Mar. 2 Governors

Mar. 7 & 9 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

Mar. 14 Governors and Executive Branch (continued)

Mar. 16 Bureaucracy
Read: Bowman & Kearney, ch. 8
Mar. 21  Courts
Read: Bowman & Kearney, ch. 9

Mar. 23  Courts (continued)

Mar. 28  MIDTERM EXAM 2

Mar. 30  Taxation Policy
Read: Bowman & Kearney, ch. 13.

Apr. 4  Tax Policy (continued)

Apr. 6  Economic Policy: Economic Development

Apr. 11  Economic Policy: Infrastructure & Regulation

Apr. 13  Education Policy

Apr. 18  Criminal Justice Policy

Apr. 20  Criminal Justice Policy: Death Penalty

Apr. 25  Welfare & Health Policy

Apr. 27  Health Policy

Apr. 29  8 a.m. FINAL EXAM