POLI 101-004  
State and Local Governments in the United States

Spring Semester 2015  
Phillips 206  
Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:45pm

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Hours: Tuesday 12:30-3:30 and by appointment

Course Description:
We will study political behavior and processes, governmental institutions, and public policies at the subnational level within a comparative 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.

Like other academic fields, political science demands skepticism and critical thinking. We will seek to develop these are attributes throughout the semester and apply them to state governments. The goal, through readings and class discussions, is not to promote any specific worldview, but rather to emphasize the importance of approaching politics critically.

Textbook (required):

Websites:
Please consult the class site on Sakai where you will find the lecture outlines, outside readings, syllabus, assignments, external links, etc.

Also you may find the Writing Center’s handout “Writing in Political Science” helpful when writing your term papers. It can be found, along with many other useful handouts, at http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/

Format of the Course:
The class will meet twice a week for lectures. It works best if you complete the assigned reading before coming to class. Periodically there will be participatory activities during class—small group discussions or short writing assignments.

We will endeavor to start and end on time; please make every effort to do the same. If you do happen to come in late, please find a seat. Questions are always welcomed during lecture. If you don’t understand something, please ask, or if you have an example to contribute, please speak up.
Grading:
Midterm exam  20%
Paper 1 (5-pages)  25
Paper 2 (5-pages)  25
Final exam  25
Participation  5
Total  100

Grades are recorded on Sakai, 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 and turn in term papers when they are due. If a medical emergency occurs that prevents this, please contact me as soon as possible.

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 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 a bit 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.

In my classes I use the following grade distribution:

A:  93 and above
A-:  90-92
B+:  88-89
B:  83-87
B-:  80-82
C+:  78-79
C:  73-77
C-:  70-72
D+:  68-69
D:  63-67
D-:  60-62
F:  59 and below

Honor Code:
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 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.
Accommodation:
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

1) Contact the office of the Department of Disability Services at UNC (if you have not already done so) http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/eligibility/documentation.html.

2) Bring me a letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. I am happy to make accommodation in these circumstances. Similarly, student athletes should give me notification of travel schedules requiring any adjustment in exam schedules.

Outline and Reading Assignments:

Jan 8  Introduction to the class
Jan 13 Why and How to Study States
  1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 1
Jan 15 Federalism
  1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 2
Jan 20 State Constitutions
  1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 3
Jan 22 Public Opinion & Representation
Jan 27 Political Participation & Elections
  1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 4
Jan 29 Direct democracy
  1. Frosch, “Professional Petitioners Aid Ballot Initiatives,” New York Times, Oct 23 2010
Feb 3  Political Parties

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 5

Feb 5  Media


Feb 10  Interest Groups and Lobbying

1. Hopey, “45 State Officials have Ties to Fracking Industry in PA,” *Governing* Mar 2013

Feb 12  Legislatues

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 6

Feb 17  Redistricting

2. Greenblatt, “Can Redistricting Ever be Fair?” *Governing* Nov 2011: 54-60

Feb 19  Governors

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 7

Feb 24  Review Day

Feb 26  MIDTERM

Mar 3  Courts

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 9
Mar 5       Bureaucracy

PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 8

Mar 10      NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Mar 12      NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Mar 17      Fiscal Policy

   Finance & Development, Sept 2014

Mar 19      Tax Policy

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 13
   WalletHub, Mar 2014

Mar 24      Budgeting

1. Lemov, “What’s Wrong with Kansas’ Tax Reform?” Governing, Apr 11 2013
2. Breunig and Koski, “Punctuated Equilibria and Budgets in American States,”
   Policy Studies Journal, 2006

Mar 26      Economic Development

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 14

Mar 31      Infrastructure & Regulation

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 18
2. Davenport and Southall, “Critics Say Spill Highlights Lax West Virginia

Apr 2       Criminal Justice

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 16
2. Lyons “High-Yield Corrections,” State Legislatures, Jan 2013

Apr 7       The Death Penalty

1. Jost, “Death Penalty Debates: Is the capital punishment system working?” CQ
   Researcher, Nov 19 2010
2. Baumgartner, Grigg, and Mastro, “Capital Punishment and the Invisible Black
   Male,” Under Review at Politics, Groups, and Identity
   Center, 2013.
Apr 9  Education Policy

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 15

Apr 14  Welfare Policy

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 17

Apr 16  Health Policy


Apr 21  Local Government

1. Bowman & Kearney, Chapter 10 & Chapter 12

Apr 23  Review and summary

PAPER 2 DUE IN CLASS

Apr 28  FINAL EXAM – 4:00PM