

American State Politics
Political Science 113
Summer 2012, July 3- 30

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Course Description

This course will provide students with an overview of some of the major research conducted on American state politics and policy. The American states provide an excellent opportunity to test general propositions about political behavior and policy. The states represent 50 units of analysis with broadly similar political structures, but with significant variation across a range of policy outcomes. Unlike the examination of single units of government, such as the US federal government, there is enough variation among the 50 states for scholars to explore how differences in political institutions, public attitudes, and socioeconomic conditions lead to different political and policy outcomes. A main goal of this course is to give you an understanding of how to systematically identify the sources of variation in state policy.

This is a completely web-based course. Because of the online delivery mode, it can be taken at any geographic location as long as one has regular access to the Internet. You are responsible for keeping up with all readings and assignments throughout the semester. Assignments will include taking weekly exams that will cover material from the textbook, completing web research assignments, participating in online class discussions, and writing a review of the book *Why Iowa?* (Redlawsk et al. 2010). The course website includes PDF slides that outline each chapter of the textbook, as well as audio lectures for each chapter by Professor Caroline Tolbert. Since this class is being taken during a summer session, we will be covering a regular three semester hour course in four weeks. This means you need to be prepared for a relatively large workload during the four-week session. You will likely have to devote 25-30 hours per week on the course in this condensed format.

How to Succeed in this Class

- 1) Succeeding in this course will take a significant investment of your time. Be prepared to spend a minimum of three hours studying for every one hour spent on assignments.
- 2) Participation in online discussion is strongly encouraged. The course will encompass weekly online discussions, and your participation is necessary to make these discussions/projects profitable.
- 3) Please turn in assignments on time. Late homework assignments will be marked down and could hamper your progress in the class.
- 4) *The key to succeeding in this class is to complete the reading assignments before the day for which they are assigned and turn in assignments, including weekly internet assignments on time.*

Required Texts

Donovan, Todd, Christopher Mooney and Daniel Smith. 2011. *State and Local Politics and Policy: Institutions and Reform*, 2nd Edition. Wadsworth Press. (Available both used and new on Amazon). ISBN: 978-0-495-80223-5

Redlawsk, David, Caroline Tolbert and Todd Donovan. 2010. *Why Iowa? How Caucuses and Sequential Elections Improve the Presidential Nominating Process*. University of Chicago Press. (Amazon's price new \$19.95). The last book will be a focus of the final exam and a short paper. ISBN: 978-0-226706962

All books available online at www.amazon.com and other online retailers.

Electronic/downloadable version of *State and Local Politics* available for purchase at www.coursesmart.com for a reduced price. I recommend the online version of the book for this course; however, the choice is yours.

Other Readings

Supplemental readings may also be assigned throughout the semester to complement the topics being discussed. I will make students aware of additional reading material prior to the class it is assigned for. You should routinely check the class ICON page and your university e-mail accounts for course related announcements. Students should also follow the news daily. It is important to think about how current events are related to the material being discussed throughout the course. This will help you better understand course concepts, as well as keep class discussions interesting.

Expectations and Requirements

Succeeding in this course will take a significant investment of your time. As stated above, be prepared to spend 25-30 hours each week on this course during the four-week summer session. Time management is particularly important for summer session courses. You will have to complete a large amount of reading, two web assignments, and take an exam by the end of each week. A book review will also be due by the end of the fourth week of the course. The key to succeeding in this class is to keep up with the assigned readings and complete assignments on time.

Participation will be measured by submission of web research assignments (2 per week) where students will post their assignments on the class discussion board. It is necessary for everyone to produce thoughtful posts and responses to make these discussions profitable. It is very important that discussion posts and responses do not involve flames, inappropriate language, or insults to other students in the class. Keeping a positive tone online is critical. If you have problems with an assignment or concerns or experience frustration, send me an email and I will address your concerns as soon as possible.

Please turn in assignments on time. Late assignments will be marked down a full letter grade for each day it is late if the student does not make arrangements with me prior to the assignment due date. Exams will not be excused or rescheduled without a legitimate excuse.

Course Communication

Our class communications will be completely web-based. You will be able to contact me via email at emily-schilling@uiowa.edu. Under normal circumstances I will respond to emails within 24 hours, but I will do my best to respond sooner. Course discussions will take place on the ICON class discussion board, and all assignments will be submitted via ICON.

I will also post class updates, reminders, assignment feedback, and grades on the ICON course page. Since we will be entirely reliant on electronic forms of communication, it is imperative that you regularly check ICON and your university email account. During the summer session I suggest you check each account daily.

Evaluation Method

45% Three short midterm exams (multiple choice and short answer format) each worth 15% of the final grade. Exams cover the required reading and class discussions.

- For each of the exams, you will have an 64 hour period within which you need to complete the exam. Each exam period will last from the assigned Saturday at 8am CST to Monday at 11:59pm CST. Once you begin the exam you will have 70 minutes to complete the exam. NOTE: you do not have the full 64 hours to take the exam, you only have 70 minutes. Once you have begun the exam you must complete it, you cannot stop and start again later.
- You will only be allowed to log into each exam ONE time. Be sure that your computer is plugged into a power source and you are using a reliable internet connection. This is your responsibility, if the internet connection is severed during the exam you will not be able to log in again to complete it.
- Books, notes, and other course materials are NOT to be used during the exam.
- If you are new to exams using ICON, a practice exam will be available so that you can familiarize yourself with the format. The questions will not be related to the course material, they are simply to demonstrate how to take exams on ICON.
- No scores for the exams will be posted until all exams are fully graded.
- Exam dates are: July 9, 16, 23.

20% Final exam.

- The final exam will be similar to the midterms.
- The exam date is July 30.

20% Short 5 page paper over *Why Iowa?* Due July 30.

15% Daily participation and attendance

Web Assignments

You will be asked to post responses to two web assignments each week, as well as comment on the posts of your classmates (one comment per assignment, which will be a total of two comments each week). These web assignments will form the basis of the class discussion and be posted on the course website each week. Posts should be approximately one single-spaced page in length, or 2-3 paragraphs, and comments should be around one paragraph. Since reading and responding to each other's posts will take

time, please do not wait until the very end of the week to post your responses online.

The web assignments are intended to make sure students understand the course material, mainly by applying the concepts in the readings to current events and issues in the states. For these weekly posts to be effective, everyone should focus on relating all posts and comments to the assignment and the course material. Comments should not include your personal opinions on the various political issues being discussed. Your comments on other students' posts should be substantive critiques and/or suggestions that will help us better understand the course concepts. When you respond to other posts please try to have constructive feedback/comments, but remember to keep them respectful.

The earlier you complete these discussion posts the better it will be for everyone. Please do not wait until the last minute to complete your posts, or your classmates will not be able to respond to them.

The final grade for the course will be determined on the basis of your point totals for all assignments over the course of the semester. Please email me at any time during the semester if you have questions about your grade or progress in the class.

Readings and Assignments

All readings and assignments are to be completed the week they are assigned, by the end of the day Monday (11:59 pm). Exams and web research assignments must be taken by the due date listed on the schedule below or they will not be counted.

Week 1: Due July 9

Introduction to State and Local Politics. Chapter 1, Donovan, Mooney, and Smith (DMS)

Federalism: State Politics within a Federal System. Chapter 2, DMS

Participation, Elections, and Representation. Chapter 3, DMS

State and Local Direct Democracy. Chapter 4, DMS

** Complete Web Assignments 1 & 2 * Take Exam 1*

Week 2: Due July 16

Political Parties. Chapter 5, DMS

Interest Groups. Chapter 6, DMS

State Legislatures. Chapter 7, DMS

Governors and the Executive Branch. Chapter 8, DMS

** Complete Web Assignments 3 & 4 * Take Exam 2*

Week 3: Due July 23

The Court System. Chapter 9, DMS

State and Local Fiscal Policy. Chapter 10, DMS

The Structure of Municipal Governments. Chapter 11, DMS

The Politics of Place. Chapter 12, DMS

** Complete Web Assignments 5 & 6 * Take Exam 3*

Week 4: Due July 30

Morality Politics. Chapter 13, DMS

Social Welfare and Health Care Politics. Chapter 14, DMS

Why Iowa? How Caucuses and Sequential Elections Improve the Presidential Nominating Process. Redlawsk et al.

** Complete Web Assignments 7 & 8 * Take Exam 4 * Turn in Book Review*

Teaching Policies & Procedures

Administrative Home

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Electronic Communication

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual*, [III.15.2](#). Scroll down to k.11.)

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the [CLAS Code of Academic Honesty](#). Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

CLAS Final Examination Policies

Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety [web site](#).

Student Resources: The Writing Center www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/ and the Campus Information Center's Tutor Referral Services <http://imu.uiowa.edu/cic/> at the IMU.

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) and The University of Iowa [Operations Manual](#).

