

Y360: State Politics in the United States

Spring, 2016

MW, 2:30-3:45 PM, Room: Global and International Studies (GA) 1118

Instructor: Alex Badas, abadas@indiana.edu

Office Hours: Woodburn Hall 329 Thursday and Friday 11:30-1

Course Description:

The American states are often referred to as laboratories of democracy. The federal constitution grants considerable authority to state governments and does not define how these governments are to be structured. As a result, how political institutions and political processes are structured varies considerably across states. The purpose of this class is to learn about the variance in political institutions and political processes in the American states and how this variance shapes political outcomes.

Required texts:

The following textbook is required for this course. Additional readings will be posted to the course site.

- Smith, K. B. and Greenblatt, A. (2015). *Governing States and Localities, 5th Edition*. CQ Press

Course Requirements:

- Three exams 10% for the first exam 15% for the second and third exams.
 - Students will complete three exams. Exams will not be cumulative. Exams will be a mixture of multiple choice and short response. Exams are designed to test students' underlying understanding of the concepts discussed. We will hold a review session before each exam.
 - Exam 1 date February 1
 - Exam 2 date March 9
 - Exam 3 date April 27
- Three Article Summaries 5% each
 - Part of what I hope you take away from this class is an understanding of what political scientists do. To this end, you must find and summarize three academic journal articles related to state politics. These articles cannot be articles we are going to be discussing

in this course. A good starting point in your search for articles will likely be the journal State Politics and Policy Quarterly which is available electronically through the library. A handout will be distributed with further details.

- Article Summary 1 due date February 8
 - Article Summary 2 due date February 22
 - Article Summary 3 due date March 23
- Research Design Paper 30%
- Students must write a research design paper. This paper should be between 8-10 pages. The paper should identify a research question related to state politics and put forth a hypothesis which answers this research question and explains why it is an important question. We will have a session dedicated to research design after the first exam.
 - Due date April 27.
- Participation 15%
- Students are expected to attend each class session. However, I understand things do come up. Therefore, each student will be granted two excused absences for the semester. After your two excused absences, for each class you miss your final grade will be docked 1%. Students are expected to be active participants in class discussion. Active participants does not simply mean “talking a lot.” Participation means reading the materials, coming to class prepared to ask and answer questions about the reading, and offering your opinion when appropriate.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will not be accepted. Students who do not submit work on time will receive a zero credit for the assignment. Students who are absent on a day which we have an exam and do not have a university approved excuse will fail the exam.

Course Schedule and Readings

January 11 - Introduction to the course

Readings: The Syllabus. Seriously.

January 13 - Introduction to State Politics

What do state governments do that the federal government does not? What are the advantages and disadvantages of federalism?

Readings:

- S&G chapter 1 and chapter 2

January 18 - NO CLASS. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

January 20 - State Constitutions

How do state constitutions differ from the U.S. Constitution?

Readings:

- S&G Chapter 3
- Zink, J. R. (2015). The dead hand of the past? toward an understanding of “constitutional veneration”. *Political Behavior*

January 25 - State Finances

How do states raise money? How do states spend their money? How does the federal government incentivize the states to adopt certain policies?

Readings:

- S&G chapter 4

January 27 - Exam 1 Review

Come to class with questions you have about the material we have covered so far.

February 1 - EXAM 1

February 3 - Thinking about Research Design

This class will introduce students to the basics of research design and help them develop ideas for their research papers.

Readings:

- TBA

Assignment:

- First article summary due. Upload to canvas before class.

February 8 - Legislatures

How does the legislative process work? What is the job of state legislatures?

Readings:

- S&G chapter 7

February 10 - Issues with Legislatures

How polarized are state legislatures? How professional are legislatures?

Readings:

- Shor, B. and McCarty, N. (2011). The ideological mapping of american legislatures. *American Political Science Review*, 105(3):530–551
- King, J. D. (2000). Changes in professionalism in u.s. state legislatures. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, XXV(2):327–343

February 15 - Governors

What roles do governors play? How powerful are governors vis-a-vis state legislatures?

Readings:

- S&G chapter 8

February 17 - Issues with Governors

Do governors influence the economy? What influences the governor's relationship with the legislature?

Readings:

- Brown, A. R. (2010). Are governors responsible for the state economy? partisanship, blame, and divided federalism. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(3):605–615
- Dilger, R. J., Krause, G. A., and Moffett, R. R. (1995). State legislative professionalism and gubernatorial effectiveness, 1978-1991. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 20:553–571

February 22 - The Courts

In what ways do state courts differ from the federal court system? How much authority do state courts have?

Readings:

- S&G chapter 9

Assignment:

- Article summary 2 due. Upload to canvas before class.

February 24 - Issues with The Courts

How does selection system influence judicial decision-making?

Readings:

- Canes-Wrone, B., Clark, T. S., and Kelly, J. P. (2014). Judicial selection and death penalty decisions. *American Political Science Review*, 108(1):23–39
- Huber, G. A. and Gordon, S. C. (2004). Accountability and coercion: Is justice blind when it runs for office? *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(2):247–263

February 29 - Bureaucracy

What is bureaucracy? How effective is bureaucracy?

Readings:

- S&G chapter 10

March 2 - Issues in the Bureaucracy

How do term limits empower the bureaucracy?

Readings:

- Sarbaugh-Thompson, M., Thompson, L., Elder, C. D., Comins, M., Elling, R. C., and Strate, J. (2006). Democracy among strangers: Term limits' effects on relationships between legislators. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 6(4):384–409
- Sarbaugh-Thompson, M., Strate, J., LeRoux, K., Thompson, L., Elling, R., and Elder, C. D. (2010). Legislators and administrators: Complex relationships complicated by term limits. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 35(1):57–89

March 7 - Exam 2 Review

Come to class with your questions.

March 9 - Exam 2

March 14 and 16 - NO CLASS SPRING BREAK

March 21 - Parties and Interest Groups

How do political parties function? Do they get in the way of good government or are they essential to it? How much influence do interest groups have?

Readings:

- GS chapter 5

March 23 - Issues in Parties and Interests Groups

How influential are parties? How influential are interest groups? Under what contexts are they more or less influential?

Readings:

- Garrett, K. N. and Jansa, J. M. (2015). Interest group influence in policy diffusion networks. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 15(3):387–417
- Wright, G. and Schaffner, B. F. (2002). The influence of party: Evidence from the state legislatures. *American Political Science Review*, 96(2):367–379
- Nownes, A. J. and Freeman, P. (1998). Interest group activity in the states. *The Journal of Politics*, 60(1):86–112

Assignment:

- Third article summary due. Upload to canvas before class.

March 28 - Elections and Participation

How are elections in the states organized? What drives decision-making in elections?

Readings:

- S&G chapter 5

March 30 - Issues in Election

Do national issues influence state elections? Do elections produce representation?

Readings:

- Carsey, T. and Wright, J. (1998). State and national factors in gubernatorial and senatorial elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42
- Lax, J. R. and Phillips, J. H. (2012). The democratic deficit in the states. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56:148–166

April 4 - Issues in Participation

What are some features that motivate political participation?

Readings:

- Martinez, M. D. and Hill, D. (1999). Did motor voter work? *American Politics Quarterly*, 27:296–315
- Hershey, M. R. (2009). What we know about voter-id laws, registration, and turnout. *PS - Political Science & Politics*, 42(1):87–91
- Gann Hall, M. (2007). Voting in state supreme court elections: Competition and context as democratic incentives. *Journal of Politics*, 69(4):1147–1159

April 6 - Direct Democracy

Can the people govern by themselves? How do states structure their issues of initiatives, referenda, and recalls?

Readings:

- Tolbert, C. J., McNeal, R. S., and Smith, D. A. (2003). Enhancing civic engagement: The effect of direct democracy on political participation and knowledge. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 3(1):23–21
- Lupia, A. (1994). Shortcuts versus encyclopedias: Information and voting behavior in california insurance reform elections. *American Political Science Review*, 88(1):63–76

April 11 - Crime and Punishment Policy

Examines how states develop crime and punishment policy. Examines states' authority vis-a-vis the federal government on crime and punishment issues.

Readings:

- S&G chapter 14

April 13- Health Care Policy

Examines how states develop health care policy. Examines states' authority vis-a-vis the federal government on health care issues.

Readings:

- S&G chapter 15

April 18 - Environmental Policy

Examines how states develop environmental policy. Examines states' authority vis-a-vis the federal government on environmental issues.

Readings:

- S&G chapter 16

April 20 - Education Policy

Examines how states develop education policy. Examines states' authority vis-a-vis the federal government on education issues.

Readings:

- S&G chapter 13

April 25 - Exam 3 Review and Evaluations

Come to class with your questions.

April 27 - Exam 3

Assignment:

- Research paper due. Submit to canvas site before class.

Academic Integrity:

As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (Code). When you submit a paper with your name on it in this course, you are signifying that the work contained therein is all yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing

an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the Code will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students.

Disabilities:

If any student will require assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me after class, during my office hours, or by individual appointment. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library W302, 812-855-7578.

Last updated January 2, 2016