



State and Local Politics Winter 2022 Syllabus

Course Number: PS 331_001 **Term Offered:** Winter 2022 **Credits:** 4

Meetings: Tuesday & Thursday, 12pm – 1:50pm. Bexell Hall 320.

Instructor name: Jonathan (Jon). Ruff

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Course Description

Role, organization, and functions of government at the state and local level. Satisfies teaching certification requirement for course work in state and local government. (Bacc Core Course: Social Processes and Institutions)

Communication

Please post all course-related questions in the General Discussion Forum, or bring up issues in class, so that the whole class may benefit from our conversation. Please email your instructor for matters of a personal nature. I will reply to course-related questions and email within 24-48 hours. I will strive to return your assignments and grades for course activities to you within five days of the due date.

Course Credits

This course combines approximately 120 hours of instruction, online activities, and assignments for 4 credits.

Covid Procedures.

In compliance with OSU policy, you will be expected to wear a mask in the classroom and in Bexell hall at all times. We have designed this course to place a majority of the graded assignments submitted through online (non-personal contact means) and de-emphasize in course participation credits to ensure students who are feeling sick do not feel pressured to come to campus. If you are feeling sick or have been recently exposed to Covid-19, please do not attend class that day.

Technical Assistance

If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, assistance logging into the course, or if you experience any errors or problems while in your course, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the [OSU Computer Helpdesk](#) online.

Course Overview

State and local governments are the most visible levels of government in the United States. As you leave your family house, apartment, or school dormitory you immediately encounter state and local government services, programs and infrastructure. From traffic lights, streets and highways, water and sewer services, K-12 education, higher education, parks, mass transit, law enforcement, utilities, communications and mass media, and many other activities, state and local governments are either directly involved in offering these services or in regulating organizations hired to provide such services. From the 50 US states to the 3,031 counties, 19,519 municipalities, 16,360 towns and 51,146 special purpose government districts (which could include school districts, hospital districts, rural fire districts,

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soil conservation districts, irrigation districts, regional transportation districts, and many more) - the typical resident encounters state and local government services and programs on a daily basis.

While state and local governments are the most visible and potentially most important on a daily basis for most citizens when compared to the federal government, the generally low levels of interest in and knowledge concerning these governments and the often high levels of cynicism regarding their leaders among citizens is of great concern to many political scientists (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 1996).

Given the importance of civic knowledge to effective participation and democratic institutions, how many states require students to take civics and government education? As of 2007, only 29 states require a government or civics course in high school. However limited this coverage may seem, this is a much higher proportion than is present at the university level; only 9 U.S. states require some study of American government, with five (5) of these also requiring study of their respective state governments as well (Maced, 2005). Of course, universities and political science departments may require such courses on their own, but courses on state and local government tend to be optional in most colleges and universities.

The purpose of this course and course textbook is to provide an accessible overview and guide to state and local government for students with little to no exposure – and possibly limited interest – in order to encourage lifelong democratic participation and what Political Scientist Russell Dalton (2008) Russell Dalton (2008) calls “engaged citizenship.” In an attempt to achieve this purpose, we will present state and local government in a contemporary context by examining the many forces that either promote or threaten *social, economic, institutional and environmental sustainability*. In using the term sustainability, we make use of the 1987 Brundtland Report definition (also known as Our Common Future): *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*. The book will make note of where students can go to find additional information on state and local governments, and how citizens can follow the developments of – and even become actively involved in – the unfolding of state and local governance issues that affect their own daily lives.

Learning Resources

This course will use a main textbook (open access) with updated content at the course Canvas website, and corresponding Powerpoint presentations. There are also many web-based materials including suggested lesson and lecture materials for those students going into K-12 for teaching careers in social and civics studies.

Required Textbook

Christopher Simon, Brent S. Steel, and Nicholas P. Lovrich, *State and Local Government and Politics: Prospects for Sustainability* (Open Educational Resource, Oregon State University). Textbook is an open source book and is available at <http://library.open.oregonstate.edu/government/>. Also available in Canvas.

Canvas

This course will be delivered via Canvas where you will interact with your classmates and with your instructor. Within the course Canvas site, you will access the learning materials, such as the syllabus, class discussions, assignments, and projects.

Baccalaureate Core

Successful completion of this course partially fulfills OSU’s Baccalaureate Core course requirements in the Social Processes and Institutions: “Through Social Processes and Institutions students gain knowledge

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of how human beings are inevitably social. The social sciences study social institutions and processes as well as human behaviors and values in contemporary society.”

Bacc Core Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Use theoretical frameworks to interpret the role of the individual within social process and institutions.
2. Analyze current social issues and place them in historical context(s).
3. Critique the nature, value, and limitations of the basic methods of the social sciences.

Additional Course Learning Outcomes:

4. Identify State and local government policy processes, including the various governmental and non-governmental actors involved in those processes.
5. Analyze the factors affecting state and local sustainability including population change, economic development, changing attitudes and beliefs, political culture, and globalization.
6. Apply policymaking models to policy decisionmaking situations in state and local government(s).

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Weekly Canvas Discussion (10)

Participation in **NINE (9) out of TEN (10)** weekly Canvas discussion groups is required beginning Week

1. Discussion topics should relate to the week’s assigned readings and other relevant observations. Each student must submit **ONE original** posting by Wednesday (11:59 pm). Then each student is responsible for **ONE additional reply (minimum)** to another student’s posting by Friday (11:59 pm).

Discussions will ask students to think critically and conduct research on the week’s topic, the historical context of the week’s issues, and how the institutions/political actors can promote or block state and local government efforts at sustainability (social, economic, ecological and institutional). Students will be permitted one absence from the discussion with no point penalty applied, for a total of 90 points. Students who complete all ten (10) discussion assignments will earn up to a maximum of 100 out of 90 points. Extra credit points will be applied to the overall course grade and may make up for lost points in canvas quizzes, in-class participation, or policy in context paper grades.

Discussions Rubric: 10 points total

Coverage of Course Material: 3 points

Critical analysis of ideas or issues: 3 points

Quality response to another student: 2 points

Punctuality: 2 points

Canvas Quizzes (4)

During the term, you will be required to complete four quizzes outside of class time - on Canvas. You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz, worth 15 points each. Each quiz may use multiple choice, multiple selection, fill in the blank, true-false, or written answers. You may use whatever resources at your disposal to answer the questions posed, including your textbook, course lecture notes, or other reputable online sources.

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In-class participation (10)

Throughout the term, in-class participation will be assessed via small-assignments due in class. There will be 10 opportunities to complete this in-class work, each worth 10 points. These points will be awarded randomly (approximately each week) via completion of an in-class activity such as a discussion, brief writing assignment, or other assignment handed in by the end of the class. However, **only 50 points** will be needed to obtain a full score in participation. If a student attends and participates in **more than 5 classes** offering participation points, they will earn **5 points extra credit** for every participation assignment completed, **up to a maximum of 75 out of 50 points**. Extra credit points will be applied to the overall course grade and may make up for lost points in discussion, quiz, or policy in context paper assignments.

Policy in Context Papers (2)

Each Policy Response (PR) paper should be a 5-6 page paper in APA format (1.5 spacing, 12 point font) that distills, analyzes, and applies the essential elements of the assigned readings, PowerPoints and outside reference materials. This class will utilize the following rubric to assess your work.

1. **Introduction and Conclusion (10 points):** Each PR should have an introduction that provides an overview of the institutions and policies of state and local governments covered by the assigned syllabus topics, and a statement of how you will organize and approach the topics and questions. The conclusion should include a review of the topics discussed and a few sentences that tie the student's conclusions together.
2. **Theory (15 points):** In each PR you will apply one of the four "Models of the State" to the institutions, actors, and policy topics covered in the paper. Connect the model of the state to the assigned topic by identifying key organizations, institutions, policies, or people, that the topic covers and how these groups can be understood, impacted, or effected under the model you apply. (Ex. What does federalism look like through the lens of class-conflict theory?)
3. **Analysis (35 points):** Provide a detailed analysis for the questions you choose to answer. Analysis of an issue requires that you use sources to critically examine the topic from multiple perspectives. Using your own words, provide your interpretation of the issue and why it is important to discuss for this course.
4. **Practical Utility (30 points):** Speculate about how useful the topic is to everyday life. Why is this issue important for us to discuss in this course? Ex. Is the topic related to citizen participation, economic elites, interest groups, etc? Does the topic present barriers or opportunities for authentic citizen participation? How useful is the concept for everyday citizens?
5. **Brilliant Insights or Thoughts (5 bonus points possible):** Category five is the only reason you should go over 5-6 pages. As to what you write here, well...hard to say: it should be brilliant though! (And no more than one additional page).
6. **APA Style and Citation (10 points):** Be sure to cite appropriately using APA style citations and include a title page, references page, and page numbers (this page will not be counted against your page limit). For more information on APA style, visit:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style

Your work will be submitted through TurnItIn Plagiarism checking software.

The PR papers are intended to accomplish three goals. The first goal is to meet the requirements of the Bacc Core Student Learning Outcomes for *Social Processes and Institutions* and specific course learning outcomes. The second goal is to encourage students to find common connections and themes between

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multiple aspects of state and local governance. The final goal is to help students distill the intricate and complex political and policy processes of state and local government in order to encourage lifelong democratic participation and “engaged citizenship,” which is a vital and significant precondition of sustainable communities and states.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, POINTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES **Assignment Possible Points**
Learning Outcomes

Assignment	Points per assignment	Points in category
Weekly Canvas Discussion (10)	10	90 (+10 extra credit)
Canvas Quizzes (4)	15	60
Policy in Context Papers (2)	100	200
In-class participation (10)	10	50 (+25 extra credit)

Total= 400 points (*435 points available*)

GRADING SCALE

Course Letter Grade Percent of points possible*

A	[93-100%]
A-	[90-92%]
B+	[87-89%]
B	[83-86%]
B-	[80-82%]
C+	[77-79%]
C	[73-76%]
C-	[70-72%]
D+	[67-69%]
D	[60-66%]
F	[0-59%]

Final grades in this course will use the “round-up” method for determining the outcome of decimal points after grades. For example, an 89.2% would be rounded-up to 90% or an A-.

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BACC Core or program mandated outcome	Course Learning Outcome “After successful completion of this course, you will be able to...”	Learning Activities What activities will help students achieve mastery of this course learning outcome?	Measurement How will mastery of this course learning objective be measured/assessed?
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Use theoretical frameworks to interpret the role of the individual within social process and institutions.	Multimedia: Models of State (Pp & Handout) Reading: Textbook Ch. 1, 2	Discussions: Week 1 – Models of State; Week 2 – Federalism Policy Response #1 Canvas Quiz #1
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Analyze the current social issues and place them in historical context(s).	Multimedia: Rural-Urban Divide (Pp), Federalism (Pp) Reading: Textbook Ch. 2 Video Lecture: Current events lecture	Discussions: All discussions ask students to contextualize current issues in the topic area. Policy Response #1 & #2
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Critique the nature, value, and limitations of the basic methods of the social sciences.	Multimedia: Policy Papers (Pp), Budgeting (Pp) Reading: Textbook Ch. 1, 4, 10 Reading: APA Citation guide (Reference)	Discussions: Week 2 – Federalism; Week 9 – Budgeting. Policy Response #1
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Identify state and local government policy processes, including the various governmental and non-governmental actors involved in those processes.	Multimedia: Key Actors (Pp), Legislators (Pp), Executives (Pp), Courts (Pp), Bureaucracy (Pp) Reading: Textbook Ch. 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 Video Lecture: Oregon Legislature	Discussions: Week 3 – Actors & Policy Process; Week 5 – Legislators; Week 6 – Executives; Week 7 – Courts; Week 8 – Bureaucracy. Policy Response #1 & 2 Canvas Quiz #2 & #3
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Analyze the factors affecting state and local sustainability including population change, economic development, changing attitudes and beliefs, political culture, and globalization.	Multimedia: State Constitutions (Pp), Budgeting (Pp), Traditional & Visible services (Pp). Reading: Textbook Ch. 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 Video Lecture: City Management	Discussions: Week 4 – State Constitutions, Week 9 – Budgeting; Week 10 – Traditional/Visible services. Policy Response #2 Canvas Quiz #4
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Apply policymaking models to policy decision-making situations in state and local government(s).	Reading: Textbook Ch. 1, 9, 10 Video Lecture: Current events lecture	Discussions: Week 1 – Models of State; Week 3 – Actors & Policy Process; Week 8 – Bureaucracy. Policy Response: #1 & #2

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COURSE SCHEDULE AND CONTENT

Week	Topics	Reading Assignments	Work Assignments
1 Jan 4 Jan 6	Overview and Policy Models Historical overview of forces facing state and local governments [demographic change, urbanization, globalization, economic change, technological change, value change, environmental change]. - Introduction to political science/public policy models (pluralism elitism, class conflict & participatory).	Textbook (Simon, Steel, & Lovrich) – Chapter 1 (Steel) Models of the State Handout & Weblinks Week 1 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wednesday. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST
2 Jan 11 Jan 13	Federalism -Introduction to Federalism -Units of Government -History of Federalism -Dual Federalism, Cooperative Federalism, Pragmatic Federalism, Noncentralized Federalism. -21 st Century approaches to Federalism	Textbook – Chapter 2 Week 2 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST Canvas Quiz #1 Sunday 11:59pm PST
3 Jan 18 Jan 21	Key Actors and the Policy Process -Introduction to the Policy Process -Political Participation -Interest groups, social movements, citizens, media, corporations and economic interests -Political Parties and elections -Policy Modeling	Textbook – Chapter 4 Week 3 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST
4 Jan 25 Jan 27	State Constitutions - Purpose and content of Constitutions - Changing Constitutions (Amendments) - Constitutional Amendment Trends	Textbook – Chapter 5 Week 4 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST Policy Context 1 Sunday 11:59pm PST
5 Feb 1 Feb 3	Legislatures - State Legislatures - County Commissions - City Councils - Town Boards - Special District Boards	Textbook – Chapter 6 Week 5 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST Canvas Quiz #2 Sunday 11:59pm PST

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6 Feb 8 Feb 10	Executives - State Governors - Secretaries of State - State Attorney Generals - State Treasurers - County Government Executives - Municipal Government Executives	Textbook – Chapter 7 Week 6 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST
7 Feb 15 Feb 17	Courts - State Court Systems - Judicial Selection - Local Courts - Current and Future Challenges	Textbook - Chapter 8 Week 7 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST Canvas Quiz #3 Sunday 11:59pm PST
8 Feb 22 Feb 24	State and Local Bureaucracy -Bureaucracy and Administration -Representative Bureaucracy - E-government - Public-Private Partnerships - Historical Trends in civil service	Textbook – Chapter 9 Week 8 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST
9 Mar 1 Mar 3	Budgeting -Budgeting Processes -Revenues - Expenditures -Budget Reforms	Textbook – Chapter 10 Week 9 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST Policy Context 2 Sunday 11:59pm PST
10 Mar 8 Mar 10	Traditional and Visible Services - Criminal Justice - Education - Transportation - Emergency Management - Social Services	Textbook Chapters -- 11 & 12 Week 10 Powerpoint	Discussion: Original Post: Wed. 11:59pm PST Reply post: Friday 11:59pm PST
Finals Week March 16	Finals Week No In-class final	No readings	Complete online Canvas Quiz #4 DUE Wednesday, March 16 th , 6 PST

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Course Policies:

a. Participation

Students are expected to participate in as many in-class sessions and discussion questions offered in this course. I have provided some flexibility on grading and due-dates, but this is not a self-paced course. You will need to participate in our discussions on at least two different days each week, with your first post due no later than Wednesday evening, and your second post due by Friday evening.

b. Makeup Assignments

Makeup exams will be given only for missed assignments excused in advance by the instructor. Excused absences will not be given for airline reservations, routine illness (colds, flu, stomach aches), or other common ailments. Excused absences will generally not be given after the absence has occurred, except under very unusual circumstances.

c. Incompletes

Incomplete (I) grades will be granted only in emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of your child), and if the student has turned in 80% of the points possible (in other words, usually everything but the final paper). If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please don't wait until the end of the term; let me know right away.

d. Guidelines for a Productive and Effective Classroom

During this course (e.g., in-class, on discussion boards, email) students are expected to conduct themselves in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility.

Civility is an essential ingredient for academic discourse. All communications for this course should be conducted constructively, civilly, and respectfully. Differences in beliefs, opinions, and approaches are to be expected. In all you say and do for this course, be professional. Please bring any communications you believe to be in violation of this class policy to the attention of your instructor.

Active interaction with peers and your instructor is essential to success in this course, paying particular attention to the following:

- Unless indicated otherwise, please complete the readings and view other instructional materials for each week before participating in the discussion board.
- Read your posts carefully before submitting them.
- Be respectful of others and their opinions, valuing diversity in backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
- Challenging the ideas held by others is an integral aspect of critical thinking and the academic process. Please word your responses carefully, and recognize that others are expected to challenge your ideas. A positive atmosphere of healthy debate is encouraged.

e. Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and [Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty

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member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

f. Accessibility of Course Materials

All materials used in this course are accessible and cost-free. If you require accommodations please contact [Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#).

Additionally, Canvas, the learning management system through which this course is offered, provides a [vendor statement](#) certifying how the platform is accessible to students with disabilities.

g. Expectations for Student Conduct

Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the [Student Conduct Code](#).

h. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty. For further information, visit [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#), or contact the office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

OAR 576-015-0020 (2) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty:

1. Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty is defined as an act of deception in which a Student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work or research, either through the Student's own efforts or the efforts of another.

2. It includes:

CHEATING - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids, or an act of deceit by which a Student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment, using prohibited materials and texts, any misuse of an electronic device, or using any deceptive means to gain academic credit.

FABRICATION - falsification or invention of any information including but not limited to falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.

ASSISTING - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes but is not limited to paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else by any means, including misuse of an electronic device. It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an educational assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).

TAMPERING - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments or documents.

PLAGIARISM - representing the words or ideas of another person or presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own, or using one's own previously submitted work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying another person's work (including

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unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own.

Academic Dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units, following the process outlined in the University's Academic Dishonesty Report Form, and will also be referred to SCCS for action under these rules.

i. Conduct in this Classroom

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., in-class, on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the [university's regulations regarding civility](#).

j. Tutoring

Utilize OSU resources to maximize your scores in writing assignments. OSU provides many services such as the [Writing Center](#), [IT HELP](#), the [Valley Library](#), and [Academic Coaching](#). Visit the OSU tutoring online page at: <https://success.oregonstate.edu/tutoring-osu>

k. OSU Student Evaluation of Teaching

Course evaluation is extremely important and are used to help me improve this course and the learning experience of future students. Results from the 19 multiple choice questions are tabulated anonymously and go directly to instructors and department heads. Student comments on the open-ended questions are compiled and confidentially forwarded to each instructor, per OSU procedures. The online Student Evaluation of Teaching form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent Instructions via ONID by the Office of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Accreditation. You will log in to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.

References

- Dalton, R. (2008) *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Changing American Politics*. CQ Press.
- Hibbing, J. and E. Theiss-Morse (1996) “Civics is Not Enough: Teaching in K-12,” . 29: 57-62.
- Maced, S. (2005) *Democracy at Risk*. Brookings Institute Press.
- Mann, S. (1999) “What a Survey of American College Students Tells Us About Their Interest in Politics and Political Science,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 32: 263–268.