



Course #: POLS 210

CRN: 28535

Credits: 3

Class Meets: M,W,F: 9:00am – 9:50am

Classroom: Avera 0280

Instructor:

Dr. Jonathan Ruff (Jon or Dr. Ruff)

Contact: Jonathan.Ruff@sdstate.edu

Office Location: Lincoln 329

Office Hours: Mon. 10– 11am
Thurs. 2 – 4pm

Course Description

An analysis of the legal status, powers and functions, intergovernmental relations and political problems of state and local governments.

Course Introduction

POLS 210 explores the most visible and prevalent forms of government in the United States. From the 50 US states to their 3,244 counties, the 19,519 municipalities, and over 39,000 special districts, the typical resident of the United States encounters state and local government services and programs daily. The purpose of this course is to provide an accessible overview and guide to state and local government functions, processes, and participation in order to encourage lifelong democratic participation and what Political Scientist Russell Dalton (2008) called, “engaged citizenship.” To meet this purpose, we will learn about state & local governments in a contemporary context by examining the many forces that promote and threaten social, economic, institutional, and environmental sustainability of local governance functions. By the end of this course, students will be familiar with how state and local governance structures and issues affect their daily lives.

Student Learning Objectives

SGR #3: Social Science Graduation Requirement

Students will understand the organization, potential, and diversity of the human community through study of the social sciences.

As a result of taking this course, students will:

- Identify and explain basic concepts, terminology, theories, and systems of inquiry of the selected social science disciplines.
- Apply selected social science concepts and theories to contemporary or historical issues from different behavioral, cultural, institutional, temporal, or special contexts.
- Analyze the extent and impact of variation among individuals, cultures, or societies in contemporary or historical contexts using social science methods and concepts.

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Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of taking this course, students will:

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

Instructional Methods

To successfully complete the work of this course, we will dedicate class time to (1) Lecture (2) Open and group discussions of the reading assignments (outloud and via Echo360); (3) open and group discussions of contemporary conflicts in US state & local government systems (outloud and via Echo360); (4) activities promoting learning of various US governance systems; (5) quizzes and tests on the readings, lectures, discussions and activities; and (6) written assignments demonstrating knowledge and practical application of course content to relevant state and local governance policy issues.

Required Texts and other materials

Textbook:

[Open Source] State and Local Government & Politics (3rd Edition).

Christopher Simon, Brent S. Steel, and Nicholas P. Lovrich

<https://open.oregonstate.education/stateandlocalgovernment3e/>

Other Materials:

Students will be required to complete readings and other content as posted on D2L (e.g. movie clips, short readings, timelines, social media excerpts).

Clickers: Students are required to use the **Echo 360 PointSolutions** (clicker) system. PointSolutions will facilitate in-class writing exercises, participation, and activities. Our course will include short answer questions and discussions, not just multiple choice; this system requires access to a smartphone (internet) cellphone (SMS), tablet, or laptop.

NOTE: You do not need the physical clicker, but you are required to purchase a subscription to the digital Echo360 platform (app).

Use of Clickers - Support: If you are a student with a disability that makes the use of a standard “clicker” device difficult or impossible, please do not buy a device at the University bookstore. Instead please contact Instructional Design Services (IDS) at 605-688-6312. IDS will assist you in obtaining an accessible version of the technology to fit your needs.

Assignments

Grades for this course will be based on the following assignments. Assignment descriptions can be found in D2L. [See [Appendix](#) for assignment connection to SGRs & SLOs]

Assignment Category	Assignments Available	Points per assignment	Points available	Overall Weight
Reflections on class Activities & Discussions	10	10	100	10%
In-class participation	45	3 - 8	X	5%
Local Government Meeting	1	100	110	10%
D2L Quizzes	6	50	300	25%
Policy in Context Paper #1	1	150	160	15%
Policy in Context Paper #2	1	250	260	25%
Final Exam	1	100	100	10%
<i>Extra Credit Available</i>	X	X	50	[5%]
Total needed for 100% rating			1,000	100%
<i>Total Available in course</i>			1,080	105%

1. Reflections on class activities & discussions: 10% [100 points]

- Some classes will include short activities, discussions, and feedback. Students will write brief reflections on these activities and their relevance to state and local governance.
- Grades are subjective of the quality of response and relevance to the questions posed.

2. In-Class Participation: 5% [Points variable]

- Classes will include short writing assignments, questions, quizzes, or participation activities collected through **Echo 360 (TurningPoint)**.
- Grades will be subjective of the quality of response and relevance to the questions posed.
- Students are granted five (5) missed classes with no penalty to participation, no questions asked.**

3. Local Government Meeting: 10% [100 points]

- Students will be responsible for attending a Brookings City Council meeting by the end of the term.
- Students will demonstrate attendance by taking a selfie [without disruption of the meeting] and writing a brief reflection on what the city council was discussing in the meeting. [Please see D2L for full assignment description].
- The Schedule for the Brookings City Council meetings can be found here: <https://www.cityofbrookings-sd.gov/calendar.aspx>

4. D2L Quizzes: 25% [250 points]

- a. Six (6) quizzes will take place outside of class on D2L which may include, multiple choice, matching, ranking, or short answer questions. Each quiz is worth 5% of the total course grade [50 points]. Quiz due dates are provided on the course schedule.
- b. **One Quiz with the lowest score will be dropped at the end of the semester.**

5. Policy in Context Papers: 40% [400 points]

- a. In the Policy in Context Papers, students will distill, analyze, and apply the essential elements of this course's assigned readings, activities, and lectures and apply them to an ongoing local, regional, or state policy issue relevant to you. The PiCs will be two interconnected pieces:
 - i. PiC #1 [150 points]
Defining a policy issue with the "Models of State" [4-5 pages]
 - ii. PiC #2 [250 points]
Identifying a feasible policy solution and defending it [8-10 pages].
- b. The goal of these assignments is to help you become deeply familiar with the roles that state and local government have in implementing policy. Both assignments require the following:
 - i. APA Format (1.5 spacing, 12pt non-serif font).
 - ii. Separate the title page, references page, and include page numbers.
 - iii. Frequent citations coherent with course materials and policy issue.
- c. **Student work will be submitted on D2L through TurnItIn Plagiarism and AI checking software.**

6. Final Exam: 10% [100 points]

- a. The Final Exam is **cumulative of course material** and may include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, ranking, short answer, and long-answer questions.
- b. **The Final Exam will take place on Monday, May 4th at 9:15am – 11:15am in Avera 280**

7. Extra Credit: (Maximum 5% of final course grade)

- a. Various opportunities for extra credit will be presented throughout the semester [See details on D2L]
 - i. Pre-test Quiz [0.5%]
 - a Complete the State & Local Prequalification quiz for 5 extra credit points to boost your overall grade.
 - ii. Participation E.C. [1%]
 - a Each unused absence will earn the student 2 points, for a total available of 10 extra credit points for no missed classes at the end of the semester.
 - iii. Letter to a Local Legislator [1%]
 - a Students writing a letter to a local Brookings City Councilor (or Mayor) which reflects a relevant and recent discussion in the

Council may earn up to 10 points of extra credit by taking a screenshot of the email or physical letter sent and providing a digital copy of the content. [Please see D2L for full assignment description.]

- iv. State Committee Meeting E.C. [1%]
 - a. Students will have an opportunity to attend a state committee meeting [online]. Providing evidence of attendance (e.g. screenshot) and a reflection on the meeting's purpose or policy discussion can earn up to 10 points of extra credit.
- v. Other opportunities as they arise [1.5%]

Letter Grades

A	[90-100%]
B	[80-89%]
C	[70-79%]
D	[60-69%]
F	[0-59%]

Note: All letter grades will be **rounded up** to the next integer at end of term.
[e.g. 89.2 → 90%, A]

Course Policies

University Excused Absences

For students with official university “excused” absences (e.g. due to university approved travel & sports), please e-mail the instructor to make-up equivalent work missed for each class period absent. **For all other absences, the policies below apply.**

Late Work & Make-Up policies

In-class Participation: No late or make-up participation will be available or accepted. Students are permitted five (5) absences without penalty, no questions asked.

Assignments: Late submissions will be accepted up to one week late without penalty. *Assignments submitted beyond one week late will not be accepted.*

Quizzes: Quizzes are completed online outside of class. Late submissions will be accepted up to one week late without penalty.

Final Exam: The Final is scheduled for **Monday, May 4th @ 9:15am – 11:15am**. An alternative exam will only be available for students with extreme circumstances – please contact the professor for more information.

[Jump ahead to Course Schedule](#)

Instructor Communication:

Dr. Ruff will make every effort to respond to emails and Q&A discussion board questions within 24 (working week) hours of receipt. Weekend or Holiday emails may be extended to the next working day.

Late to class statement:

All members of the class should make every effort to arrive on time. **You do not need to inform me if you are running late.**

If I am going to be late, due to circumstances beyond my control, I will, if possible, notify the department and ask that someone be sent to apprise you of the situation. If such notification is not possible, **please remain in the class for 15 minutes** beyond the scheduled start time. If I have not yet arrived, and if no emissary of the department has informed you otherwise, class will be canceled, and you will be free to leave.

Guidelines for a Productive Classroom

Students are expected to conduct themselves in compliance with the [University's Student Conduct Code](#) (click link to view policies). Civility is an essential ingredient for academic discourse. All communications for this course should be constructive and respectful.

Differences in beliefs, opinions, and approaches are to be expected in a political science course. Be respectful of those around you. Challenging the ideas held by others is an integral aspect of critical thinking and the academic process. Please consider your in-class responses and recognize that others are expected to challenge your ideas. In all you do and say for this course, **be kind to others and be kind to yourself.**

Please bring any communications you believe to be in violation of this class policy to the attention of your instructor.

Freedom in Learning Statement:

Under Board of Regents and Regental Institutions policy, student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Discussion and debate are critical to education and professional development. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact their home institution to initiate a review of the evaluation.

Divisive Concepts:

Discussion and debate are critical to education and professional development. (Insert discipline) face difficult, and sometimes controversial, ethical and moral situations. In this course, students will expand their understanding by being exposed to a variety of viewpoints, ideas, and theories so they can be debated and critiqued. This could include discredited or controversial ideas, because understanding the weaknesses of failed ideas is as important as understanding the strengths of successful ones. Students should be prepared to identify the good and bad in new or controversial areas of thought. Topics may be difficult, not only intellectually but emotionally; however, these discussions are essential to meeting the course's student learning outcomes and assisting students in developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills. During all conversations, respect for diverse viewpoints is of utmost importance. Students are free to take reasoned exception

to the views offered in the course and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of the course. While the exploration of controversial topics may be an important component of meeting the student learning outcomes in this course, no student will be compelled or directed to personally affirm, adopt, or adhere to any of the divisive concepts.

ADA Statement:

South Dakota State University strives to ensure that physical resources, as well as information and communication technologies, are reasonably accessible to users in order to provide equal access to all. If you encounter any accessibility issues, you are encouraged to immediately contact the instructor of the course and the Office of Disability Services (Phone: 605-688- 4504; Fax: 605-688-4987; E-mail: Nancy.Crooks@sdstate.edu or SDSU.Disabilityservices@sdstate.edu; Address: Room 271, Box 2815, University Student Union, Brookings South Dakota 57007).

Veterans and Active-Duty Military Personnel:

Veterans and Active Duty Military Personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities, and other qualifying needs) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor in order to address attendance requirements or other actions in accordance with SDBOR and University policies and procedures.

Children in class:

Per SDBOR Policy 4.8.3, children are not allowed in work areas, hallways, libraries, lounges, areas adjacent to classrooms, laboratories, or offices except under brief or exceptional circumstances during the standard working hours. As a general rule, students should not bring children to class; however, if an emergency situation occurs exceptions can be made with prior approval of the faculty member.

Student Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct:

Cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct run contrary to the purposes of higher education and will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, copying answers or work done by another student (either on an exam or an assignment), allowing another student to copy from you, and using unauthorized materials during an exam. The University's policy and procedures on cheating and academic dishonesty can be found in University Policy 2:4 and the governing Board of Regents policies can be found in SDBOR Policy 2.9.2 and SDBOR Policy 3.4.1. The consequences for cheating and academic dishonesty are outlined in policy. [University's Student Conduct Code](#) (click link to view policies)

Acceptable Use of Technology:

While Regental Institutions strive to provide access to computer labs and other technology, it is the student's responsibility to ensure adequate access to the technology required for a course. This may include access to a computer (not Chromebooks, iPads, etc.), webcam, internet, adequate bandwidth, etc. While utilizing any of the information technology

systems students, faculty and staff should observe all relevant laws, regulations, SDBOR Policy 7.1, and any institutional procedural requirements.

Emergency Alert Communication:

In the event of an emergency arising on campus under SDBOR Policy 7.3, your Regental Home Institution will notify the campus community via the emergency alert system. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their information is updated in the emergency alert system. The student's cell phone will be automatically inserted if available and if not, their email address is loaded. Students can at any time update their information in the student alert system.

Compliant Procedure and Academic Appeals:

South Dakota State University's primary objective is to assist students in meeting their academic goals through a positive and rigorous academic experience. In the case that a student has a concern, the University's procedures should be followed to address these concerns and/or complaints. University Policy 2:4 outlines procedures for academic appeals.

Student Success Services and Supports:

Information about student success services and supports, including tutoring and supplemental instruction, can be found at the [Wintrobe Student Success and Opportunity Center's website](#).

Changes to the Course Schedule:

The instructor reserves the right to update the syllabus and its contents throughout the term as deemed necessary for the beneficial outcomes of student learning. In accordance with (SDBOR Policy 2.7.3) changes will not include (i) course number or credit hours; (ii) course title; (iii) course description; (iv) course goals and student learning outcomes; (v) required policies. Changes may include updates to the course schedule. In the event of syllabus changes, students will be given sufficient and prompt notice of any such changes, and such changes will not unduly penalize students.

Course Schedule

The semester moves quickly - to ensure success, plan early for the readings, assignments, quizzes, and exams. Below is a guideline for the semester. This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor (when necessary, and to the benefit of the students (e.g. delaying assignments, or reducing work) – See Changes to the Course Schedule).

Week	Theme	Due Monday	Due Wed	Due Friday
Unit I: Distinguishing levels of government				
1 Jan 12-14-16	Overview of State & Local Government	Syllabus	Preface D2L Readings	Chapter 1

2 Jan 19-21-23	Local Government issues in practice	MLK Jr. Holiday No Class	Guest Speaker	Guest Speaker
3 Jan 26-28-30	Federalism	Chapter 2: Introduction – Historical Roots to Federalism	Chapter 2: Advantages, Disadvantages, & Models of Federalism	Chapter 2: 21 st Century Network – End Quiz #1 Due
4 Feb 2-4-6	The Models of State & Key Actors	Chapter 5: Introduction, Political Participation, & Policy Models	Chapter 5: Interest Groups, Media, & Corporate Interests	Chapter 5: Citizens and Social Movements
Unit II: Governance Structures & Institutions				
5 Feb 9-11-13	Elections & State Constitutions	Chapter 5: Political Parties and Elections	Chapter 6: Introduction – Content of State Constitutions	Chapter 6: Changing State Constitutions - Conclusion Quiz #2 Due
6 Feb 16-18-20	State Legislatures	Presidents Day No Class	Chapter 7: Introduction – Representation	Chapter 7: Lawmaking – Variation Among State Legislatures & Current Trends in State Legislatures
7 Feb 23-25-27	Local Legislatures	Chapter 7: Legislatures in General-Purpose & Single Purpose	Chapter 7: Current Trends in Local Legislatures & Conclusion	Quiz #3 Due
8 Mar 2-4-6	Executives	Policy in Context # 1 Due by Start of Class	Chapter 8: Introduction – Superintendent of Public Instruction	Chapter 8: Local Governments – Conclusion
9 Mar 9-11-13	Court Systems	Chapter 9: Introduction – How State Courts Work	Chapter 9: Judicial Selection & Court Sustainability	Chapter 9: Current Trends – Conclusion Quiz #4 Due
10 Mar 16-18-20	Spring Break!	No Class	No Class	No Class

Unit III: Governance Administration				
11 March 23-25- 27	Local Bureaucracy	Chapter 10: Introduction – What is Bureaucracy	Guest Speaker	Guest Speaker
12 Mar 30 Apr 1-3	The Policy Process	D2L Readings	D2L Readings	Easter Break No Class
13 Apr 6-8-10	State Bureaucracy	Chapter 10: Moving from Bureaucracy to Administration – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities	Chapter 10: Women and Minorities in PA – Focus on State/Local Employment	Chapter 10: Administration, Governance, and Innovation – Conclusion Quiz #5 Due
14 Apr 13-15-17	Budgeting	Chapter 11: Introduction – Generic Budgeting Process	Chapter 11: Sustainable Budgeting – Federal Grants for Children	Chapter 11: State & Local Budget Expenditures – Conclusion
15 Apr 20-22- 24	Entitlements & Guest Content	Policy in Context # 2 Due by Start of Class	Chapter 12: Introduction – Unemployment Compensation & Current Trends	D2L Readings TA Guest Lectures Quiz #6 Due
16 Apr 27-29 May 1	Visible Services & Exam Prep	Chapter 13: [Skim] Introduction – Education	Chapter 13: [Skim] Transportation - Conclusion	Finals Prep
Final Exam: Monday, May 4th 9:15am – 11:15am Avera 0280				

System General Requirement #3	Course Learning Outcome “As a result of taking this course, students will:”	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?
SGR #3 A	Identify and explain basic concepts, terminology, theories, and systems of inquiry of the selected social science disciplines.	Multimedia: Models of State (pp & handout) Reading: Textbook Ch. 1, 2	Reflections: Weeks 1 & 5 Quizzes: 1 & 2 Policy in Context Papers
SGR #3 B	Apply selected social science concepts and theories to contemporary or historical issues from different behavioral, cultural, institutional, temporal, or special contexts.	Multimedia: Rural-Urban Divide (Pp), Federalism (Pp) Readings: Textbook Ch. 3 – 13 + D2L Readings City Council Meeting	Reflections: Weeks 1, 3-5, 12 Letter to Local Legislator Policy in Context Papers
SGR #3 C	Analyze the extent and impact of variation among individuals, cultures, or societies in contemporary or historical contexts using social science methods and concepts.	Multimedia: Policy Papers (Pp), Budgeting (Pp) Reading: Textbook Ch. 1, 5, 10	Reflections: Week 3 & 13-16 Policy in Context Papers
SLO 1	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. 5, 7, 8, 8, 9 Guest speakers: Oregon Legislature	Participation: Weeks 1-16 Reflections: Weeks 3 - 9 Quizzes #2, #3, & #4 Policy in Context Papers
SLO 2	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. 6, 10, 11, 12, 13 Guest Speakers: City Management	Reflections: Weeks 4, 5, 13-16 Quizzes #5 & #6 Policy in Context Papers
SLO 3	Apply policymaking models to policy decision-making situations in state and local government(s).	Reading: Textbook Ch. 1, 10, 11 City Council Meeting Guest Speakers	Discussions: Weeks 1, 4, 11-13 Policy in Context Papers Final Exam

Appendix