

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Lafayette College
Fall 2020

Government 211 Sec. 01 (W+)

Tues. & Thurs.

1:15 p.m.- 2:30 p.m., K 003

Kirby Hall of Civil Rights

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Meyner Center for State & Local Govt.

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Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2:30-3:30 p.m. and appointment.

Rationale

This course focuses mainly on the governments and politics of the 50 states and the 89,476 local governments that make up the United States. Local governments include counties, municipalities, townships, special districts, school districts, and some other forms of local government. In addition, there are 573 American Indian tribal governments, more than 286,000 residential community-associations, as well as territories and associated states of the United States, such as Puerto Rico and Guam.

State and local governments account for one-half of all own-source domestic spending, 83 percent (15.5 million) of all civilian government employees, and 99.8 percent (497,155) of all elected officials in the United States. For most citizens, therefore, these governments are the primary arenas of participation and direct access to government. State courts, for example, handle more than 98 percent of all judicial business in the nation. State and local governments also are responsible for nearly all public services and other government functions that affect citizens--from registration of birth to certification of death, from fire and police protection to water and sewer service, from abortion regulation to zoo maintenance, and from the conduct of elections to the repair of potholes.

In the course, we will examine the origins, purposes, and legal status of state and local governments; the roles of these governments in the federal system; the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state and local governments and their policymaking functions; state and local political parties, election processes, interest groups, and media outlets; state and local taxing, budgeting, and spending rules and behaviors; and prominent public policy issues in state and local government. In addition, we will look briefly at tribal governments, residential community associations, and associated states and territories.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, if you have attended classes, participated in classroom activities, asked questions, analyzed ideas, read all assigned books and articles, visited with the professor when necessary, paid attention to news about government and politics, and studied diligently, then you will be able to, among other things,

- Identify, analyze, and critique a research article on state or local government in a scholarly political science journal
- Write an analysis of a political science research article
- Analyze the impacts of political ideas on state and local political action
- Analyze and debate important political ideas and public policies
- Use valid empirical evidence and rational arguments to construct and evaluate policy choices involving questions of moral and political significance such as physician-assisted suicide, property-tax reliance for public education financing, zoning restrictions on population diversity, and Medicaid versus higher education
- Recognize the intergovernmental nature of public policy in the United States
- Distinguish among the key functions of the federal, state, and local governments
- List the key functions of state and local governments
- Identify rights protected in state declarations of rights, including protections of individual rights that exceed federal protections
- Explain how and why a bill becomes a law in a state legislature
- Recognize impacts of state constitutional rules on gubernatorial behavior
- Apply patronage, civil service, and reinventing government models to state/local agencies
- Explain the impacts of state courts on state and local governments and society
- Analyze the sources of your own opinions about government and politics
- Evaluate public opinion poll information
- Explain key policy and demographic differences between Democrats and Republicans
- Apply textbook principles to an actual political campaign
- Evaluate media messages and explain the media's impacts on government and politics
- Describe the key strategies used by interest groups to achieve their objectives
- Outline the principal steps of policy-making
- Propose solutions for the financial crises facing key national social-welfare programs
- Apply basic principles of taxation to actual tax policies

Required Texts

Todd Donovan, Daniel A. Smith, Tracy Osborn, and Christopher Z. Mooney, *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform*. 4th ed. Stamford, CT: Cengage, 2015 [DSOM].

Please also read a daily local newspaper from your hometown for news about state and local government.

Class Reading and Discussion Schedule

- T: Aug. 18 Introduction of the Course, Participants, and Requirements
- TH: Aug. 20 Introduction to State and Local Governments: DSOM, Ch. 1, pp. 1-21.
CQ: What do state and local governments do?
- T: Aug. 25 Introduction to State and Local Governments: DSOM, Ch. 1, pp. 21-37.
CQ: To what extent can state and local governments function autonomously and control their own destinies?
- TH: Aug. 27 States and Localities in the Federal System: DSOM, Ch.2, pp. 38-53.
CQ: Is the federal government too powerful?
- F: Aug. 28 **Deadline** for dropping and adding courses; conversion to pass/fail
- T: Sept. 1 States and Localities in the Federal System: DSOM, Ch. 2, pp. 53-71 and John Kincaid, "Introduction: The Trump Interlude and the States of American Federalism," *State and Local Government Review* 49:3 (September 2017): 156-169 [Access online].
CQ: Should more powers be restored to the states?
- TH: Sept. 3 Participation, Elections and Representation: DSOM, Ch. 3, pp. 72-87.
CQ: Is voting the only way for people to participate in state and local government?
- T: Sept. 8 Participation, Elections and Representation: DSOM, Ch. 3, pp. 88-105.
CQ: Should voting be made easier?
- TH: Sept. 10 State and Local Direct Democracy: DSOM, Ch. 4, pp. 106-141.
CQ: Should states restrain or eliminate citizen ballot initiatives?
- T: Sept. 15 Political Parties: DSOM, Ch. 5, pp. 142-175.
CQ: What good are political parties? Do they serve any good purposes?
- TH: Sept. 17 Interest Groups: DSOM, Ch. 6, pp. 176-192 and Jeffrey R. Laxand Justin H. Phillips, "The Democratic Deficit in the States," *American Journal of Political Science* 56:1 (January 2012): 148-166 [Access online].
CQ: Do interest groups benefit or harm state and local governments?

- T: Sept. 22 Interest Groups: DSOM, Ch. 6, pp. 192-210.
CQ: What are the most influential interest groups in state capitals?
Article Review Paper Due
- TH: Sept. 24 Legislatures: DSOM, Ch. 7, pp. 211-226 and Daniel M. Butler and David E. Broockman, "Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators," *American Journal of Political Science* 55:3 (July 2011): 463-477 [Access online].
CQ: Should the members of a state legislature mirror the state's population?
- T: Sept. 29 Legislatures: DSOM, Ch. 7, pp. 227-253.
CQ: What is the best role for a legislator: delegate or trustee?
- TH: Oct. 1 Governors: DSO, Ch. 8, pp. 254-274 and E. Lee Bernick, "Studying Governors Over Five Decades: What We Know and Where We Need to Go?" *State and Local Government Review* 48:2 (2016): 132-146 [Access online].
CQ: Why do most states have a plural executive system?
- T: Oct. 6 Governors: DSOM, Ch. 8, pp. 274-295.
CQ: What are a governor's formal powers and also political roles?
- TH: Oct. 8 **Mid-Term Exam** (50 multiple-choice questions)
- T: Oct 13 State Courts: DSOM, Ch. 9, pp. 296-315.
CQ: Should judges be appointed or elected?
- TH: Oct. 15 State Courts: DSOM, Ch. 9, pp. 315-343.
CQ: Have state courts become too powerful?
- T: Oct. 20 Fiscal Policy: DSOM, Ch. 10, pp. 344-360.
CQ: What is meant by revenue diversification?
- TH: Oct. 22 Fiscal Policy: DSOM, Ch. 10, pp. 360-380
CQ: Why do states spend so much on social services?
- T: Oct. 27 Social Welfare and Health Care: DSOM, Ch. 14, pp. 486-503.
CQ: Do states with more generous welfare attract poor people?

- TH: Oct. 29 Social Welfare and Health Care, DSOM, Ch. 14, pp. 504-522.
CQ: How will states pay for Medicaid?
- M: Nov. 2 **Last day to withdraw** from courses with a WD.
- T: Nov. 3 The Structure of Local Governments: DSOM, Ch. 11, pp. 381-396.
CQ: Which is more preferable: Dillon’s Rule or Home Rule?
Research Paper Draft due in for instructor review.
- TH: Nov. 5 The Structure of Local Governments: DSOM, Ch. 11, pp. 396-413 and
Mirya R. Holman, “Women in Local Government: What We Know and Where
We Go from Here,” *State and Local Government Review* 49:4 (2017): 285-296
[access online].
CQ: Have reforms made city governments better?
- T: Nov. 10 Local Land-Use Politics: DSOM, Ch. 12, pp. 414-427.
CQ: Should metropolitan areas be consolidated into one government?
- TH: Nov. 12 Local Land-Use Politics: DSOM, Ch. 12, pp. 427-447.
CQ: Is city competition for economic development beneficial?
- T: Nov. 17 Morality Policy: DSOM, Ch. 13, pp. 448-485.
CQ: What kinds of morality policies should be decided by the states?
- TH: Nov. 19 Education Policy: DSOM, Ch. 15, pp. 523-557.
CQ: Is school choice a better policy than the current public-school system?
Research Paper Final due today or on the day of the final exam. Persons who
hand in the Research Paper on or before November 19 will receive 3 extra points
on the paper grade. A late paper will be regarded as one handed in after the final
exam.
- Nov. 30-Dec.7 **Final Exam** (Date to be Announced)
- TH: Dec. 9 Final Grades Due to Registrar by Noon

Research and Writing Assignments

Please type or computer print in 12 pt. font all writing assignments double spaced on 8.5" x 11" white paper with 1" margins on all sides.

Do not put paper in a covering binder; just staple it in the upper left corner.

Do not add a cover page; just center your paper title at the top of the first page and center your name under the title.

Print your paper on both sides of the paper if you can do so.

For all research-source citations, follow the APSA's Style Manual for Political Science, which can be found at

<https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/>

A Few Scholarly Journals Relevant to This Course

American Journal of Political Science

American Political Science Review

American Politics Research

Journal of Politics

Legislative Studies Quarterly

Perspectives on Politics

Policy Studies Journal

Polity

Public Administration Review

Publius: The Journal of Federalism

Social Science Quarterly

State and Local Government Review

State Politics & Policy Quarterly

Article Review Paper. The first writing assignment, due no later than **September 22, 2020**, is to read and review one article of your choice from one of the above political science journals. The article must deal entirely or primarily with state and/or local government (e.g., governors, legislatures, courts, county councils, mayors, city councils), state and/or local politics (e.g., political parties, voting behavior, public opinion), and/or state and/or local public policy (e.g., social welfare, environmental protection, policing). Do not choose a book review, review essay, short article, introduction, research note, letter, or editorial. (If in doubt about anything, consult the instructor.) In selecting an article, stay within the years 2015-2020. All of the journals are available electronically through the Kirby and Skillman libraries. Deliver your paper via email as a word document if possible. Also attach a pdf of the article you reviewed. The length of the paper should be about 1,000 words; it can be longer if you wish to say more. Failure to select an article from one of the journals above, to choose an article relevant to this course, or to choose a substantive article will result in a grade of 0 with no option to re-do the paper.

After reading the article, kindly do the following in your paper:

- Summarize the main idea and findings or conclusions of the article in 700-725 of your own words so as to demonstrate that you really understood the article. The reader of your paper should not have to read the article in order to get all of its key points and to understand it. Your summary should be sure to cover, among other things, (a) the main purpose of the article, (b) the key question the author is answering in the article, (c) the most important information and findings in the article, and (d) the main conclusions of the article. Then, in another 250-275 words:

- What important facts or data does the author use to support their main idea or conclusions?
- Discuss any examples of bias, faulty reasoning, or unsupported assertions you found in the article.
- Discuss the implications of the author's findings or conclusions for American government or politics.
- Explain what you learned from reading the article.

You do not need full endnote or reference citations of the article you are reviewing. If you refer to a portion of the article or quote from the article, simply provide the page number in parentheses at the point in your paper where you refer to a portion of the article or quote from it. However, provide full citations of any other articles or books you use in writing your paper.

In-Class Reports on Readings: Each student will be asked to present two or more reports during class sessions on the readings for a particular day. Please prepare a written report of about 350 words on what you found to be the most interesting or important point you encountered in the assigned reading. Kindly end your report with a good question to pose to the class for discussion. Email your report to Professor Kincaid no later than 12 noon on the day the report is due. Be prepared then to deliver your report orally in class. Each report will be worth 0-10 points toward your Participation grade in the course. These reports will not be the only basis for your final Participation grade. For the other important components, see Classroom Participation on page 9 of this syllabus.

Research Paper: The second writing assignment is a 4,000-5,000 double-spaced research paper in which you will examine one of the following policy issues: (1) COVID-19, (2) police misconduct (including calls to defund the police), (3) violent crimes, or (4) climate change. For this paper, you will conduct a literature search on your topic and also conduct an analysis of data you collect on the topic for the 50 states or a sample of cities or counties by which you will seek to explain variations across the states.

Your paper is to focus on presenting (a) a careful and accurate statement of the policy issue, (b) the importance and scope of the issue for state/local government, (c) a brief and relevant history of the issue, (d) the theoretical literature and hypotheses, (e) the available, pertinent information

and data on the issue, (f) the extent to which manifestations of the policy issue vary significantly among the states, (g) factors that seem to explain the variations, (h) an analysis of competing interpretations of the policy issue and of existing and proposed policy options, (i) your evaluations of the policy options and the values associated with those options, and (j) your well-reasoned policy recommendations and the values you seek to promote with your recommendations.

This paper goes toward meeting the CCS **Social Science** requirement. The learning objectives are as follows:

- SS1 Demonstrate an understanding of basic findings and theories in the social sciences.
- SS2 Demonstrate an ability to construct and evaluate arguments using ideas, explanations, and evidence with the social sciences.
- SS3 Demonstrate an understanding of how methods of inquiry in the social sciences are applied to collect and examine evidence in a variety of social issues.

This paper also goes toward meeting the CCS **Values** requirement. The learning objective is as follows: Construct and/or evaluate responses to questions of moral and political concern (e.g., questions of moral conduct, justice, and social policy) via careful analysis and based on sufficient evidence.

Deadlines: Draft of Paper 3 is due in to the instructor by 1:15 p.m. on Tuesday, **November 3, 2020**. Please email the paper to the professor as a Word attachment if possible. The final paper is due on Thursday, **November 19, 2020**, or on the day of the final exam.

Chase Prize

Please note that the Eugene P. Chase Government Prize is awarded for the best-written exposition in the field of political science submitted to the Department of Government and Law during the academic year. Term papers done by students in regular courses are eligible to be nominated for the prize. You might, therefore, keep this prize in mind while writing Paper 3 for this course.

Course Requirements and Grading

You are expected to complete all reading and other assignments on time and to participate actively in class discussions. The readings assigned for each class session should be read before that class day. Your final course grade will be based on the following distribution, each of which is based on a 0-100 scale:

Article Review Paper	20 %	Final Exam	20 %
Research Paper	25 %	Class Participation	12 %
Mid-Term Exam	20 %	Class Attendance	3 %

A = 94-100 B+ = 87-89 B- = 80-82 C = 73-76 D+ = 67-69 D- = 60-62

A- = 90-93 B = 83-86 C+ = 77-79 C- = 70-72 D = 63-66 F = 0-59

Attendance is expected at each synchronous class.

Cheating on an exam will result in a grade of zero on that exam.

Classroom Decorum: You are expected to arrive on time for synchronous class sessions, remain in the session with camera on for the duration of each class session, and keep your microphone muted except with speaking as part of the class session.

Classroom Participation: You can score high on participation by the end of the semester by (1) asking questions and commenting on topics in class, (2) responding to the professor's questions posed in class, (3) discussing what you found to be most interesting about the day's readings and also asking an intelligent question about the readings, (4) bringing a news item to class and discussing it briefly, and (5) participating in classroom debates.

Disability Statement: In compliance with Lafayette College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students must register with the Office of the Dean of the College for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.

Early Papers: The paper deadlines in this syllabus are final deadlines. You are free to hand in a paper to the instructor before a deadline.

Electronics: The use of cell phones, blackberries, ipods, and the like is not permitted during class and exam sessions.

Exam Policies: You are expected to take the mid-term and final exams at their scheduled times. Make-up exams will be scheduled at the convenience of the instructor, and will consist of 2-3 essay questions different from questions used on the regularly scheduled exam. The final exam will be given only on its College-appointed date; no provisions will be made for early final exams for individuals. Please plan your fall-winter schedule accordingly. Failure to take the regularly scheduled final exam and to arrange for a make-up with the instructor on or before noon December 8, 2020, will result in a final course grade based on the work completed as of that date.

Extra Credit extra credit will not be available; instead, it is important that you concentrate on the assigned work for the course.

Free Speech and Free Thought: Everyone is free to express their ideas and views in this class. Likewise, everyone is free to challenge respectfully the views expressed by others in class, including the professor. No one will be degraded or downgraded because of their views or for challenging the professor.

Late Papers: Two points will be subtracted from the grade of a paper for each day it is late, including the day it's due (if delivered after class) and Saturdays and Sundays. This penalty will not be waived for any reason.

Moodle contains student information that is protected by the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). Disclosure to unauthorized parties violates federal privacy laws. Courses using Moodle will make student information visible to other students in this class. Please remember that this information is protected by these federal privacy laws and must not be shared with anyone outside the class. Questions can be referred to the Registrar's Office.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism on any written assignment or examination will result in an F grade for the course, no matter what your other assignment or exam grades, and a recommendation to the College for expulsion or other disciplinary action. The instructor reserves the right to make the sole determination of plagiarism by one of the following two methods: (1) producing the original source for the plagiarism or (2) examining the student orally at a time and place of his discretion. If, in the instructor's judgment, the student does not demonstrate understanding and mastery of his/her own writing assignment, the instructor will make a final determination of plagiarism.

Recommendation Letters: The instructor will be happy to write recommendation letters for study abroad, prospective employers, graduate schools, law schools, or medical schools.

Rewriting Papers: If you have questions or need clarification of an assignment, please see the professor before you complete the assignment. Grading of an assignment is final, with no opportunity to rewrite it.

Syllabus Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to change or deviate from the syllabus during the semester and to expect students to know material that cannot be covered in class sessions.

Syllabus Reference: Please keep this syllabus for your reference. Reading assignments are to be completed by the dates indicated on the syllabus.

Weather Class-Cancellation: My policy is to hold class whenever possible during bad weather such as a snowstorm; if it is necessary to cancel class, I will leave a voice-mail message about the cancellation on my office telephone line: 610-330-5597.

The student work in this course is in full compliance with the federal definition of a four credit hour course. Please see the Registrar's Office web site (<http://www.registrar.lafayette.edu/additional-resources/cep-course-proposal/>) for the full policy and practice statement.

Academic Honesty Rules

To maintain the scholarly standards of the College and, equally important, the personal ethical standards of our students, it is essential that written assignments be a student's own work, just as is expected in examinations and class participation. A student who commits academic dishonesty is subject to a range of penalties, including suspension or expulsion. Finally, the underlying principle is one of intellectual honesty, if a person is to have self-respect and the respect of others, all work must be his/her own.

Kindly review closely and follow in letter and spirit the principles expressed in the Student Handbook and in the department statement distributed with this syllabus. The instructor should be consulted if there is any ambiguity about the rules for any assignment. All matters of academic honesty will be treated with utmost seriousness.