

POL 242
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Monday and Wednesday, 12:30-1:45pm
Virtual Classroom (Zoom)

Instructor Information:
Dr. Gregory Gunderson
Room 313
Office phone: 261-6257
ggunders@uwsp.edu

If you have an emergency, questions, etc, the best way to contact me is through email.

Office Hours:
MT 3:30-4:30pm

Description

Organization, structure and functions of state and local governments in general, while using Wisconsin as a prime example. SS

Course Content: This course explores the structure and dynamics of state and local government, providing a broad-based introduction to the ideas and institutions that shape politics at the state and local levels in the contemporary United States. While the bulk of media coverage focuses on politics at the national level, it is actually politics at the state and local level which has the greater impact on individual citizens. We will focus on state Constitutions, the institutions of modern state and local government, and the political behavior of the American public. We will study the strategies, roles, and limitations of both governmental elites and ordinary citizens, with particular emphasis on how they communicate and interact within the constitutional “rules of the game” to promote the achievement of public goods at the state and local levels.

Please read the remainder of this syllabus carefully; it can be viewed as a contract of sorts (although I retain the right to make changes if necessary – they will be kept to a minimum and will be discussed in class), laying out what you can expect of me as well as what I will expect of you. I look forward to working with you this semester. Welcome.

Required Textbook:

David B. Magleby, Paul C. Light, and Christine L. Nemacheck, State and Local Government by the People, 16th edition.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the semester each student should be able to...

- Describe and discuss the foundations and bases of state and local government in America.
- Describe the various aspects of political behavior of individuals and groups including political parties, public opinion, interest groups, media, nominations, campaigns, and elections at the state and local levels.
- Describe the operations of the various governmental institutions including executive, legislative, judicial, and administrative functions at the state and local levels.

- Analyze American politics and government in a state and local context.

Attendance: I believe, in general, that attendance policies should not be necessary at the university-level. Unfortunately, experience has shown that many students will only attend class regularly if it directly affects their grade. During the course, your discussion will be worth 50 points. Obviously, you cannot discuss if you do not attend. I will take attendance every day.

Additionally each student is responsible for (1) any announcements in class; (2) the content of lectures and multi-media presentations in class; and (3) any changes to the class schedule announced in class. Let me repeat this - students are expected to attend all classes. A missed class is not an acceptable excuse for not knowing about changes in assignments, the content of class sessions, etc. It is the student's responsibility to find out. Do not call or email the instructor to inform him that you will miss a class or an exam. If you can be there, it is assumed that you will be there and if you cannot attend, a telephone call or email will not change my policy in any way.

All lectures will be recorded.

Academic Honesty

Please do not cheat – cheating does nothing but rob you of the chance for an education. As a college student, you are part of an academic community and are expected to behave in a manner that is respectful of that community, in part by being academically honest. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to “cheating on an examination,” “submitting a paper or assignment as one’s own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another,” and “submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas.”

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance is required. See the section above on attendance for a discussion of my policy.
2. Discussion is important. Don’t be afraid to speak up, ask questions, or challenge the information I give you. Education is not strictly a spectator sport -- you will find the class more interesting and informative if you participate.
3. Be nice, be patient, be tolerant.
4. Exams and stuff like that –

- There will be three exams given in this class; two “midterm exams” and the final exam. Each midterm exam will be worth 120 points and the final will be worth 160 points.
- Regular class attendance and participation will be worth 50 points.
- Each student will be expected to write a short research paper on a topic of your choosing that deals with either state or local government and politics. The paper will be 3-4 pages in length and will be worth 50 points. The assignment will be discussed in more detail (and directions will be provided in Canvas) during the first two weeks of the course.
- To review, the distribution of points will be as follows:

Attendance and participation - 50 points
Exams - 400 points
Research Paper - 50 points
Total - 500 points

There will be no make-up exams or assignments except in the case of a bona fide (and verified) emergency! All make-up exams will consist of essay questions only.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

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

Course Schedule: Subject to change. I will try to keep changes to a minimum and will announce them in class.

Day Date Subject Reading, Assignment, Etc.

Mon 1/25 Course Introduction

Wed 1/27 State and Local Politics Magleby, Chapter 1

Mon 2/1 State and Local Politics

Wed 2/3 Federalism Magleby, Chapter 2

Mon 2/8 Federalism

Wed 2/10 State Constitutions Magleby, Chapter 3

Mon 2/15 State Constitutions

Wed 2/17 Parties and Elections Magleby, Chapter 4

Mon 2/22 Parties and Elections

Wed 2/24 FIRST EXAM

Mon 3/1 Writing a Good Research Paper

Wed 3/3 State Legislatures Magleby, Chapter 5

Mon 3/8 State Legislatures

Wed 3/10 State Governors Magleby, Chapter 6

Mon 3/15 State Governors

Wed 3/17 State Courts Magleby, Chapter 7

Mon 3/22 Spring Break

Wed 3/24 Spring Break

Mon 3/29 State Courts

Wed 3/31 Local Governments Magleby, Chapter 8

Mon 4/5 Local Governments

Wed 4/7 Local Governments

Mon 4/12 SECOND EXAM

Wed 4/14 Making Policy Magleby, Chapter 9
Mon 4/19 Making Policy
Wed 4/21 People and Money Magleby, Chapter 10
Mon 4/26 People and Money
Wed 4/28 Wisconsin State Government
Mon 5/3 WSG Research paper due by 3PM
Wed 5/5 WSG
Mon 5/12 WSG

Wed 5/14 Review
Fri 5/21 FINAL DUE BY 3PM