
POLI 242 State and Local Government
University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, Spring 2019

Instructor: **Dr. Saemyi Park**
 Class Location & Time: **SCI A121 & T/TH 2:00PM-3:15PM**
 Instructor’s Office: CCC 468
 Office Hours: T/TH 8:50AM-10:50AM & by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

While many people are somewhat familiar with the issues, institutions, and actors that define our national government and politics, many are unaware of what goes on at the state and local level. It is at these lower tiers of the American federal system where the majority of decisions that most directly affect our daily lives are made. In POLI 242, students will learn how the state and local political framework is structured within the American federal system and how it functions as a system comprised of various individual and group interest.

This course examines political institutions, actors, and issues within American state and local governments. Among other topics, our class will discuss federalism, political culture, state campaigns and elections, public policies, constitutional provisions, and state government branches (legislative, executive, and judicial). At some points we will closely look at the politics that are relevant to the state of Wisconsin, while at other times we will examine political matters in other states. Overall, this class introduces students to plethora of important concepts and theories relating to sub-national governments.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

Student Learning Outcomes at the end of this course,	Course Topics	Evaluation of Outcomes
Students should be able to:	The following topics will address this outcome:	This outcome will be evaluated primarily by:
Describe the constitutional division of powers between the federal government and the state government, and the evolution of that relationship over time	Introduction to State/Local Governments Federalism	Midterm Exam In-Class Activity
Explain the structure and functions of the institutions of state and local government	Constitutions Three Branches	Midterm Exam In-Class Activity

Explain the varying roles of the decision-makers at each level of government	Finance Local Government Political Attitudes and Participation	Local Government Report Final Exam
Identify key issues that consistently impact the activities of state and local government	Education Morality Policy Health and Welfare Environment and Climate Change	Final Exam In-Class Activity Bill Review
Identify factors in the political environment that affect the public policy process		

REQUIRED READINGS

The following books have been ordered at University Bookstore for textbook rental:

- ***“Governing States and Localities”*** (7th Edition) by Kevin B. Smith and Alan Greenblatt (2019)
Sage & CQ Press

This course will have a site Canvas. The site will be used to share course materials including, but not limited to, lecture note, and additional readings. Make sure to check the course site frequently as I will use it for course announcement.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

	Weight	Due Date
In-Class Midterm Exam	20%	October 17 (TH)
Online Final Exam	20%	December 18 (W)
Local Government Report	20%	November 21 (TH)
Bill Review	20%	December 15 (Sunday)
In-Class Assignments	10%	Throughout the semester
Attendance & Participation	10%	Every class
Total:	100%	

Note: students must complete ALL the required work in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade in the course. **You do NOT have the option to “take a zero” on an assignment.** Not completing all required work will result either in a final grade of incomplete until the work is submitted or an F for the course. You are NOT allowed to submit and complete the required course assignments late unless you receive my permission to do so.

Students with serious illness or family emergencies may be considered to be given for late submission, but I will need to see an official evidence to verify the seriousness of the situation. Extension of written assignments can be only allowed to the extraordinary circumstances (school-sponsored activities and events, serious medical emergency, etc.). Please read the course policies for more details in pages 4-5.

GRADING SCALE

Grades will be determined according to the university's standard scale. I have incredibly high standards for my grades. If you meet the basic requirements for an assignment, you will get a C. If you want a A or B, you need to go above and beyond the exact requirements for an assignment. For individual assignments, I will define the A-F grade base in the following way:

Criteria						
Outstanding	A	93-100	A-	90-92		
Above average	B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
Average	C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
Below average	D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
Unsatisfactory	F	Below 60				

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

A. Exams (20% per each exam)

The midterm exam will be given on **October 17 (TH)**. It will contain material covered in the first part of the course. This is an **in-class** exam where it takes place during the class time. I will allow you to bring one-page note of your own for the exam although it is not an open book test. If you are required to attend the university-sponsored activities (athletic games etc.) or if you are seriously ill and incapable of taking the exam, I may consider you to take a make-up exam. You must provide an official document to prove your excuse, and I reserve the right to determine if you will be given the make-up exam opportunity or not. Make-up exam is all short identification essays, which is a lot harder for students to do well on it. And, you will take it on the final day of class in my office.

The final exam will be given online on **December 18 (W)**. It will NOT be cumulative, and questions will cover the second half of the course. The exam will be open at 9AM and close at 11:59PM on the scheduled date. You will be given two hours to take the test. Once you start taking the test, you are NOT allowed to take a break for return. **Because it is an online exam that is open for a day, students would not have a make-up exam opportunity for whatever reasons.**

The format of exams is a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions. I will distribute a study guide one week before the midterm exam, and we will have a review session.

B. Local Government Report (20%)

This assignment will be a "field report" from a local government meeting. You will attend one meeting of any local government council, commission, board, or committee. You may attend a meeting in the immediate area (Stevens Point, Wausau, or Portage County), or you may attend a meeting outside the area if you happen to be traveling during the semester (anything from your hometown zoning commission to other city governments in any states). In your paper, you will describe and analyze the

meeting you attend using the material on local government covered in class. A photogenic evidence of your attendance to the meeting is required too. A paper prompt containing report guidelines and information about WI local government meetings will be distributed in the first two weeks of class. The report is due on November 21. Online submission to Canvas is required for this assignment.

C. Bill Review (20%)

Students are required to write a bill review over a piece of legislation proposed in the Wisconsin General Assembly or Senate. This bill review is due December 15. A list of available WI bills is given to you on Canvas and you must select one from the list. Detailed instructions on the bill review as well as a template can be found in the course website. Good bill reviews (1) briefly summarizes the bill, (2) lists noteworthy proponents and opponents to the bill, (3) assesses whether there are any outstanding questions to resolve (i.e. what is missing from the bill) and (4) give final considerations and recommendations for the bill. Online submission to Canvas is required for this assignment.

D. In-Class Assignments (10%)

Throughout the semester, I will conduct 5 or 6 in-class assignments. Activities include small group discussion, debate, news ombudsman, the one-minute paper, the press conference simulation, and more. These assignments both serve as an attendance check and ask you to engage with the assigned reading material. Your contribution and completion to each activity will be graded. Please be aware that there will be no make-up opportunity for the missed class activity unless you are excused for the legitimate reasons. Students with serious illness or family emergencies may be considered to be given, but I will need to see an official evidence to verify the seriousness of the situation. Please remember that students are NOT allowed to have more than one make-up opportunity for the missed class activity.

E. Attendance & Participation (10%)

Regular and prompt attendance, active participation, and mature attentiveness during class are MANDATORY for all students. I will NOT distribute lecture notes via e-mail for students who miss a lecture. The student is responsible for finding out what he/she missed and obtaining class notes or assignments from someone else in the class. E will have about 28 class sessions throughout the semester. **7 OR MORE unexcused absences will result in the automatic F in the course.** If you are simply sick or under the weather, you do not need to email me about it. I will give you **TWO free tickets** on your attendance record. But, do not depend on it too much as it is your best interest to be attentive to class.

Students are expected to be on time for class. Students missing more than half of the class are charged proportionately at the instructor's discretion. The first five minutes of each class often contain important procedural announcements which the student must know. Any student who departs prior to the completion of that class session must inform the instructor of the reason for their departure or face deduction of participation points. Please be aware of excusable absences/tardiness/early departure:

- Documented participated in school-sponsored activities
- Religious holiday
- Note: evidence/document is required to submit at the beginning of the semester.

COURSE POLICIES

A. Readings

Students are required to complete each week's required reading BEFORE that lecture. You need to bring assigned readings and lecture notes to each class.

B. Lectures

Before we begin a topic in class, I will post an outline of the lecture material on the course website. The outlines give you the framework of the lecture but do not give you the entire script. If you wish, you can print these outlines and bring them with you to class to use as a base for note taking. You will learn and remember better when you write things down yourself. Regarding note taking, make sure you take notes that will be meaningful to you later when you are reviewing your notes, rather than focusing only on transcribing the slides verbatim.

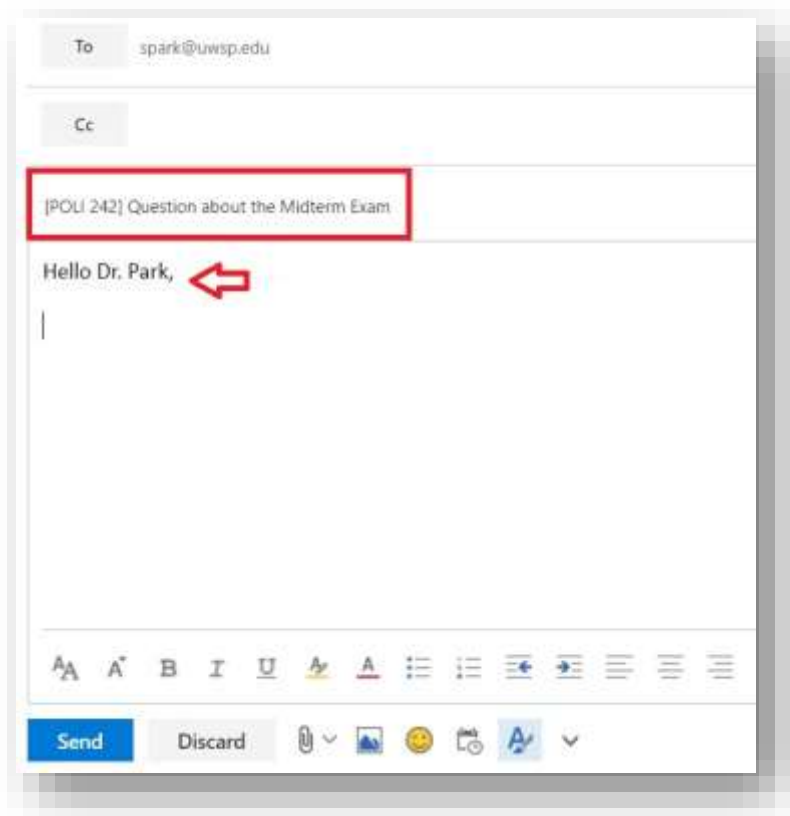
C. Office Hours

Feel free to drop by during my office hours or make an appointment to see me. I WELCOME students. If my regular office hours do not work for you, we can meet online via Canvas. The instruction is posted to the course website for an online virtual meeting.

D. Communication Policy

Email is the most convenient way that communication between the instructor and students can take place. While students should take advantage of this email communication opportunity with me, you should also do so in a professional manner. Please follow a specific format when you communicate with me via email. The subject line should indicate 1) course number in parenthesis and 2) the subject of your inquiry. Your email should include a proper salutation such as "Hello Professor." Please see the image in the next page for an example.

If you have any questions regarding your papers, please visit my office hours for in-depth consultation. I will NOT consult on your written assignment via email. I will also NOT respond to emails that ask for answers to questions that can easily be found on the syllabus or the lecture notes. If you have a question regarding lectures or assigned material that you just cannot seem to master, then ask a question in class, or come to me during office hours. I will only respond to questions about coursework or academic requirements, and I will not respond to questions of a personal nature. I will be able to respond your email during weekdays (not weekend), but please email me again if you do not receive my response within 48 hours.



E. Honesty

Any instance of academic misconduct will be taken seriously and may result in failure of the course. Misconduct will result in notification to the Dean of Students. If you are having a problem, it is much better to talk to me about it. Do not struggle by yourself. I want you to learn and do well in this course, not punish you with a lower grade. Talk to me if you are having a problem so I can try to help you work out a solution.

F. Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. If changes are made, students will be informed through email and verbally in class, and a new syllabus document will be posted on Canvas.

G. Ground Rules

This course is open to a variety of ways of interpreting history, theories, and policies. Students are encouraged to share their questions and ideas in lecture. Since there will be differences and disagreements, students are expected to show respect to the comments and positions of fellow students and me. Also, **using a cell phone, iPad, or laptop is NOT allowed in class.**

The Course Calendar

(Topics, readings, and schedule subject to announced change by instructor.)

Topic	Tentative Dates	Readings
Introduction	9/3	
Introduction to State and Local Government	9/5	Ch. 1
Federalism	9/10 & 9/12	Ch. 2
Constitutions	9/17 & 9/19	Ch. 3
Legislatures	9/24 & 9/26	Ch. 7
Governors and Executives	10/1 & 10/3	Ch. 8
The Courts	10/8 & 10/10	Ch. 9
Review Session & The Midterm Exam	10/15 & 10/17	
Finance	10/22 & 10/24	Ch. 4
Film Presentation I	10/29	
Local Government	11/5 & 11/7	Ch. 11
Political Attitudes and Participation	11/12 & 11/14	Ch. 5
Education	11/19 & 11/21	Ch. 13
Film Presentation II	11/26	
Health and Welfare	12/3 & 12/5	Ch. 15
Environment and Climate Change	12/10 & 12/10	Ch. 16
The Final Exam	12/18	

- No class on October 31 (TH): Professor Park will attend the conference.
- No class on November 28 (TH): Thanksgiving Day