Course Description:

This course introduces undergraduates to politics and policymaking in American states and localities. Subnational politics are less visible than national politics, but governments at the state and local levels engage in countless activities that affect our daily lives. Moreover, there are several reasons why students of politics should concern themselves with state and local political processes. First, studies of urban politics provided important contributions to our understanding of the nature and role of power in American politics.

State and urban political events also have a significant impact on national politics. Many federal policies started out as innovations at the state level. Likewise, social movement activities in the U.S. are highly decentralized and typically emerge in exemplary local settings.

Finally, smaller scale jurisdictions exhibit considerable diversity—and there are a great many of them—which makes them an ideal setting for large-N, statistical investigations. Variations in policies, institutional design, political behavior and culture among states and cities permit researchers to conduct studies of politics and policies that are not possible at the national level. Throughout the course, we will identify the commonalities among states and localities as well as the ways in which they vary, and we will consider the advantages and disadvantages of the American federalist system.

Office Hours:

I will hold office hours in Monroe 409 from 9:15-10:30am on Wednesdays. Students who need to meet at another time should speak to me in class or e-mail to set up an alternative time.

Required Reading:


Gray, Hanson & Kousser, Politics in the American States (10th ed.), Sage; CQ, 2013 (hereafter GHK).


Other readings for the course will be found on Blackboard. I encourage you not to fall behind in the readings since not all the material in the readings will be covered in class.
On examinations, you will be responsible for lecture remarks as well as all the readings (even if not discussed in class). You should pay particular attention to terms and new concepts as you read.

**Educational Goals:**

Students in this course should come away with an understanding of the following, among other things:

- The history, characteristics, and fundamental role of federalism and intergovernmental relations in U.S. politics;
- What the “community power” debate was about and its legacy;
- What contemporary forces (cultural, economic, and technological) are acting on cities and states and how jurisdictions respond to them;
- Some provocative claims about how changing ways of life, especially among the youngest age cohorts, and changing patterns of work influence the nature of urban communities and their prospects for economic development.

**Grading:**

- Two exams (mid-term—worth 30% of your grade; final—worth 40% of your grade). Exams will include some combination of identification, short answer, and essay questions.

- Paper (worth 15%) on a controversial policy issue at the state level (1,500-2,000 words) which will be due on Feb. 4. I would like you to examine a current controversy being played out in state politics—whether to legalize marijuana. Your paper should be typed, double-spaced, and between 1,500 and 2,000 words. I expect you to cite five (5) sources in your paper, three of which must be academic books or articles. Note: Wikipedia is not an acceptable source for your paper. Late papers will be reduced by one letter grade.

- Seven unannounced quizzes (your best five will count toward your final grade) that will cover the required readings. There are no make-up quizzes. If you miss a quiz, you will receive a score of zero.

**Academic Integrity:**

All graded examinations and assignments are to be completed in a manner conforming to The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity ([http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/pdf/CodeofAcademicIntegrity.pdf](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/pdf/CodeofAcademicIntegrity.pdf), in particular see Article II, Section I of the Code).
Disability Support:

Any student who needs, or feels they may need, accommodation for this class based on the potential impact of a disability is encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office at 202-994-8250 or visit them in Rome Hall, Suite 102. NOTE: To establish eligibility for accommodations, you must go through DSS first. Once that is done, I am more than happy to work with you regarding reasonable and suitable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/.

University Counseling Center (UCC):

The University Counseling Center offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Their phone number is 202-994-5300. See also:

- Their academic success center: http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/asc
- Their main website: http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel

Writing Centers:

Your tuition pays for free writing instruction, so taking advantage of it is wise:

- The Writing Center in Gelman Library: http://www.gwu.edu/gwriter/
- If English is not your native language, you should investigate free writing resources and assistance at the Language Center at Phillips Hall 210B: http://www.gwu.edu/~language/ (click on “English for Academic Purposes (EAP)” and “EAP Writing Support Program”).
- Excellent resources also exist at the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/ and at the Dartmouth Writing Program: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/index.html

Schedule of Readings/Exams:

Mon., Jan. 14:  Course Introduction; States in Context  
GHK, Ch. 1

Wed., Jan. 16:  States in Context  
GHK, Ch. 2

Mon., Jan. 21:  No class
Wed., Jan. 23  Fiscal Concerns
    GHK, Ch. 10

Mon., Jan. 28:  Parties and Elections
    GHK, Ch. 3

Wed., Jan. 30:  Interest Groups
    GHK, Ch. 4; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady

Mon., Feb. 4: Initiative Process and Morality Politics
    GHK, Ch. 5 & 14; papers due.

Wed., Feb. 6: Legislative Politics
    GHK, Ch. 6

Mon., Feb. 11: Governors
    GHK, Ch. 7

Wed., Feb. 13: Judiciary
    GHK, Ch. 8

Mon., Feb. 18: no class

Wed., Feb. 20: Welfare
    GHK, Ch. 11

Mon., Feb. 25: Education
    GHK, Ch. 12

Wed., Feb. 27: Demographics; Why Cities?
    JS, Ch. 1 & 2

Mon., Mar. 4: Mid-term Exam

Wed., Mar. 6: Community Power: Elitism and Pluralism
    Judge, “Pluralism”; Bachrach & Baratz, “Two Faces of Power”


Mon., Mar. 18: Economic Determinism and Politics
    Peterson, *City Limits*; Stone, Orr & Imburscio, “The Reshaping of Urban Leadership in U.S. Cities”
Wed., Mar. 20: Federalism and the City  
JS, Ch. 5

Mon., Mar. 25: Federalism and the City  
JS, Ch. 12

Wed., Mar. 27: Urban Machine and Reform  
JS, Ch. 3 & 4

Mon., Apr. 1: Urban Crisis I  
JS, Ch. 6 & 7

Wed., Apr. 3: Urban Crisis II  
JS, Ch. 8 & 9

Mon., Apr. 8: Governance and the Fragmented City  
JS, Ch. 10 & 11

Wed., Apr. 10: 21st Century Urban Governance  
JS, Ch. 13 & 14 (pp. 385-98); Hyra, “Conceptualizing the New Urban Renewal”

Mon., Apr. 15: DC as a Governance Challenge, Community Organizing, and Social Movements  
Orr and Rivlin; JS, Ch. 14 (pp. 398-409); Swarts, “Which Cities Adopt Living Wage Ordinances?”

Wed., Apr. 17: Progressive Politics  
Rosdil, The Cultural Contradictions of Progressive Politics

Mon., Apr. 22: The Creative Class—Who/Where Are They and Are They a Class?  
Florida, Ch. 1, 3-5, 8, 11 & 14; Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto

Florida, Ch. 9-10, 12 & 15

Mon., Apr. 29: The Dark Side of the Creative Class  
Putnam, Bowling Alone, Ch.1; Florida, Ch. 14 (pp. 283-287) & 16-17; DC statistics

Wed., May 1: Exam Review