State and Local Government
POL 305-800E

Course Description: This course is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of how public policy is formulated and political decisions are made by state and local governments. This course will examine the general principles of federalism as that process impacts upon state and local governments. That examination will explore the relationships and factors that impact upon state and local electoral politics, political institutions, and public policies. We will investigate the impact those factors have had on state-wide politics, local politics, regional politics and state-local relations. As part of that examination the course will analyze in greater depth a sampling of state and local governments.

Instructional Process: Instruction employs a seminar format with the utilization of multiple print and media sources. Students are expected to participate in the class discussion and in a variety of educational tasks which reflect the varied skills and disciplines essential to policy analysis and learning in an age of diverse information and complex challenges.

Professor: Dr. Michael Ruddy

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Important: e-mail is the course’s primary mode of communication.

Note: Please list course number in subject line.


Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30-5:50 pm; Thursdays 2:30-3:45 pm in 212 Mahar office.

Office Location: Room 212 Mahar

Mail: Campus - Political Science Department, 435 Mahar Hall

Web site: www.oswego.edu/~ruddy

E-mail address: michael.ruddy@oswego.edu

Telephones: During Office Hours Only: 312-3414 Or to leave message: 312-2350

Course Objectives: Students will be able to:

(1) Know the terminology, definitions, and basic functions of the political process as it pertains to federalism and selected state and local governments;

(2) Demonstrate a working knowledge of the significant events in the creation and evolution of federalism including social, cultural and historical factors and components;

(3) Know the major issues currently facing state and local governments;

(4) Know the basic challenges facing state and local governments in the 21st Century;
(5) Recognize the influence of institutions outside the respective governments in the formulation of public policy;

(6) Appraise, on the basis of readings, discussions, and reflection, the strengths and weaknesses of the political process which formulates public policy within the federal system and in selected states;

(7) Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the individual as a citizen in the process of solving public policy problems at the state and local level;

(8) Demonstrate the skills needed to collect and process information from diverse sources;

(9) Demonstrate research skills necessary for the study of state and local governments;

(10) Demonstrate the skills needed to produce a policy or political process analysis paper.

**Student Requirements:**

(1) **Attendance:** Attendance is taken at every class. Each student is expected to attend every class. Students are allowed two full class unexcused absences before five points for each absence is deducted from the attendance/participation point total. Students experiencing attendance problems must consult with the instructor. Acquiring information or fulfilling work missed by the student due to absences is the sole responsibility of the student.

(2) **Tardiness:** 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.

(3) **Early Departure:** 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.

(4) **Conduct:** As reported in the media last year, there have been public forums where confrontational, rude and even sometimes threatening behavior during public discussions and debates were tolerated, if not encouraged. That will not be the case in this class. In this class all participants in discourse will both practice courtesy and receive respect, conduct essential to exercise democracy.

(5) **Attentiveness:** Students must be fully attentive at all times; i.e., no use of cell phones or audio devices, no unauthorized Internet activity, no reading other material, and no sleeping.

(6) **Cheating:** No form of cheating will be tolerated. Students involved as either the initiator or the accomplice will receive no credit for the quiz or exam.

(7) **Plagiarism:** No form of plagiarism is to be tolerated! Any student found to have plagiarized material is to receive no credit for the assignment involved, regardless of the proportion of the plagiarized material to the overall work. Additionally, all subsequent materials submitted by the student are presumed to be similarly plagiarized and evidence of original research must be submitted to receive credit for those assignments. **Note:** Students found plagiarizing material will be reported to the department and the academic dean for discipline.
EVALUATION:

Testing: There are two regular exams, a mid-term and a final. The exams cover the preceding lessons, including the primary text readings, class notes, lectures, secondary text readings, current events articles and videos. Questions are divided between essay and multiple choice. Absence from an exam requires either permission prior to the absence or an excuse from a medical professional, written on medical script. Exams missed must be made up during office hours within a week of return to class.

Class Participation: Each student is expected attend every class and to contribute to the discussions of the class in a constructive manner. This means reading the required material before class and participating in any discussions, debates, or teacher inquiries.

Written Projects: All written assignments must be word processor printed on standard-sized white paper, double-spaced, and conform to either American Psychological Association Style or Chicago Manual of Style. Margins must be 1.25" on the top and left, and 1.00" on the bottom and right. Fonts must be 12 point with no use of script styles. Proper grammar and correct spelling are required; any paper not conforming will be returned for correction and re-submission with corrections made. Hand written papers will not be accepted. For all projects counting a page means the entire page is filled.

Article Reviews: Each student is required to write 2-5 page reviews four at least four of the assigned articles which are found in various publications including peer-reviewed periodicals or journals.

Oral Class Presentation: Each student is required to lead the class discussion for a forty minute segment of one class. The presentation must include a significant PowerPoint component.

Analysis Paper: Each student is required to develop a written analysis of a topic in federalism or state and local government. The paper must be a minimum of fifteen full pages (including notes and bibliography) and no more than twenty pages and conform to the standards discussed under “Written Projects.” Students are encouraged to select, in consultation with the instructor, an educational policy which interests them and about which the student can readily find valid information. Students are permitted to incorporate other assignments into furthering the research for this paper.

Paper Proposal: Each student is required to submit a proposal 1-2 page proposal detailing the topic of their policy analysis paper and why that topic is relevant to the study of state and local government. The student must provide in specific detail what sources they will use, and what analytical model they will employ to analyze the case. The topic must be approved by the instructor to proceed.

Paper Outline: Each student is required to submit a 3-6 page outline of the policy analysis paper. The outline form required must conform to one of major styles used for scholarly research papers.

Size of Individual Pages: Each written assignment has a specified minimum length describe as pages. For a page to count as a full page it must be double-spaced within the standard margins on all sides.

Late Assignments: Assignments not submitted on time will be deducted 10% for each class it is late.

Extra Credit: There may be opportunities to earn extra credit but the assignment must be proposed by the instructor and conform strictly to the analysis paper guidelines.
Disabilities: Any student diagnosed during elementary or secondary school as having a disability, a learning disability, or if you have not been diagnosed but you believe you are experiencing inexplicable or inordinate difficulty, you should refer to the Disability Services website.

Point Values:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Article Reviews</td>
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<td>Class Presentation</td>
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<td>Paper Proposal</td>
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<td>Paper Outline</td>
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<td>Analysis Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grades:

- 280-300 = A
- 260-269 = B+
- 250-259 = B
- 240-249 = B-
- 230-239 = C+
- 220-229 = C
- 210-219 = C-
- 200-209 = D+
- 190-199 = D
- 180-189 = D-
- 0-179 = E

Important Notice

Website Notes: There will be an effort to post the basic outline of the class notes on this course’s section of the website:

www.oswego.edu/~ruddy

However: this accommodation should not be seen as a substitute for taking notes during class. In the event that the notes are not placed on the website or if there is a technology failure which prohibits access to the website edition of the notes, no steps will be taken to either offer an alternative source of the notes or to alter or postpone testing. In short, attend class, take notes, and use the website notes as merely a check on your own note taking or for emergencies.

Schedule of Classes

Week One

Tuesday – August 28 – (1) Administrative Tasks (2) Lecture Topic: Course Introduction

Thursday – August 30 – (1) Discussion Topic: A Brief History of Federalism; Reading assignment: What is Federalism? http://www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/csls/CSLSpeakerseries/Federalism.Chapter1.pdf
Week Two

**Tuesday – September 4** – Documentary film on national issues impacting local government & politics

**Thursday – September 6** – (1) Discussion Topic: Which is More Powerful, State or Federal Governments? [Part 1]; (2) Reading assignment: Magleby & Light, Chapter 1.

Week Three

**Tuesday – September 11** – (1) Discussion Topic: Which is More Powerful, State or Federal Governments? [Part 2]; (2) Reading assignment: Smith, Readings #3 & 4.

**Thursday – September 13** – (1) Discussion Topic: State Constitutions [Part 1]; (2) Reading assignment: Magleby & Light, Chapter 2.

Week Four

**Tuesday – September 18** – *No Class – Monday Schedule*

**Thursday – September 22** – (1) Discussion Topic: State Constitutions [Part 2]; Reading assignment: Smith, Readings #1 & 2.

Week Five

**Tuesday – September 25** – (1) Presentation & Discussion Topic: [I] A Short Political History of Maryland; [II] The State Constitution of Maryland. (2) Reading assignment: Magleby & Light, Ch. 4.

**Thursday – September 27** – (1) Documentary film on urban politics; (2) Reading assignment: Smith, Readings #5, 6, & 7.

Week Six

**Tuesday – October 2** – (1) Assignment Due: Paper Proposal; (2) Presentation & Discussion Topic: A Short Political History of Wisconsin. (3) Reading assignment: Magleby & Light, Chapter 5.


Week Seven

**Tuesday – October 9** – (1) Assignment Due: Article #1; (2) Presentation & Discussion Topic: A Short Political History of Texas Politics; (3) Reading assignment: Magleby & Light, Chapter 6.

**Thursday – October 11** – (1) Presentation & Discussion Topic: The Constitution of Texas; (2)
Reading assignment: Smith, Readings #11, 12 & 13.

Week Eight

Tuesday – October 16 – Documentary Film on Texas Politics.

Thursday–October 18 – Review and discussion for Mid-Term Exam.

Week Nine

Tuesday– October 23 – Mid-Term Exam

Thursday – October 25 – Documentary film on state referendum politics.

Week Ten

Tuesday– October 30 – (1) Assignment Due: Article #2; (2) Presentation & Discussion Topic: A Short Political History of California; (3) Reading assignments: Magleby & Light., Chapter 7.


Week Eleven

Tuesday – November 6 – (1) Assignment Due: Paper Outline; (2) Presentation & Discussion Topic: The Governor and Legislature of Maryland; (3) Reading assignment: Magleby & Light, Chapter 8.

Thursday – November 8 – (1) Presentation & Discussion Topic: The Governor and Legislature of Wisconsin; (2) Reading assignment: Smith, Readings #15, 16 & 17.

Week Twelve

Tuesday – November 13– (1) Assignment Due: Article #3; (2) Presentation & Discussion Topic: The Governor and Legislature of Texas; (3) Reading assignment: Magleby & Light, Chapter 9.

Thursday – November 15 – (1) Presentation & Discussion Topic: The Governor and Legislature of California; (2) Reading assignment: Smith, Readings #18, 19 & 20.

Week Thirteen

Tuesday– November 20 – (1) Documentary Film; (2) Reading assignment: Smith, Readings #21, 22, 23, 24, 25 & 26.

Thursday– November 22 –  No class – Thanksgiving Holiday
Week Fourteen

Tuesday– November 27 – (1) Assignment Due: Article #4; (2) Presentation & Discussion Topics: [I] The Structure of the Government of Maryland; [II] The Structure of the Government of Wisconsin; (3) Reading assignments: (3) Smith, Readings #27, 28, & 29.


Week Fifteen


Thursday – December 6 – (1) Presentation & Discussion Topics: [I] How the 2008 Financial Crisis Impacted Texas; [II] How the 2008 Financial Crisis Impacted California; (2) Exam Review

Week Sixteen

Monday, December 10 – Friday, December 14 – Exams