

**AMERICAN STATE AND LOCAL POLITICS**  
**PS 507**  
**Spring 2004 • MW 5:30 - 7:18pm**

Instructor: Elizabeth Kloss  
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Office Hours: 3046 Derby Hall  
MW 7:30 - 8:30pm or by appointment

**OVERVIEW**

This course will offer you many opportunities to learn more about state and local governmental systems in the United States and, more importantly, how state and local politics can and does affect all of us. In order to increase your understanding of the politics and processes of modern governing, the first goal of this course is to introduce you to goals of federalism. Secondly, we will discuss in some detail the institutions of government in the American states. Lastly, in this course, you will become familiar with some of the problems and challenges facing local and state governments in the United States.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Students should purchase the following three books which are all available at SBX on High Street.

*State and Local Politics: Government by the People, 11<sup>th</sup> edition*  
James MacGregor Burns et. al.  
Pearson/Prentice Hall 2004

*Governing: Issues and Applications from the Front Lines of Government*  
Alan Ehrenhalt, ed.  
CQ Press 2002

*Political Parties and Elections in American States, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*  
Malcolm Jewell and Sarah M. Morehouse  
CQ Press 2001

The Burns text will serve to cover the basics of state and local politics. The Ehrenhalt book contains articles about contemporary issues in state and local politics, which will help connect the subject of this course to real world problems and politics. The Jewell and Morehouse book will provide significant information about political parties and the election process in the American states, and will be useful as you work on your research paper. Students are expected to have read the assigned pages prior to the class for which they were assigned and attend class ready to actively participate in the learning process.

## EVALUATION

There are 100 points available in this course. Students will be evaluated as follows:

Exam 1:	25 points
Exam 2:	25 points
Research Paper:	35 points
Local Politics Report:	15 points

In addition, there will be several unannounced, "pop" quizzes, based on the assigned readings, throughout the quarter. Each of these quizzes will be worth 1 point of EXTRA CREDIT. No make-up quizzes will be offered. Class attendance and participation will also be taken into account at the margins when determining final grades.

## EXAMS

There will be an exam covering each half of the quarter. The second exam is not a comprehensive final, and will cover material from the second part of the class. The exams will be a mix of multiple choice (on scan-tron forms) and essay questions.

## STATE POLITICS RESEARCH PAPER

In this course, you will be expected to complete an 8 - 12 page research paper on any US state or territory, with the EXCEPTION of OHIO. In this paper, you will be expected to research your state to provide a comprehensive analysis of the key factors influencing the 2004 election in this particular state.

These research papers should cover the following points:

1. State institutional arrangement. Who has power over what? What are the rules governing the election cycle? How are these rules affecting the offices that are part of the 2004 election cycle?
2. What are the key issues/problems facing your state in 2004? What are people disagreeing about? Who is being held accountable? Who is really responsible?
3. Who are the players in electoral politics? What is the strength and importance of political parties, interest groups, unions, corporations and others in your state? What rules empower and constrain these political actors?
4. Which major state and local offices are being contested by multiple candidates in the primary and the general elections? By whom? Which are not? Why?
5. Your assessment of the "state" of your state. Predictions for the elections and the future of politics in your state.

Some states will certainly be "better" subjects for investigation than others, so I urge you to select your state carefully. Lack of information will not be an acceptable excuse for a poor paper, so it is in your best interest to spend some time investigating your choice

## LOCAL POLITICS ASSIGNMENT

To enhance your knowledge and understanding of local politics, students in this course are expected to conduct first-hand, independent research on a portion of local government and report on the experience. In other words, you need to attend an official, working function of local government, like a city council meeting, a zoning board meeting, a school board meeting. Any official function of a local governing body is acceptable as long as they have REAL power, meaning that they can make someone do something that they wouldn't otherwise do. For this assignment, the more local the better! If you are unsure if you have selected an appropriate subject for this investigation, please see me and we will figure it out together.

In your report on your fieldwork experience, I expect that you will cover the all of following points:

1. Subject of investigation. Official name of the governing body, its duties and date of meeting.
2. Players. Who are the power holders? How were they selected? Who do they affect?
3. Scope. What does this governing body do? What is it responsible for? Be specific!
4. What was discussed? What was decided? How many sides of issues were discussed? Who represented the different sides of the issues?
5. Your assessment. How "important" is this portion of local government. How well does it do its job? How well does it represent the people? How accessible is it to ordinary people?

To successfully complete this assignment, you will need to do some background research as well as attend a meeting. **DON'T WAIT TOO LONG TO START THIS ASSIGNMENT!** Many local governing bodies meet infrequently, so you want to determine your subject quickly in order to complete this assignment by the due date of MAY 5.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All written assignments are expected to be typed, doubled spaced with one inch margins and in a 10 or 12 point font. Acceptable fonts are CG Times or Times New Roman. Please number your pages and be sure that your paper is stapled before you turn it in. The clarity of your writing will affect the strength of your analyses and therefore students should proof-read and spell-check their work carefully.

Remember, you **must** cite any information and/or ideas that you take from someone else's work. Also note, you should limit your use of direct quotations (someone else's words surrounded by

“”) to the rare occasion when the original author has stated your point perfectly and it can not be improved. Otherwise, you are generally better off stylistically using your own words and citing the ideas and facts provided by other authors.

For citations, I prefer that students use the Scientific Style outlined in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. However, any citation method is acceptable as long as it is used correctly and consistently. For help with citations, I recommend you refer to this helpful web site: <http://www.lib.ohio-state.edu/guides/#citationguides> In addition, the fine people at the Library have created helpful citation “cheat sheets” which I have added to the end of this document.

**Written assignments and exams are expected to be completed on time, according to the class schedule, unless arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance or the student provides the instructor with a documented medical excuse. Hard copies of all papers should be turned in directly to the instructor. No electronic copies of any assignment will be accepted.**

#### ACADEMIC HONESTY

All of the work that students do in this course is expected to be their own. Cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas, including material from web sites, without proper citation) will not be tolerated. Any case of possible academic misconduct in the form of cheating or plagiarism will be reported automatically to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct and handled according to University policy.

#### ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking available assistance in a timely manner. It is best to do this during the first week of the course. Course materials can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

#### COURSE SYLLABUS

The following pages contain a topical outline for the course, the reading assignments for each topic and the schedule of assignments and due dates.

## SYLLABUS

WEEK 1: March 29 - April 2

### Course Introduction and Federalism

- M: Course Introduction.
- W: Burns et. al. - chap. 1, pp.1 - 13 and chap.10, pp. 183 - 199  
Ehrenhalt - #s 2 - 8, pp. 6 - 34

WEEK 2: April 5 - 9

### Federalism and State Constitutions

- M: Burns et. al. - chap. 2, pp.14 - 37  
Ehrenhalt - #s 29, 31, pp 119 -124, 129 - 130
- W: Burns et. al. - chap. 3, pp. 38 - 50

WEEK 3: April 12 -16

### Political Parties and Elections

- M: Burns et. al. - chap. 4, pp. 52 - 71  
Jewell and Morehouse - chap 3, pp. 47 -99
- W: Jewell and Morehouse - chap 4, pp. 100 - 140

WEEK 4: April 19 - 23

### Finish Elections

- M: Jewell and Morehouse - chap 5, pp. 141 - 175
- W: **1<sup>st</sup> EXAM**

WEEK 5: April 26 - 30

### State Legislatures

- M: Burns et. al. - chap. 5, pp. 72 - 95  
Ehrenhalt - #s 33, 36, pp. 132 - 135, 141 - 142
- W: Jewell and Morehouse - chaps. 7 - 8, pp. 201 - 252

WEEK 6: May 3 - 7

Governors

- M: Burns et. al. - chap. 6, pp. 96 - 115  
W: **LOCAL POLITICS REPORT DUE**  
Jewell and Morehouse - chap. 6, pp. 176 - 201

WEEK 7: May 10 - 14

Judges and Justice

- M: Burns et. al. - chap. 7, pp. 116 - 135  
W: Catch-up day

WEEK 8: May 17 - 21

Local Governments and Metropolitics

- M: Burns et. al. - chap. 8, pp.136 - 156  
W: Ehrenhalt - #s 1, 17, 23 - 26, 37, 39  
pp. 1 - 2, 64 - 68, 92 - 109, 144- 148, 152 - 156

WEEK 9: May 26 - 30

Making State and Local Policy

- M: Burns et. al. - chap. 9, pp.158 - 181  
W: Ehrenhalt - #s 16, 22, 27 - 28, 38  
pp. 58 - 62, 87 - 91, 110 - 118, 149 - 151

WEEK 10: May 31 - June 4

- M: Memorial Day - No Class  
W: **2<sup>nd</sup> EXAM**

**MONDAY, JUNE 7 -  
RESEARCH PAPER DUE at 5:30**