

Political Science 4126
Ohio Politics
Autumn 2013
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Syllabus

This course will examine the formal institutions of Ohio government—executive, legislative, and judicial—and the political processes and actors that shape Ohio politics and policies—elections, political parties and interest groups. The course begins with a discussion of various factors that shape and constrain the choices available to our elected leaders. These include the Ohio Constitution, Ohio’s political culture, Ohio’s population distribution, Ohio’s changing economy, and Ohio’s relationship with the federal government. We next examine the executive, legislative and judicial branches of Ohio government. We will devote substantial attention to the Ohio budget process as well as to specific public policy issues such as the funding and regulation of primary and secondary education and of higher education. We will also examine briefly the structure and functions of local governments in Ohio. Finally, we will discuss the 2013-2014 election cycle in Ohio and the role of political parties and interest groups..

Students should gain from the course a basic knowledge of the nuts and bolts of Ohio government. More importantly, students should be able to analyze the performance of Ohio’s government, explaining how and why Ohio government has performed effectively and ineffectively.

Course Requirements

There will be a midterm exam, a final exam, and a paper; each counts one-third of the final grade. Students are, of course, expected to keep up with the readings and are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions. The paper assignment is described at the end of the syllabus; note that there are three options for the paper.

Books

There are four required texts for the course; all are available in used copies (check Amazon.com for some inexpensive prices). Additional materials will be distributed in class or available on the Internet (including Columbus Dispatch special reports available at Dispatch.com).

Dennis Dresang and James Gosling, Politics and Policy in American States and Communities, any recent edition, Pearson Education, Inc.

Alexander Lamis and Brian Usher (eds.), Ohio Politics, revised and updated edition, Kent State University Press, 2007.

Michael Curtin, The Ohio Politics Almanac, 2nd edition, Kent State University Press, 2007.

Geoffrey Parker et al. (eds.), Ohio and the World, 1753-2053, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005.

To retrieve the Dispatch articles, go to Dispatch.com, go to “news” in the main menu, and then click on “special reports” which will give you a list of the most recent special reports. If necessary, click on “next” to see additional reports.

Academic Misconduct

All of the work you do in this class will of course be your own. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and will be handled according to university policy.

Disability

Please let me know whether you need any accommodation because of a disability. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodation and in developing appropriate responses. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so.

Reading Assignments

August 21 Introduction and Overview

Dresang and Gosling, chapter 1
Parker et al., “Introduction,” pp. 1-21
Curtin, chapter 1
Lamis and Usher, chapters 1, 2

August 26 The Ohio Constitution and 28

Dresang and Gosling, chapter 4
Curtin, chapter 7

Sept. 2 Labor Day—No Class

Sept. 4, 9 Ohio’s Regional, Economic and Political Environment and 11

Dresang and Gosling, chapter 2
Curtin, chapter 9
Parker et al., chapters 2, 5, 6, and 7

Sept. 16,18 Federalism and Ohio Politics

Driesang and Gosling, chapter 3

Sept. 23,25 The Governor and the Executive Branch

Driesand and Gosling, chapters 9 and 12
Lamis and Usher, chapters 3 through 11, 17
Curtin, chapter 4 (skim)

- Sept. 30 Redistricting**
Materials to be distributed
- Oct. 2, 7 The State Legislature; Ohio and Congress**
Dresang and Gosling, chapter 10
Lamis and Usher, chapters 12, 13, and 14
Curtin, chapter 5
- Oct. 9, 14 The State Budget Process**
Dresang and Gosling, chapters 5, 18
- Oct. 16, 21 Education in Ohio—Primary, Secondary, Higher**
Dresang and Gosling, chapter 15
- Oct. 23 Policy Areas: Corrections, Health and Social Welfare, Environment, Jobs and Economic Development**
Dresang and Gosling, chapter 14, 16, 17 ”
- Oct. 28, 30 The Judicial Branch**
Dresang and Gosling, chapter 13
Lamis and Usher, chapters 15 and 16
Curtin, chapter 6
- Nov. 4, 6 Local and County Government**
Dresang and Gosling, chapter 11
Curtin, chapter 10, 11
- Nov. 11 Veteran’s Day—No Class**
- Nov. 13, 18 Political Parties and Interest Groups**
Dresang and Gosling, chapters 7 and 8
Lamis and Usher, chapter 18
Parker et al., chapter 4
- Nov. 20,25 Campaigns and Elections**
Dresang and Gosling, chapters 6
Lamis and Usher, chapters 19, 20
Curtin, chapters 2, 8, 9
- Nov. 27 Day before Thanksgiving—No Class**
- Dec. 2 Ohio’s Performance; Reform; Wrap Up**
Dresang and Gosling, chapter 19
Lamis and Usher, chapter 21

Paper Assignment Option #1

You are to write an analysis of the economic health of your home county covering the period from 1970 through 2011. You should also compare your home county to the state of Ohio as a whole so that you can address the question of how your county is doing relative to the entire state. If you are not from Ohio and want to do this paper, use Franklin County as your home county.

One indicator of economic health that you must examine is the unemployment rate in the county and the state. In addition, you must examine three other measures or indicators that might reflect the economic health of the county and the state. You will decide which three indicators to analyze. Your paper should make a number of comparisons. You should analyze how the county has done over time; the same analysis should be done for the state. You should also compare the county directly with the state over the 1970-2011 period.

The paper is due Tuesday, May 29. The paper should not exceed 8 double-spaced typed pages. Because the paper covers a 41 year span, you will need to devise efficient ways of presenting, describing, and commenting on your results. Charts, tables, and graphs might be good ways to present your data and results. Do not let your paper become simply a set

of numbers and statistics. Instead, make sure you provide discussion about the patterns and trends you uncover.

This is a challenging assignment so make sure you get started in a timely fashion. The paper will require you to make many choices about the kinds of data and evidence that are relevant to the assignment. Feel free to talk to me about the paper. Late papers will be penalized.

Let me suggest a few sources to get you started. Check out <http://lmi.state.oh.us> for labor market information. You might also do a Google search on Ohio County Profiles. There are many other sources available.

Paper Assignment Option #2

You are to write a political/election history of your home county covering the period from 1976 through 2010. You should also compare your home county to the state of Ohio as a whole. If you are not from Ohio and wish to do this assignment, use Franklin County as your home county.

Your political/election history should focus only on contests for Governor and President in this time period. In focusing on gubernatorial and presidential races, you will first want to examine the vote choices (Democrat vs. Republican) made by citizens in the county and the state. How Republican or how Democratic is your home county? How has this changed over time? How does your home county compare with Ohio as a whole? In addition to addressing whether your county voted Democratic vs. Republican, you must also examine the turnout in the county and the state. What is the turnout rate for the county and the state? How has this changed over time? Finally, what share of the total state vote does your county cast? How has this changed over time?

The paper is due Tuesday, May 29. The paper should not exceed 8 double-spaced typed pages. Because the paper covers a thirty-four year span and is limited to 8 pages, you

will need to devise efficient ways of presenting, describing and commenting on your results. Charts, tables, and graphs might be good ways to present your data and results. Do **not** let your paper become simply a set of numbers and statistics. Instead, make sure you provide discussion about the patterns and trends you uncover.

This is a challenging assignment so make sure you get started in a timely fashion. Feel free to talk to me about the paper. Late papers will be penalized.

One good source for Ohio election data is the website of the Secretary of State of Ohio. There are also books (Ohio Election Statistics) published by the Secretary of State's office.

Paper Assignment Option #3

You are to describe the taxing and spending policies of three government jurisdictions: your home county, your local public school district, and your home municipality (a city, township, village or whatever). You should describe the major funding (taxes, fees, other) sources for the general funds (operating) budget for all three jurisdictions. Also examine how the funding sources have changed over the last 20 years, perhaps by examining jurisdiction budgets every four years for the past twenty years. Make sure you indicate how the budget has changed over time with respect its size (dollars) and sources of those dollars.

Next, you are to describe how the budget dollars are spent in these three governmental jurisdictions. What are the major spending areas? How have these changed over time? Try to identify broader spending categories and see how their share of the budget has changed over time. Examine a twenty year period, perhaps by examining jurisdiction budgets every four years.

If you are from Ohio, analyze your home school district, your home county, and your home municipality. If you are not from Ohio, then use Franklin County, Columbus, and the Columbus school district as your three jurisdictions. The paper is due Tuesday, May

29. It should not exceed 8 double-spaced typed pages. You will need to devise efficient ways of presenting, describing and commenting on your results. Charts, tables, and graphs might be good ways to present your data and results. Do **not** let your paper become simply a set of numbers and statistics. Instead, make sure you provide discussion about the patterns and trends you uncover.

This is a challenging assignment so make sure you get started in a timely fashion. Feel free to talk to me about the paper. Late papers will be penalized.