

PLS 2603 - State and Local Government/Politics
Eastern Illinois University
Spring 2009
T Th 12:30-1:45
Coleman 2210

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COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course aims at highlighting the mechanisms and complexities of American government and politics at the state and local levels. This survey course hopes to expose students to some theoretical approaches within the field, focusing upon important issues and debates in American politics at the state and local level. This course will enable the student to understand the workings of state and local governments, and in doing so, broaden the student's ability to interpret the workings of state politics in the communities in which they live. This course is also designed to provide you with the most useful up-to-date assessment of state and local politics. The states and their localities have increasingly played a more significant and visible role in American politics and thus need to be critically examined. Historical and contemporary contexts, federal-state relations, privatization, state-local dynamics, state and regional comparisons, political economy, interests, and politics in Illinois will be a few of the recurring themes in the course. Perhaps most importantly, the course will help students better understand and appreciate what it means to be a civic leader.

REQUIRED READINGS:

The basic materials for this course, which are required of every student, are:

(1) Dresang and Gosling, Politics and Policy in American States and Communities, 6th ed.,

(2) The Chicago Tribune (read this daily!!) The Tribune can be found on-line at:
<http://www.chicagotribune.com>

OFFICE HOURS: My office is located in Coleman Hall room 2033. Normal office hours are T TR 10:45-12:00, and W 8:00-10:00. Other hours are available during the week by appointment. My office phone is: 581-8418. If you wish to reach me via Email, which is the easiest way to contact me, my e-mail address is: jsashley@eiu.edu.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Be here

EVALUATION:

Examinations:

There will be three exams throughout the semester (including the final which will not be cumulative). Each exam will be worth 100 points for a total of 300 points.

Make-up exams will be allowed only for excused absences. They will normally be more difficult and will be administered only in the last week of classes. Failure to take an exam

or make it up at the appropriate time will result in a zero. Religious holidays, family deaths, and medical excuses that can be validated are the only obvious acceptable excuses for missing exams, presentations, and class.

Quizzes:

There will be weekly quizzes over assigned readings. The quizzes will add up to 50 points over the course of the semester.

Presentations:

Students are to give two separate presentations to the class and turn in an outline and summary of each one to me (details at end of syllabus). The first presentation (and documentation) is worth 50 points, and the second presentation is worth 25 points for a total of 75 points.

GRADING:

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

“A” =	90-100%
“B” =	80-89%
“C” =	70-79%
“D” =	60-69%
“F” =	below 60%

EXTRA CREDIT: Students may earn extra credit by attending public lectures of visiting speakers at EIU (or in the outside community) on topics directly related to state and local government and local issues over the course of the semester and writing a summary and critique of the lecture. These critiques should be typed and doubled-spaced and must be one to two pages in length. Be sure to give the name of the speaker, the title of the lecture, and the date of the presentation at the top of the first page. Each student critique is worth up to five (5) points. No more than twenty (20) extra points may be earned in this fashion. Critiques must be turned into the instructor no later than one week (7 calendar days) after the lecture is given.

CLASS SCHEDULE: The following should be considered a class reading schedule. If you keep up with these readings on the dates assigned, you will never be behind. Please take into consideration that this is a tentative course outline and is subject to change as determined by the instructor.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1	1/12	Introduction	Chapter 1
2	1/19	State Diversity Federalism	Chapters 2&3
3	1/26	Constitutions and Charters Policy-Making Processes	Chapters 4&5
4	2/2	Exam #1 on Thursday (over ch. 1-5)	

5	2/9	Governors State Legislatures	Chapters 9&10
6	2/16	Local Governments Bureaucracies	Chapters 11&12
7	2/23	Courts *No class Thursday – MIG	Chapter 13
8	3/2	Exam #2 on Tuesday (over ch. 9-13) *No class Thursday – conference	
9	3/9	Start issue presentations (all written materials due Tues.)	
10	3/16	Spring Break	
11	3/23	Issue presentations	
12	3/30	Participation Parties and Interests	Chapters 6,7&8
13	4/6	Crime & Correction Policy Education Policy	Chapters 14 & 15
14	4/13	Social Welfare and Health Policy *No class Tuesday – SURS	Chapter 16
15	4/20	Environmental Policy & Regulation bill presentations (<i>all written materials due on Thurs.</i>)	Chapter 17
16	4/27	bill presentations	
17		FINALS WEEK – check final exam schedule for exact time.	

****please note that this syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion!!!***

University Policies

Learning Disabilities/Physical Challenges Policy

Students with disabilities who require special accommodation are encouraged to meet with the instructor during the first week of class. For further assistance or information, please contact the EIU Office of Disability Services at 581-6583.

Student Assistance

The purpose of both the EIU Counseling Center and the EIU Learning Assistance Center is to help you obtain maximum educational benefit from your time here. The support offered enables students to obtain help for both academic and personal problems. The Learning Assistance Center (581-6696) can help with individual tutoring for academic needs. The Counseling Center (581-3413) has a staff available to assist you with any personal problems which might arise. College can be a very stressful experience, and I would encourage anyone to take advantage of these services when they feel the need.

Academic Integrity

The university takes an extremely serious view of violations of academic integrity. As members of the academic community, EIU's administration, faculty, staff, and students are dedicated to promoting an atmosphere of honesty and are committed to maintaining the academic integrity essential to the educational process. Inherent in this commitment is the belief that academic dishonesty in all forms violates the basic principles of integrity and impedes learning.

It is the responsibility of individual faculty members to identify instances of academic dishonesty and recommend penalties to the department chair or college dean in keeping with the severity of the violation. At a minimum, academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for this course.

PLS 2603 – State and Local Politics/Government Presentation Guidelines

- a. both presentations will be 4-5 minutes in length
- b. each presentation must be polished, concise, and well presented

- c. each presentation must fit the length requirement (practice and time it)
- d. each presentation will require supporting documentation (see below) which will be graded for clarity, spelling, and grammar.

1. Issue Presentation

Each student will give a short presentation presenting support for one side of a particular issue (from the assigned list). Points will be deducted for those who make a half-hearted effort to present this view point and laugh at the ideas presented. The bottom line is that I want you to try and convince us that this position is correct (even if you do not believe it). Also, remember that this is a class on state and local politics so attempt to bring the issue down to this level where possible.

For the issue presentation you *must hand in* the following:

- a. an outline of the presentation
- b. an annotated bibliography listing a minimum of ten varied sources used in preparing the presentation. Each entry should include the full citation, a summary of the main point/points of the work, and how this source was useful to you in conducting the research and preparing the presentation.

2. Bill Presentation

Each student will select a bill from the Illinois Senate or House and track its progress from the beginning of the semester until the time of the presentation. I want you to look for the following:

- a. what is the bill supposed to do?
- b. who sponsored and supported the bill?
 - why?
- c. what happened to the bill?
 - why?

*the “why” question is the heart of the matter and will require you to start thinking in political terms. Who does the bill help, who does it hurt? Why would it get support or die?

For the bill presentation you *must hand in* the following:

- a. an outline of the presentation
- b. a short summary of what the bill is about and what happened to it.

