PSCI 336 01W American State and Local Govt
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2017

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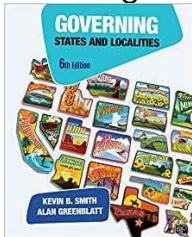
Online Course Time Zone: U.S. Central Time

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

Smith, Kevin B. and Alan Greenblatt. 2017.
Governing States and Localities (6th ed).
Washington, DC: CQ Press (ISBN: 978-1506360263).

Textbook Cover Photograph

Textbook Readings. Given the vast amount of information available in the course, we will not have enough time to "cover" all of the readings in the assigned book—chapter by chapter. Consequently, this course will depend on you to **complete all assigned readings** and be prepared to discuss them in online class in a timely manner. Please note that all assigned readings are critically important for successfully completing exams and class activities.

Course Description

This course introduces students to how sub-national governmental entities operate in the United States and the impact that these political systems and

processes have on representation and public policy creation. Students will focus on the government institutions and political behavior in the states and their localities. The study of state and local politics is inherently comparative in nature. This course takes advantage of the variation among and within states and localities.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course

1. Students will understand and use appropriately a variety of concepts necessary to describe, interpret, and explain the differences of politics, policy, and government institutions around the country.
2. Students will identify how political systems operate in the United States and how they vary among the states.
3. Students will analyze the effects of these differences among the states.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

1. Complete all course readings for each module of the course.
2. Regularly check the course site for announcement and updates.
3. Complete assigned readings.
4. Take each of the scheduled exams.
5. Participate fully in the class discussion.
6. Complete class activities.
7. Write reflection papers.
8. Students will respect their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and respect in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
9. All students will maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty. Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, on either exams or discussion assignments will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an internet source, or another student. Violations of academic integrity/honesty while carrying out academic assignments

may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a zero on the particular work in question, receive an "F" in the course and may result in significant administrative penalties.

10. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.

11. Failure to complete two of any discussion, assignment, or activity will be considered "excessive" absenteeism and the student will be administratively dropped from the class.

GRADING

This course occurs in a digital learning environment designed in module format. Each module runs around a week during which time you will be expected to read assigned material, participate in discussions, complete class activities, and take midterm exams. Each module opens and closes on a certain date and once a module closes it will not be opened again. Therefore you need to demonstrate a level of time management that allows you to meet deadlines as posted.

Midterm Exams: 240 Points (40% of total course grade)
Exam Format
Students will take three midterm exams that feature 40 multiple choice questions. 60 minutes are allotted for exam.

Exam Times and Dates
Midterm exams will be taken online and are scheduled on the dates listed below. The midterm exam will begin at **11:59 PM on Saturday** and will close 72 hours later at **11:59 PM on Tuesday**.

Midterm Exam #1
 Opens 9/30
 Due 10/3
 Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

Midterm Exam #2
 Opens 10/28
 Due 10/31
 Covers Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10

Midterm Exam #3
 Opens 12/2
 Due 12/5
 Covers Chapters 11, 12, 14, 16

Technical Issues: Students will take midterm exams via the course page. Students are responsible for testing the compatibility of their own computers and software prior to starting the exam and must be sure to have a high speed internet connection to eliminate the chance of technical problems. Exams are timed and can only be taken once. Once the exam has begun, the allotted time will begin counting down and students will not be able to "pause" or put the exam time on hold, even if they disconnect from the course site or exam. Students should save their answers frequently by clicking on the "Save Answers" button. Students should not click the "Submit Test" button until they have completed the exam as it will not be possible to re-enter the exam once the test has been submitted. Students who encounter technical problems as a result of failing to comply with these guidelines will not be given an opportunity to re-take or re-access an exam. Any technical problems should be immediately referred to the help desk.

Make Up Exams
If a student misses a midterm exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be made in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 3 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request during that time period. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and/or legal obligations. Technical problems with accessing the course will not be considered a valid excuse for missing an exam unless it can be shown that the problem is the fault of the eCollege platform.

Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.

Class Discussion: 120 Points (20% of total course grade)
This is the second graded component of the course and will consist of six discussions. Topics for the discussion will be posted on **Wednesday each module at 9 AM**. Each discussion thread will close at **11:59 PM on Tuesday next week of each module**. Regardless of the reason, there will be no make-up opportunities for discussion assignments and students will not receive any credit for posts made after the deadline.

The instructor will create a discussion thread topic for each discussion to which students are expected to compile responses.

Students will be graded upon two criteria. First, students are expected to submit an original response to the topic posted, answering all parts of the topic (one original post requiring 200-300 words in length). Second,

students are expected to respond to the posts of other students (at least two peer responses requiring at least 100 words each in length). Students should engage in conversation with their peer students in a thoughtful discussion about the topic as well as their individual responses to the topic. These posts should not be made all on the same day during the final hours of the discussion time line.

Students will receive a grade on each discussion assignment (Students who do not participate will receive a 0). Grades will be based both upon the quality of the content of a student's posts, as well as the student's engagement with other students by responding to posts. Posts that do not fully answer the questions or do not respond posted will not receive full credit. Students who wait until the end of the time frame may receive a grade penalty. **Discussion Posts cannot be made up. No late work accepted.**

o Post your discussion answers to respond to the discussion questions
    [Possible points (12 points x 6 Modules) = 72 points]
o Respond to classmates' postings
    [Possible points ((4 points x 2 responses) x 6 Modules) = 48 points]

Possible assigned points will be divided by the total number of discussion questions. For instance, if there are two discussion questions in the Module, 6 points will be assigned to original discussion for question #1 and remaining 6 points for questions #2. 4 points will be assigned to two responses for question #1 and remaining 4 points to two responses for question #2.

See the Guidelines/Rubric for Discussion Answer and Guidelines/Rubric for Responding Peer's Posting for the evaluation criteria (Will be placed in Doc Sharing under Course Document).

All content submitted for Discussion Assignments must be a student's original submission. Any material taken from another source, including the textbook, should include a proper citation. Material which is copied or pasted from any source will be considered plagiarism as discussed above in the Course Policies and Procedures section.

Class Activities: 96 points (16% of total course grade)
You will have an opportunity to do a variety of class activities which will include the best practices in American and Texas politics areas. More specific information will be provided later.

o Complete class activity [Possible points (12 points x 8 Modules) = 96 points]

Reflection Paper: 120 points (20% of total course grade)

You will write short reflection papers. Reflection paper will ask you to write a specific topic and issue. These will be a good opportunity for you to explore critical issues. These papers are required to write 3-4 page, typed, with one-inch margins, in Times New Roman, 12-point, double spaced. No late work will be accepted (also see in the Course Policies and Procedures section). Instructions with details on reflection papers will be distributed later.

o Write three reflection papers [Possible points (40 points x 3 papers) = 120 points]

Self-Assessment: 24 points (4% of total course grade)

You will assess your performance for each module.

o Complete self-assessment [Possible points (3 points x 8 Modules) = 24 points]

Summary of Assignments and Grading

Assignments	How Many	Point Value	Total Possible	Percent of Total
Midterm Exams	3	80	240 points	40%
Discussion	6	20	120 points	20%
Class Activities	8	12	96 points	16%
Reflection Paper	3	40	120 points	20%
Self-Assessment	8	3	24 points	4%
Total			600 points	100%

Grading Scale

Points	Grade	Standard
540-600	A	Superior
480-539	B	Above Average
420-479	C	Average Performance
360-419	D	Below Average
359 and Below	F	Unsatisfactory

Late Work

No late work accepted and work cannot be made up. Technical difficulties of the student's equipment or internet provider are not excused. When such difficulties occur, students are expected to locate an alternative

source for submitting assignments, e.g., neighbor, workplace, public library, etc. Technical difficulties caused by the University or eCollege can be excused provided the student obtains documentation from technical support. Students should always have a back-up in mind for unexpected glitches in technology.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Because this is an online course, all students must meet the following technology requirements to successfully complete this course.

- To fully participate in online courses, you will need to use a current, Flash enabled browser. For PC users, the suggested browser is Internet Explorer 9.0 or 10. For Mac users, the most current update of Firefox is suggested.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
    - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
    - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
    - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution

- You must have a:
    - sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
    - speakers or headphones.

- Depending on your course, you might also need a:
    - webcam
    - microphone

    For courses where interactive tools are used, like VoiceThread or Class Live Pro, headphones are suggested for use with recording and playback. We recommend a webcam with an integrated microphone, such as the Microsoft LifeCam Cinema. All devices should be installed and configured before class begins.

- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. Java can be downloaded at: http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp

- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

- You will need some additional free software for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
    - Adobe Reader
    - Adobe Flash Player

- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

- For additional information about system requirements, please see: https://secure.ecollege.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Pearson LearningStudio Access and Log in Information

This course will be facilitated using Pearson LearningStudio, the learning management system used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.
It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to Pearson LearningStudio, click on the 'myCourses' tab and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

Pearson LearningStudio Student Technical Support

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of Pearson LearningStudio.

Technical assistance is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Chat Support:** Click on *'Live Support'* on the tool bar within your course to chat with an Pearson LearningStudio Representative.

- **Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.

- **Email:** helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.

Accessing Help from within Your Course: Click on the *'Tech Support'* icon on the upper left side of the screen inside the course. You will then be able to get assistance via online chat, email or by phone by calling the Help Desk number noted below.

Note: Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

Policy for Reporting Problems with Pearson LearningStudio

Should students encounter Pearson LearningStudio based problems while submitting assignments/discussions/comments/exams, the following procedure **MUST** be followed?

1. Students must report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at
2. helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or 1-866-656-5511
3. Students **MUST** file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number
4. Once a helpdesk ticket number is in your possession, students should email me to advise me of the problem and to provide me with the helpdesk ticket number
5. At that time, I will call the helpdesk to confirm your problem and follow up with you

PLEASE NOTE: Your personal computer/access problems are not a legitimate excuse for filing a ticket with the Pearson help desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for compatibility of your browser **BEFORE** the

course begins and to take the Pearson LearningStudio tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the Pearson LearningStudio platform. **ONLY** Pearson LearningStudio based problems are legitimate.

Internet Access

An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

myLeo Support

Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email helpdesk@tamuc.edu or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at https://leo.tamuc.edu.

Learner Support

Go to the following link One Stop Shop- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location.
Go to the following link Academic Success Center- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

It is very important to go to this online course 4-5 times each week to:

1. Read new announcements
2. Check your university email
3. Review activities and assignments
4. Check the schedule of activities and assignments
5. Communicate as needed with your instructor and class members.

Submitting assignments

You are responsible for attaching the correct assignment to the correct folder in the Dropbox. Once you submit your assignment, you should always click on the Outbox to make sure the assignment is there. You can tell if it is attached in at least two ways: (1) touch the little document icon (symbol for an attachment) with your cursor and the name of your document will appear or (2) click on the little icon and actually open and view the document. Submitting an incorrect document, a blank document, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time.

Each assignment or work should include your name in the content. Also make your computer file name, when attaching to the Dropbox, using your last name and a specific assignment (i.e., Choi Activity1.docx).

Announcements

Announcements are posted often in the course. When you go to the course, you should first read any announcements that have been posted since you were last in the class.

Email Correspondence

Email from me is sent to your University email account. It is important to go to MyLeo mail regularly to check for messages.

If you need to contact me, email is the best way to reach me. Please send your message with your first and last name so I know who you are. Unless otherwise announced, I will do my best to respond within 48 hours except weekends.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC)

46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to ((http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1 (August 28 – September 5)
    1. Course Introduction
    2. Introduction to State and Local Government (Ch. 1)

    Class Activity #1

Module 2 (September 6 – September 19)
    1. Federalism (Ch. 2)
    2. Constitutions (Ch. 3)

    Class Activity #2
    Discussion #1
    Reflection Paper #1

Module 3 (September 20 – October 3)

1. Political Attitudes and Participation (Ch. 5)
2. Parties and Interest Groups (Ch. 6)

Exam #1
Class Activity #3
Discussion #2

Module 4 (October 4 – October 17)
1. Legislatures (Ch. 7)
2. Governors and Executives (Ch. 8)

Class Activity #4
Discussion #3
Reflection Paper #2

Module 5 (October 18 – October 31)
1. Courts (Ch. 9)
2. Bureaucracy (Ch. 10)

Exam #2
Class Activity #5
Discussion #4

Module 6 (November 1 – November 14)
1. Local Government (Ch. 11)
2. Metropolitics (Ch. 12)

Class Activity #6
Discussion #5
Reflection Paper #3

Module 7 (November 15 – December 5)
1. Crime and Punishment (Ch. 14)
2. Environment and Climate Change (Ch. 16)

Exam #3
Class Activity #7
Discussion #6

Module 8 (December 6 – December 8)
1. Finance (Ch. 4)

Class Activity #8

√ Many class activities, discussions, exams, and reflection papers are due at **11:59 PM on Tuesday**.

√ Please note that the instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced.