Winthrop University, Spring 2015
Political Science 202-001: State and Local Government
Monday/Wednesday 12:30-1:45 PM, Owens 203
Three credit hours
Turnitin.com class number 9274324, password holder202

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Office Hours: MW 11:00 AM-12:15 PM, T 3:30-6:15 PM, or by appointment.

Required Materials:

The text is available for purchase or rental in print or e-book format through the Winthrop University Bookstore, and is also available through online sources):


An additional reading (TBA) on health care policy will also be posted on the Webpage.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND COURSE GOALS
The United States Constitution divides and shares power not only among the three branches of the Federal Government, but also between the governments of the nation and the states. The states then further share power with cities, counties, townships and other local entities. Perhaps contrary to popular belief, state and local governments frequently affect most Americans’ day-to-day lives far more than does the government in Washington, D.C. This course will address a number of questions: What is the relationship between Washington and the states? How are the states similar, and how are they different, in their structures, processes, and philosophies of government? How do the political systems of the states resemble each other, and how do they differ? What policy issues are significant for state and local governments? How are the states similar, and how are they different, in the way they carry out policies and provide services such as welfare and education? What difference does it make if a policy is made and carried out in Washington, as opposed to Columbia, Raleigh or Honolulu? And how is the federal government “better” or “worse” than the state governments at making policy and providing services? We will also examine the role which city, county, town and other local units of government play in all of the above.

South Carolina is an ongoing topic in the class, but not the primary focus. (Winthrop occasionally offers a distinct Special Topics class on South Carolina government and politics.) While relevant examples from this state will be used, the emphasis here is on issues that affect all 50 states, and on a comparative analysis of how all the states do things. As is true of any other state, South Carolina is typical of the rest of the nation in some respects, but unique in others,
and how things are (or are not) done here is certainly of interest, but not necessarily relevant to a study of the larger issues involved in state and local government.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**
The course objective is not only to increase your understanding of state and local government and politics, and the relationships among those institutions and their counterparts on the federal level, but also to develop your understanding of a number of public policy issues with critical importance to state and local governments and to American society, including education, welfare, civil rights, economic development, environmental policy, and health care. You will explore a topic of your choice related to one of these issues in your research paper. This class contributes to student mastery of Winthrop University Level Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live; and University Level Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.

**GRADING SCALE**
The course will use Winthrop University’s +/- grading system. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

- 93-100 = A
- 90-92 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 83-86 = B
- 80-82 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 73-76 = C
- 70-72 = C-
- 67-69 = D+
- 63-66 = D
- 60-62 = D-
- 59 or below = F.

**STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
On the first day of class, you will randomly draw a state. You will become the class expert on that state for the semester. You will complete a worksheet on your state’s government and politics early in the semester. Throughout the semester, you will monitor news, political and legislative developments in the state, through the Websites of the state government, the newspapers in the capital or largest city, and other sources. This will help you develop an understanding of the state’s politics and important policy issues. Your paper will be on the impact of a specific policy in your state. You will be expected to contribute your knowledge of ongoing issues in your state to class discussion.

**State Worksheet:** This will be a brief exercise in which you will research the partisan composition of your state’s legislature, its political culture, methods by which certain officials are named to office, and current political issues. This will be graded pass/fail. Failure to complete this exercise will result in a reduction of your semester grade by one increment (e.g., from A to A-).
Research Paper, 30%: The research paper will be a 7-10 page analysis of a research question of your choice related to a current public policy issue in your state. Examples of a research question would be, for example, “Do laws requiring photo identification for voting effectively prevent voter fraud, or do they unfairly disenfranchise citizens?” “How will the requirements of the federal Affordable Care Act affect health care expenditures by state governments?” or “Have the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act improved educational outcomes in [your state]?” I will be happy to discuss possible topics and research questions with you. I would encourage you to begin thinking about the paper as early as possible, rather than waiting until we actually discuss these issues in class late in the semester. This paper must be uploaded to turnitin.com by the beginning of class on Wednesday, Apr. 22.

Two midterm exams (20% each); Final exam (30%): The midterm exams will be in class on Feb. 11 and Mar. 11. The final exam will be on Wednesday, Apr. 29, 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM. The exams will include a combination of short answers/definitions, and essay questions. The final exam is not cumulative, but assumes knowledge of material covered on the midterm. A review guide for each exam will be handed out approximately one week in advance, and the last class before each exam will include time for review.

Makeup exams will not be given without documentation of extenuating circumstances. Winthrop University policy does not allow the rescheduling of exams (including taking an exam earlier than the scheduled time) due to travel plans.

Administrative Announcements:
Class cancellations, changes in schedule, guest speakers, etc., will be announced via the class listserv, to which you will be automatically subscribed through your winthrop.edu e-mail address. If you need to subscribe to the class listserv, go to: http://www.winthrop.edu/technology/default.aspx?id=7081&ekmensel=bef63b6_489_491_7081_1. The class number is PLSC202001. Check your WU e-mail frequently. You may use the listserv for discussion or to share information with classmates, review for exams, or ask questions about course material. Note that anything you post to the listserv will be seen by everyone in the class.

Attendance:
Attendance will be taken by means of a sign-in sheet circulated at the beginning of each class meeting. In accordance with Winthrop’s attendance policies, if you are absent without excuse from one-quarter of the class meetings or more (in this case, seven), you will receive an N or an F, as appropriate. In this class, signing in an absent classmate is considered an act of academic dishonesty. I do not require documentation for absences except for exams.

Technology:
You are welcome to use a computer to take notes in class. However, this class follows the College of Arts and Sciences policy on use of technology in the classroom. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic communication devices during class meetings. If you need to leave your phone on during a particular class for emergency reasons, please let me know in advance. The use of any kind of electronic device, including a phone, iPod or Internet access, during an exam constitutes academic dishonesty.
Academic Honesty and Integrity:
Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the class. This class follows the policies of Winthrop University and the Department of Political Science, which are linked below, on academic misconduct and plagiarism. Please be aware of these policies and abide by them. In addition to the failing grade imposed by the instructor, academic misconduct of any kind will result in referral to the Dean of Students for possible additional sanctions.

Political Science Department policy statement:
http://www.winthrop.edu/cas/politicalscience/default.aspx?id=19401

Office of Academic Affairs policy statement:

Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments
This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. In particular, I expect to invite guest speakers.

Mon., Jan. 12: Introduction to the Course; state selection.
Wed., Jan. 14: Overview of State and Local Government/Political Culture (D&M, Ch. 1).
Mon., Jan. 19: No Class – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday.
Wed., Jan. 28/Mon., Feb. 2: State Legislatures (D&M, Ch. 6).
Mon., Feb. 2: State worksheet due.
Wed., Feb. 4/Mon., Feb. 9: Governors and Executive Branches (D&M, Chs. 7-8).
Week of Feb. 16: State Judicial Systems and Criminal Justice (D&M, Ch. 9).
Week of Mar. 16: No Class - Spring Break.
Mon., Mar. 23: Economic Policy (D&M, Ch. 13)
Wed., Mar. 25: Environmental Policy (D&M, Ch. 14)
Mon., Mar. 30: Civil Rights Policy (D&M, Ch. 15)
Wed., Apr. 1/Mon., Apr. 6: Education Policy (D&M, Ch. 16)
Wed., Apr. 8/Mon., Apr. 13: Welfare Policy (D&M, Ch. 17; Schram)
Wed., Apr. 15-Mon., Apr. 20: Health Care Policy (readings TBA)
Mon., Apr. 27: Last Class. Review for final exam.
Wed., Apr. 29, 11:30-2:00: Final Exam.
Winthrop University Resources

Winthrop’s Office of Disability Services (ODS) Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact Gena Smith, Coordinator, ODS Program Director, at 323-3290, as soon as possible. Once you have your professor notification letter, please notify me so that I am aware of your accommodations early in the semester.

Winthrop’s Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (ONCA) identifies and assists highly motivated and talented students to apply for nationally and internationally competitive awards, scholarships, fellowships, and unique opportunities both at home and abroad. ONCA gathers and disseminates award information and deadlines across the campus community, and serves as a resource for students, faculty, and staff throughout the nationally competitive award nomination and application process. ONCA is located in Dinkins 222A. Please fill out an online information form at the bottom of the ONCA webpage www.winthrop.edu/onca and email onca@winthrop.edu for more information.

Winthrop’s Academic Success Center (ASC) is a free resource for all undergraduate students seeking to perform their best academically. The ASC offers a variety of personalized and structured resources that help students achieve academic excellence, such as tutoring, academic skill development (test taking strategies, time management counseling, and study techniques), group and individual study spaces, and academic coaching. The ASC is located on the first floor of Dinkins, Suite 106. Please contact the ASC at 803-323-3929 or success@winthrop.edu or www.winthrop.edu/success.

Winthrop’s Office of Victims Assistance (OVA) provides services to survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking as well as educational programming to prevent these crimes from occurring. The staff assists all survivors, regardless of when they were victimized, in obtaining counseling, medical care, housing options, legal prosecution, and more. In addition, the OVA helps students access support services for academic problems resulting from victimization. The OVA is located in 204 Crawford and can be reached at (803) 323-2206. In the case of an after-hours emergency, please call Campus Police at (803)323-3333, or the local rape crisis center, Safe Passage, at their 24-hour hot-line, (803)329-2800. For more information please visit: http://www.winthrop.edu/victimsassistance/