

Political Science 4015
American State Politics and Policy Making
Spring 2016

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104 Audubon: TTH 1:30-2:50
Office Hours: Mon. 9-11 (or by appt.)

Course Description

This course introduces students to governmental institutions, political behavior, and policy issues at the state level. Our goal is to understand how different institutions and political conditions interact and play a role in the public policy process. A comparative approach is used to assess the political contexts, governmental institutions, and policies of the various states. While Louisiana will be used as a prominent example in our study, this is not a course on Louisiana politics.

The topics to be covered are divided into four broad sections. The first part of the course focuses on various political contexts in which state governments operate. The second part explores the institutions in which policy is created and implemented (legislative, executive, and judicial). A third section gives attention to differences across states in political party structures, interest group activities, media coverage, and election practices. The fourth section of the course focuses on different policy areas. We will spend time covering problems or conditions that policies are intended to alter, the specific actions governments take in response to these conditions, and whether or not such efforts have their intended effects.

In addition to our focus on the substantive aspects of state politics, we will also spend time examining the methods used by scholars to answer questions on these topics. Part of our goal is to assess the evidence obtained by scholars and to consider alternative approaches. While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in our class discussions.

Required Reading Materials

There is one textbook available for purchase in the bookstore: *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis* (10th edition) by Virginia Gray, Russell L. Hanson, and Thad Kousser (2013, Sage and Congressional Quarterly Press). However, a large share of the reading load includes the articles listed on the course schedule below. Each is available for download from the class Moodle site. Note that a few of these readings are newspaper articles that will take only a few minutes to read, but many are lengthy pieces from academic journals that will take an hour or more to fully digest. These academic articles very often form the central part of our class discussions so it is imperative that you carefully read and take notes on these pieces prior to class. I also strongly recommend printing most of the articles given that I will often make reference to the tables and graphs in the articles. Reading constitutes a substantial portion of the work for this course, so make certain that you plan accordingly for each class. I conduct class in a manner that assumes students have read the course materials assigned for the day, so come to class prepared.

Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university's definition of work required for each credit hour: "not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester." Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom (for this class it means reading, studying, and working on the course assignments).

Course Requirements

The grade for the course is determined by a student's performance in the following areas:

Participation	20%
Research Project	25%
Midterm	25%
Final Exam	30%
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TOTAL	100%

Letter grades are assigned as follows based on a student's final numerical average:

F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
<60	60-62	63-66	67-69	70-72	73-76	77-79	80-82	83-86	87-89	90-92	93-96	97 ≥

Participation

Classes are generally conducted in a lecture-discussion format so it is important to keep up with the readings and to come prepared for every class. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do this, it is necessary to complete the readings *in advance* and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments at the state level since these will often be used as examples in our discussions. Participation comprises a relatively large portion of your grade (20% total) and will be determined by four equally weighted components:

- Self-Reported Class Participation: During each class period I will ask questions about the day's readings and will expect to receive answers. If you have questions about the readings or comments about the substantive topics in the course, please ask them. I will track your participation based upon your self-reported participation. If you have participated in the day's class either in asking questions, answering questions, or providing comments, please hand in a sheet of paper at the end of class indicating what your contribution was for that day (briefly restating your question, answer, or comment). It is expected that you will participate on 6 different days during the course of the semester. If you provide substantive comments or ask questions (that a reasonable person would say enlightened the discussion) on 6 separate days, you will receive 100% for this portion of your participation grade (if you participate 5 times your score will be 83%, 4 times 67%, and so on).
- Class Activities: Several times during the semester I will ask you to provide written comments about a topic, answer a brief question, take a quiz, or take part in a class exercise. Your performance on these activities will be counted as a component of your overall participation grade. There will be many of these opportunities throughout the semester and your grade is determined by your successful completion of each. If you satisfactorily complete all of them, you will receive 100% for this component of your participation, complete 90% and your grade is 90, 80% is a grade of 80, etc. Note for quizzes and some activities a grade is given, so to "satisfactorily complete" the activity is to correctly answer the questions asked.
- Attendance: Attending class is important and your presence will be checked regularly with a sign-in sheet or by other mechanisms. Please make certain that you come to class on time so that you will be counted as present for the day. As with the other forms of participation, if you attend 100% of the time when I have checked attendance, your grade is 100, attend 90% of the time and it is 90, etc.
- Periodical Summaries and Presentations: At three separate points during the semester students are expected to identify a newspaper or magazine article related to an issue being covered in class, write a brief report on the article and make a very brief class presentation. A separate hand-out describes what is expected for these summaries, where appropriate information can be obtained, and how these summaries should be written and presented.

Policy Project

You are expected to complete a policy project in which you identify and write about policies recently adopted in an assigned state. Students will make brief presentations to the class on their states (on April 12 or 14) and an 8-9 page written report is due on Tuesday, April 19. Further details will be provided in a separate handout during the second week of classes.

Exams

There is a mid-term exam and a final exam (dates listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of objective-style question (multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions). Note that a makeup exam is only administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. Note also that makeup exams are all-essay exams. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Classroom Rules

Please be respectful to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in the class. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 1:30 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Absolutely no audio or video recording devices are allowed to be used unless special permission is granted. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography or videography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violators of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students. These restrictions are in place to ensure the integrity of testing materials and to protect student privacy.

You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not simply play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

Late Assignments and Missed Work

In an effort to provide a level playing field, I take deadlines very seriously and hold everyone to an identical standard. Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official university-sponsored events, etc.). A penalty for handing in the paper late is assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points (5 points for missing the deadline, and 5 points for each 24-hour period thereafter). Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on Moodle where they must be submitted along with any accompanying documentation (a doctor's note, etc.).

Graded Work

I do not make grades available on Moodle and I will not e-mail grades. I will return your midterm exam and your policy project to you in class. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance. Please note, however, I will not estimate your current grade for you (the percentage that each grade counts toward your final average is provided above).

Graduate Credit or Honors Credit

For students taking this course for graduate credit or for those who wish to receive special Honors credit, it is the student's responsibility to contact me at the beginning of the semester to make appropriate arrangements.

Special Needs

For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made.

Course Schedule

The Contexts of State Politics

January 14 ***Introduction to the Course***

- No reading assignment.

January 19 ***Why Study State Politics***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser Chapter 1.
- Reading #1: Moncrief, Gary, and Peverill Squire. 2013. "Making a Case for States," Chapter 1 in *Why States Matter: An Introduction to State Politics*, Landham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Reading #2: Horne, Jennifer. 2016. "Council of State Governments Policy Staff Outlines Top Issues for 2016," January 4.

January 21 ***Methods and Approaches Used in Studying State Politics***

- Reading #3: Chapters from *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answers: How Common Sense Fails Us* by Duncan J. Watts, 2011, New York: Crown Publishing (Preface, Chapters 1 & 2).
- Reading #4: Berry, William D., and Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. (Chapter 1) *Understanding Multivariate Research: A Primer for Beginning Social Scientists*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Reading #5: "Appendix: A Brief Introduction to Regression."
- Reading #6: "Political Science Research Fundamentals: Some Important Concepts and Definitions."
- Reading #7: Vara, Vauhini. 2015. "How California Bested Texas," *New Yorker*, January 8.

January 26 ***Methods and Approaches Used in Studying State Politics Continued***

- Reading #8: Hartney, Michael, and Patrick Flavin. 2011. "From the Schoolhouse to the Statehouse: Teaching Union Political Activism and U.S. State Education Reform Policy," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 3: 251-68.

January 28 ***Political Cultures and Public Opinions***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, re-read part of Chapter 1 (20-25).
- Reading #9: Fellowes, Matthew C., 2004. "Politics and the New American Welfare States," *American Journal of Political Science*, 48: 362-73.
- Reading #10: Tierney, John. 2014. "Do You Trust Your State Government?" *The Atlantic Monthly* May 14.

February 2 ***Federalism: National and State Government Relations***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 2.
- Reading #11: Nathan, Richard P. 2006. "There Will Always Be a New Federalism," *Journal of Public Administration* 16: 499-510.
- Reading #12: Zernike, Kate. 2010. "Proposed Amendment Would Enable States to Repeal Federal Law," *New York Times*, December.
- Reading #13: Barnett, Randy and William J. Howell. 2010. "The Case for a 'Repeal Amendment,'" Cato Institute, September.
- Reading #14: Stern, Mark Joseph. 2014. "Federalist Rolling Papers," *SLATE*, December 30.

February 4 ***Federalism and State Constitutions***

- Reading #15: Dinan John. 2015. "State Constitutional Developments in 2014," in *Book of the States*, pp. 3-10.
- Reading #16: Lupia, Arthur, Yanna Krupnikov, Adam Seth Levine, Spencer Piston, and Alexander Von Hagen-Jamar. 2010. "Why State Constitutions Differ in their Treatment of Same-Sex Marriage," *Journal of Politics* 74: 1222-1235.

February 9 **Mardi Gras Holiday**

Institutions of Governing in State Politics

February 11 ***Characteristics of Legislative Institutions***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 6.
- Reading #17: Squire, Peverill, and Gary Moncrief. 2010. "99 Chambers and Why They Matter," Chapter 1 in *State Legislatures Today: Politics Under the Domes*.
- Reading #18: Galbraith, Kate. 2010. "Texas Stands Against Tide in Retaining Biennial Legislature," *The New York Times* December.

- February 16** ***State Legislators: Who They Are and How They Got There***
- **Text:** Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Re-read part of Chapter 6 (173-183).
 - **Reading #19:** Hogan, Robert E. 2004. "Challenger Emergence, Incumbent Success and Electoral Accountability in State Legislative Elections" *Journal of Politics*, 66: 1309-29.
 - **Reading #20:** Greenblatt, Alan. 2012. "Can You Separate Federal Issues from State Elections?" *Governing*, October.
 - **Reading #21:** Zurik, Lee, and Manuel Torres. 2013. "Louisiana Purchased" Nola.com and the Times-Picayune.
- February 18** ***Representation in the Legislature***
- **Text:** Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Re-read part of Chapter 6 (183-185).
 - **Reading #22:** Konisky, David M., and Michiko Ueda. 2011. "The Effects of Uncontested Elections on Legislator Performance," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36: 199-229.
 - **Reading #23:** Cooper, Christopher A., and Lilliard E. Richardson. 2006. "Institutions and Representational Roles in American State Legislatures," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 6: 174-94.
- February 23** ***Legislative Decision Making***
- **Reading #24:** Maestas, Cherie. 2003. "The Incentive to Listen: Progressive Ambition, Resources, and Opinion Monitoring Among State Legislators," *Journal of Politics* 65: 439-456.
 - **Reading #25:** McKee, Seth C. 2015. "Politics Is Local: State Legislator Voting on Restrictive Voter Identification Legislation," *Research and Politics*, July-September: 1-7.
- February 25** ***Executive Branch***
- **Text:** Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 7.
 - **Reading #26:** Windett, Jason Harold. 2011. "State Effects and the Emergence and Success of Female Gubernatorial Candidates," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4: 460-82.
 - **Reading #27:** Dilger, Robert Jay, George A. Krause, and Randolph R. Moffett. 1995. "State Legislative Professionalism and Gubernatorial Effectiveness, 1978-1991," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 20: 553-71.
- March 1** ***Governors and Legislatures***
- **Reading #28:** Klarner, Carl E., and Andrew Karch. 2008. "Why Do Governors Issue Vetoes? The Impact of Individual and Institutional Influences," *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 574-84.
 - **Reading #29:** Barrilleaux, Charles, and Carlisle Rainey. 2014. "The Politics of Need: Examining Governors' Decisions to Oppose the 'Obamacare' Medicaid Expansion," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 14: 437-60.
- March 3** **Midterm Exam**
- March 8** ***State Courts***
- **Text:** Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 8.
 - **Reading #30:** Bonneau, Chris W. 2007. "Campaign Fundraising in State Supreme Court Elections," *Social Science Quarterly* 88: 68-85.
 - **Reading #31:** Hall, Melinda Gann. 1992. "Electoral Politics and Strategic Voting in State Supreme Courts," *Journal of Politics*, 55: 427-446.
 - **Reading #32:** See report by Joanna Shepherd and Michael S. Kang at <http://skewedjustice.org/>
- Linking Institutions and Citizens**
- March 10** ***Political Parties and Elections***
- **Text:** Gray, Hanson, and Kousser Chapter 3.
 - **Reading #33:** Masket, Seth E., Jonathan Winburn, and Gerald C. Wright. 2012. "The Gerrymanderers Are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It," *PS: Political Science and Politics* January 39-43.
- March 15** ***Interest Groups***
- **Text:** Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 4.
 - **Reading #34:** Nownes, Anthony J., and Krissy Walker DeAlejandro. 2009. "Lobbying in the New Millennium: Evidence of Continuity and Change in Three States," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 9(4): 429-55.

- March 17 ***Interest Group Influence***
- Reading #35: Lipton, Eric. 2014. "Lobbyists, Bearing Gifts, Pursue Attorneys General" *New York Times*, October 28.
 - Reading #36: Ozymy, Joshua. 2010. "Assessing the Impact of Legislative Lobbying Regulations on Interest Groups Influence in U.S. State Legislatures," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 10: 397-420.
- March 22 **Spring Break**
- March 24 **Spring Break**
- March 29 ***Direct Democracy***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 5.
 - Reading #37: Nicholson, Stephen P. 2003. "The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness," *American Journal of Political Science*, 47: 403-410.
 - Reading #38: Lewis, Daniel C. 2011. "Bypassing the Representational Filter? Minority Rights Policies under Direct Democracy Institutions in U.S. States," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 11: 198-222.
 - Reading #39: Steinhauer, Jennifer. 2015. "Fight on Guns Is Being Taken to State Ballots," *New York Times*, Jan. 2.

Making and Evaluating Public Policies

- March 31 ***Elements of the Public Policy Process***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 14 and 15.
- April 5 ***Fiscal Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 10.
- April 7 **No Class**
- April 12 ***Education Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 12 and 13.
 - ***** Policy Presentations: Set #1 *****
- April 14 ***State Corrections Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 9.
 - Reading #40: Smith, Kevin B. 2004. "The Politics of Punishment: Evaluating Political Explanations of Incarceration Rates," *Journal of Politics* 66: 925-38.
 - ***** Policy Presentations: Set #2 *****
- April 19 ***State Corrections Policies Continued***
- Reading #41 Lind, Dara. 2014. "The Two Simple Facts that Explain Why the US Prison Population Exploded," *Vox*, May 1.
 - ******* Policy Papers Due at the Beginning of Class *******
- April 21 ***Economic Development Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 16.
 - Reading #42: Scott, Dylan. 2012. "Southern States Have Become Job-Training Leaders," *Governing*, July.
 - Reading #43: Russell, Gordon, and Rebekah Allen. 2014. "Giving Away Louisiana," *The Advocate* (Special Report Parts 1-3).
- April 26 ***Policy Outcomes: Health and Welfare Programs***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 11.
- April 28 ***Summation and Review***
- No reading assignment.
- May 5 **FINAL EXAM in this classroom on Thursday from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.**