

GE172

State and Local Government

[Onsite]

Course Description:

This course studies institutions and structures of state, city and county governments and policy areas within their province, such as education, law enforcement, welfare, policy, citizen responsibility and other areas.

Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s):

Prerequisite: GE117 Composition I or equivalent

Credit hours: 4

Contact hours: 40 (40 Theory Hours)

Syllabus: State and Local Government

Instructor: _____

Office hours: _____

Class hours: _____

Major Instructional Areas

1. Federalism: Evaluating the constitutional and practical relationship between national, state, and local governments and their citizens
2. Public problems and public policies: Identifying what state and local governments do, why, and how
3. Citizen participation: Evaluating citizens' rights and enhancing the influence of citizens on the government
4. Policy analysis: Identifying a significant state and local issue, recommending a solution, and anticipating political debate

Course Objectives

1. Analyze U.S. federalism and the political division of functions among federal, state, and local governments.
2. Analyze the varying institutional roles and character of state constitutions, state and local legislatures, executives, bureaucracies, and courts.
3. Analyze the political dynamics of state and local policy making, including the influence of elections, parties, interest groups, political leadership, and judicial activism.
4. Analyze the potential and actual impact of citizen participation in shaping state and local government policies, bearing in mind that influence varies across jurisdictions, issue areas, and time.
5. Analyze the impact of important economic and demographic changes on state and local problems, policies, and politics.
6. Conduct a policy analysis on a significant problem for a state or local government.
7. Research selected topics using the ITT Tech Virtual Library.

SCANS Objectives

SCANS is an acronym for Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. The committee, created by the National Secretary of Labor in the early 1990s, created a list of skills and competencies that the committee feels are necessary for employees to function in a high-tech job market.

1. Identify relevant facts, analyze their accuracy, and study their effects on modern-day proceedings.
2. Recognize problems and devise and implement a plan of action to resolve them.
3. Compare and contrast two theories or alternatives to arrive at the best solution.
4. Demonstrate the ability to use authentic resources, including the Internet and knowledge libraries.
5. Select and analyze information and communicate results to others by using oral, written, graphic, pictorial, or multimedia methods.
6. Evaluate alternatives and choose the best for a situation.
7. Use a systematic problem-solving process to analyze and solve a problem.

Course Outline

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Activities</i>
1–Political Approach to State and Local Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Politics in States and Communities:</i> ◦ Chapter 1, "Politics in States and Communities," pp. 1-29 • Writing Assignment: 1
2–Democracy, Constitutionalism, and Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Chapter 3, "States, Communities, and American Federalism," pp. 61-99 • Research Assignment: 1

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Activities</i>
3–Citizen Participation in State Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 2, section titled “Direct versus Representative Democracy,” pp. 47-49 ○ Chapter 4, “Participation in State Politics,” pp.101-142 • Quiz: 1 • Analysis: 1
4–Parties and Campaigns in States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 5, “Parties and Campaigns in the States,” pp.145-181 • Research Assignment: 1 • Final Project: Start
5–Legislators in State Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 6, “Legislators in State Politics,” pp. 184-224 ○ Chapter 14, “The Politics of Taxation and Finance,” pp. 513-520 • Quiz: 1 • Writing Assignment: 1
6–Executives in State Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 7, “Governors in State Politics,” pp. 228-266 • Analysis: 1
7–Bureaucracy and Public Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 8, “Bureaucratic Politics in States and Communities,” pp. 268-303 • Quiz: 1 • Writing Assignment: 1
8–Courts and Criminal Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 9, “Courts, Crime, and Correctional Policy,” pp. 305-346

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Activities</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Assignment: 1 • Final Project Part 1: Submit
9–Local Government Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 10, “Governing America’s Communities,” pp. 349-387 • Writing Assignment: 1 • Research Assignment: 1
10–Local Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read from Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 11, “Participation in Community Politics,” pp. 389-432 • Analysis: 1
11–The Politics of Education and Conclusions on State and Local Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read from <i>Politics in States and Communities</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 16, “The Politics of Education,” pp. 568-601 • Quiz: 1 • Final Project Part 2: Submit

Instructional Methods

This course covers state and local politics in the U.S. from a dynamic and student-oriented perspective. The course starts with the textbook’s view that politics is about distributive conflict over public problems and policies. The patterns that political scientists have noticed over time are introduced. For example, the course explains why voter turnout varies or why money is important in local elections. Explanatory theories such as why collective action is difficult are explained. Finally, the course stresses change and variation—through the U.S. history of politics and public policy, across states and localities, and across issue domains.

While learning about how state and local governments work, you will see that there are many opportunities for citizen participation. You will learn about how citizens can participate in community governance and how their problems are prioritized. You will also learn about public policies that emerge from authorities in various jurisdictions.

Content will be covered in class that is beyond the scope of the text. If you find it necessary to miss one of the sessions you will want to make arrangements to find out what was covered in class.

This course is designed to encourage critical thinking, research, and writing skills. In the class, you can expect a mix of lectures, open-ended discussions, occasional group work, ungraded writing assignments, and role-playing.

The assessment strategy of this course involves quizzes, writing assignments, research assignments, analyses, and the final project.

You will be evaluated through quizzes and writing assignments that will test your understanding of the key concepts and lectures. Research assignments will help you build research skills, and you will utilize your findings while working on the final project. Analyses assignments will help you apply your learning in real situations. These assignments will also build your analytical and decision-making skills.

In your final project, you will conduct a two-part policy analysis. This will help you appreciate the virtues of researching information that will assist in solving policy problems. You will also understand the inevitability of political conflicts over policy solutions. The project will reinforce your research skills and help you apply them to controversial topics

In the first part of the final project, you will choose and analyze a public problem, research the possible alternative solutions, and recommend the policy solution you think is the best.

The second part of the final project involves predicting the likely political battle over the solutions you recommend. Policies are mostly controversial—you will have to anticipate who will support your policy and who will not. For example, will small businesses support the policy? Will unions oppose it? You will identify and analyze the resources that opponents or unions can mobilize against the proposed policy. You will also predict the debates that may follow your recommendation and develop a strategy to help win its passage.

Instructional Materials and References

Student Textbook Package

- Dye, Thomas R. and Susan A. MacManus. *Politics in States and Communities. 12th ed.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.

Text book Companion Website

Available through the ITT Tech Virtual Library

Program Links> General Education>Textbook Support> *Politics in States and Communities. 12th ed.*

Or at http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_dye_politicsin_12

References

ITT Tech Virtual Library

Log on to the ITT Tech Virtual Library at <http://www.library.itt-tech.edu/> to access online books, journals, and other reference resources selected to support ITT Tech curricula.

Reference Resources

You may click “Reference Resources” or use the “Search” function on the home page to find the following reference resources.

Reference Resources > Government

- [Governing Magazine Online](#)
A monthly magazine whose primary audience is state and local government officials.
- [Stateline.org](#)
A Web site that provides politics and policy news.
- [State and Local Sourcebook](#)
From Web site [Governing.com](#), this link takes us to state homepages, legislatures, major cities and counties, and research organizations.
- [U.S. Courts](#)
A Web site providing links to the sites of the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Courts of Appeals, the U.S. District Courts, and the U.S. Bankruptcy Courts.
- [USA.gov](#)
An easy-to-search Web site designed to provide information from local, state, and federal government Web sites.

Reference Resources > Law

- [Thomas: Legislative Information on the Internet](#)
A Web site containing bill summaries and statutes, public laws, the congressional record, and committee information.

Reference Resources > Grammar, Writing, and Style

- [KnightCite Citation Machine](#)
A project of Hekman Library, Calvin College, MI, this Web site offers templates for Chicago, APA, and MLA.
- [Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It](#)
An article by the Writing Tutorial Services, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

- 11 Rules of Writing

A guide to some of the most commonly violated rules of writing, grammar, and punctuation.

Periodicals

You may click “Periodicals” or use the “Search” function on the home page to find the following periodicals.

Periodicals> EbscoHost> EBSCOhost Databases

- American City & County

A journal that provides articles, commentary, personal profiles, legislation, public safety information, and financial management news for professionals in or dealing with municipal, county, state, and federal governments.

- American Journal of Political Science

The official publication of the Midwest Political Science Association that provides a general review about all areas of the discipline of political science. It publishes highly specialized and empirical research.

- Government Information Quarterly

A periodical providing information about levels of government within the United States and abroad. Topics include theoretical and philosophical treatises and analyses of information policies and practices.

- Political Science Quarterly

A nonpartisan journal devoted to the study of contemporary and historical aspects of government, politics, and international affairs. It publishes highly specialized and empirical research.

- State Legislatures

A journal that provides insight on state issues and politics and includes commentary and analysis on significant past, current, and future legislation.

All links to Web references outside of the ITT Tech Virtual Library are always subject to change without prior notice.

Course Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation Criteria

The final grades will be based on the following categories:

CATEGORY	WEIGHT
Analyses	20%
Quizzes	10%
Research Assignments	20%
Writing Assignments	15%
Final Project Part 1	20%
Final Project Part 2	15%
Total	100%

Grade Conversion Table

The final grades will be calculated from the percentages earned in the course, as follows:

A	90-100%	4.0
B+	85-89%	3.5
B	80-84%	3.0
C+	75-79%	2.5
C	70-74%	2.0
D+	65-69%	1.5
D	60-64%	1.0

F	<60%	0.0
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(End of Syllabus)