

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

POL 342, SPRING 2010 (Sec. J)
MON & WED, 5:00 - 6:15 (MM 216)

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SYLLABUS

Course Objectives. Federalism is a prominent feature of the governmental system in the United States of America. Since the inception of our republic, all governmental power has been bifurcated between the national government and the states, and further divided in the states between state and local governments. This course is designed to provide instruction to undergraduate students in various aspects of government and politics at the subnational level. Upon completion of the course students should have a sound appreciation of intergovernmental relations, distinctive features of state constitutions, state and local government structures and leadership, state and local government taxation, elections and politics in the states. Although the course deals generally with common topics and issues in all of the states, considerable emphasis is placed on government and politics in the southern states, especially Florida.

Textbooks. Two textbooks are required in this class:

Thomas Dye & Susan MacManus, *Politics in States and Communities (13th Ed.)* [PSC]
J. David Woodward, *The New Southern Politics* [NSP]

See also the **Schedule of Class Assignments.**

Dimensions of Evaluation. Final grades will be determined in accordance with the following criteria:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| First Midterm Examination | 15% |
| Second Midterm Examination | 25% |
| Final Examination | 40% |
| Term Papers (2) | 20% (10% each) |
| Class Attendance & Participation | 10% (negative) |

Examinations in this course are not cumulative.

Make-up exams are generally discouraged and will only be given under exceptional circumstances, based on a demonstrable showing of a compelling need and a university accepted excuse.

Course Requirements. Students are expected to regularly *attend class*. Failure to attend class with requisite regularity can lead to a failing grade, if only because material covered in class is likely to be emphasized on examinations. Students are expected to be prepared

when they attend class. **As such, students should do all required readings listed in the Schedule of Class Assignments, and be ready to discuss them, before coming to class.** Preparation and participation can contribute materially to a good grade in this course.

Also, it would be advisable to stay informed about current affairs, especially at the state and local levels in Florida. As time permits, we will endeavor to discuss topical issues that relate directly to the subject matter of this course.

Study Guides. At the end of each week your instructor will post a study guide on the class Blackboard. Study guides are intended to help students prepare for upcoming examinations. However, they are a *complement*, and not a *substitute*, for class lectures and reading assignments.

Students may be tested on *anything included in your required reading assignments* (whether or not the material is specifically covered in class), *anything covered in class lectures* (whether or not the material is specifically covered in your reading assignments), and *anything included in the study guides*. However, most test questions will be derived from the most important material, i.e., material included in assigned readings, specifically covered in class lectures, and mentioned in the study guides.

Classroom Behavior. Students may use computers in class *solely for purposes of taking notes*. Students may use electronic devices in class to record lectures upon the express *prior approval* of the instructor. *All other electronic devices (including cell phones) are to be turned off*. Students may not access the Internet for any reason in class. Students may not send or receive emails or instant messages in class. *Students are expected to be fully attentive in class*. As such, students may not use class time for personal reading or correspondence, or for any other matter not specifically related to this course.

A student who violates any of these rules of behavior will be told to immediately leave the classroom. In the event of repeated violations, a student will be told to formally withdraw from the class.

Needless to say, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student violating the University of Miami honor code will receive a grade of "F" for the course and will be reported to the honor council.

Term Papers. Students in this course are required to prepare and timely submit TWO writing assignments.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT. Write a POLITICAL PROFILE MEMORANDUM on an American state. Each student will write about a different state. States will be randomly assigned to students by means of a lottery. (Excluded from the lottery are eleven southern states, including Florida). Memoranda are due **Wednesday, March 6**.

Your STATE POLITICAL PROFILE MEMORANDUM should be informative yet concise – no less than **three** or more than **six** pages in length. It should be structured as follows:

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SCHEDULE OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is subject to revision upon the instructor's sole discretion.

| <u>WEEK</u> | <u>DATES</u> | <u>TOPIC</u> | <u>READ</u> |
|-------------|--------------|--|------------------------|
| WEEK 1 | 1/20 | INTRODUCTION: Review Syllabus; States, Southern States, and the State of Florida | PSC: 1; NSP: 1 |
| WEEK 2 | 1/25-27 | STRUCTURAL ISSUES: State Constitutions and American Federalism | PSC: 2-3 |
| WEEK 3 | 2/1-3 | STATE POLITICS: Participation, Parties and Campaigns | PSC: 4-5 |
| WEEK 4 | 2/8-10 | FIRST MIDTERM EXAM (Monday, 2/8) STATE GOV'T INSTITUTIONS & LEADERS: Legislatures & Legislators | PSC: 6 |
| WEEK 5 | 2/15-17 | GOVERNORS and Other Executive Branch Officials <u>Note:</u> Request for approval of topics for second writing assignment (RESEARCH PAPER) is due WED, 2/17. | PSC: 7; NSP: p.363-378 |
| WEEK 6 | 2/22-24 | COURTS, CRIME AND CORRECTIONS POLICY LOCAL GOVERNMENT: Organization and Structure | PSC: 9 PSC: 10 |
| WEEK 7 | 3/1-3 | LAND USE & THE ENIRONMENT TAXATION & FINANCE: State and Local Government <u>Note:</u> First writing assignment (STATE POLITICAL PROFILE MEMO) is due WED, 3/3. | PSC: 13 PSC: 14 |
| WEEK 8 | 3/8 -10 | SECOND MIDTERM EXAM (Exact date TBD) | |
| WEEK 9 | 3/15-17 | SPRING RECESS: No Class | |
| WEEK 10 | 3/22-24 | THE SOUTH: History, Demography and Geography | NSP: 2-3 |
| WEEK 11 | 3/29-31 | THE SOUTH: Race & Ethnicity | NSP: 4 & p.400-404 |
| WEEK 12 | 4/5-7 | THE SOUTH: Religion and Politics | NSP: 5 |
| WEEK 13 | 4/12-14 | THE SOUTH: Political Partisanship | NSP: 6 |
| WEEK 14 | 4/19-21 | THE SOUTH: The Republican Surge | NSP: 7 |
| WEEK 15 | 4/26-28 | THE SOUTH: The Democratic Response in Statewide Races <u>Note:</u> Second writing assignment (RESEARCH PAPER) is due WED, 4/28. | NSP: 8 |
| | 5/10 (MON) | FINAL EXAMINATION (5:00 – 7:30) | |

