

**POLS 3307-001**  
**Spring 2018**

**Comparative State & Local Politics**  
**Monday & Wednesday 1:00 – 2:20 PM**  
**Location: 11 University Hall**

Instructor: Dr. Brent Boyea  
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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 9:00-9:45AM

**I. Introduction:**

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the functions and organizations of state and local governments. Throughout the course we will evaluate, comparatively, aspects of the American states, giving special attention to the role of institutions in shaping state political behavior. At the course's conclusion, students should be able to understand and discuss the operation of major political actors and institutions common in the American states. In the first section of the course, we will proceed toward an evaluation of state elections and political parties, focusing on the consequences of state electoral environments on election outcomes. From there, we will examine attributes of state legislatures as the engines of state democracy. Our attention there will be directed to the history of state legislative development to their contemporary status within the states. Thereafter, we will focus on the structure and functions of the executive and judicial branches of state government. The material presented in this course will serve as a foundation for understanding state and local government, including the relationship between state political structures and governing entities.

**II. Required Textbooks:**

1. Andrew Gelman. 2008 (2010 Expanded Edition). *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (ISBN – 9780691143934)
2. James L. Gibson. 2012. *Electing Judges: The Surprising Effects of Campaigning on Judicial Legitimacy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (ISBN – 9780226291086)
3. Thad Kousser and Justin H. Phillips. 2012. *The Power of American Governors: Winning on Budgets and Losing on Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (ISBN – 9781107611177)
4. Peverill Squire and Gary Moncrief. 2015. *State Legislatures Today: Politics under the Domes*, 2nd Edition. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. (ISBN – 9781442247499)
5. Prepared Readings on Blackboard. To access Blackboard, log in with your UTA NetID and password at <https://elearn.uta.edu/webapps/login/>. If you have difficulty when accessing Blackboard, visit <http://www.uta.edu/blackboard/students/index.php> or contact the [Office of Information Technology Help Desk](#) at 817-272-2208.

**III. Course Requirements and Grading:**

1. Class Participation – While there is not an attendance grade, students are expected to arrive for class on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings. While it is understood that events sometimes happen beyond our control, chronic lateness is inexcusable. Class begins at 1:00 PM. Failure to attend class will have a direct negative result on your participation grade (10% of the course grade). I expect thoughtful participation in each class where participation reflects class engagement and careful thinking about that day's readings. Related, students will be called upon at random throughout the semester. The exercise of answering questions in class requires preparation and readiness to discuss the matters being discussed. One answer pass will be given per student during the semester; thereafter, deductions of

twenty (20) percentage points will be made from the participation grade where students have not responded sufficiently or where students are not present to answer a question.

2. Research Paper – All students are required to write a research paper, which will relate to a public policy arena of the states and is equal to 20% of the course grade. A detailed research assignment will be delivered in class on Monday, January 29th. Students are expected to conduct independent research and papers should be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced with a 12-point font, stapled, and have one-inch margins. Importantly, only approved news media and scholarly sources (e.g., library books or articles downloaded from a university affiliated databases, such as Lexis-Nexis, Academic Search Premier, or JSTOR) are acceptable as outside sources. Non-governmental websites are strictly not accepted for paper citations and should not be used. Citations to non-academic sources such as Wikipedia will result in a returned non-graded paper, which will be considered late. Complete citations are expected for all research. Failure to fully cite your research is a violation of academic honesty and must be avoided. Papers are due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, April 18th. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day that they are late.
3. Reading Quizzes – Students will take five reading quizzes throughout the course, which will be run through Blackboard. Each quiz will consist of 8-10 multiple choice questions based on the readings and in-class discussion of the readings that have occurred since the previous reading quiz. Each quiz will represent 5% of the student's final grade, with the lowest reading quiz score dropped ( $4 \times 5\% = 20\%$ ).
4. Examinations – There will be one midterm examinations and one final examination. The midterm exam is 20% and the final exam is 30% of the course grade. Examinations will be essay and short answer format. The mid-term examination is on March 7th and the final examination will be on May 7th. All students will take the examinations at the designated times with no make-up examinations allowed except for situations such as medical emergencies or deaths in the family. In relation to examination absences caused by medical emergencies, the student is expected to contact the instructor by the *day of the test* and will be required to present proof of a physician's examination. Otherwise, failure to take an examination will result in a grade of zero.

#### *Make-up Examination Policy*

Where make-ups are permitted for a midterm examination and not completed within one week of the scheduled exam, the make-up will then be scheduled for the final week of the semester. In those situations, make-up exams are generally more difficult due to the time that has passed since the graded material was covered.

#### *Exam Tardiness Policy*

Students entering an exam late disturb other students. Further, tardiness permits students to ask other exiting students about the content of an exam – that is obviously not fair for students that have arrived on time. Unless a prior arrangement has been made, students will receive a grade of zero when tardy for an examination.

### **IV. Grading:**

1. Participation – 10%
2. Research Paper – 20%
3. Reading Quizzes – 20%
4. Mid-term Examination – 20%
5. Final Examination – 30%

The grading scale is as follows:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D

0-59 F

## V. Class Schedule:

### Section 1: Voting, Elections and Political Parties

Week 1 & 2: January 17-24

Public Opinion and Voting

- Gelman, *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State*, chapters 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 1-40)

Week 3: January 29-31

Party Nominations and Elections

- Gelman, chapters 4, 5, and 6 (pp. 43-93)

Research Paper Assignment: January 29

Quiz #1: January 31

Week 4: February 5-7

Political Parties

- Gelman, chapters 8, 9, and 10 Election (pp. 111-177)

### Section 2: State Legislatures

Week 5: February 12-14

The History and Structure of State Legislatures

- Squire & Moncrief, *State Legislatures Today*, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-59)

Quiz #2: February 12

Week 6: February 19-21

Legislative Organization and Representation

- Squire & Moncrief, chapters 3 and 4 (pp.61-132)

Week 7: February 26-28

The Lawmaking Process and Redistricting

- Squire & Moncrief, chapters 5 and 6 (pp.133-204)

Quiz #3: February 28

Week 8: March 5

Legislatures Wrap-up and Midterm Review

- Squire & Moncrief, chapter 7 (pp. 205-224)

Midterm Examination #1: March 7

Spring Vacation: March 12-16

### Section 3: State Governors

Week 9: March 19-21

The History and Powers of State Governors

- Kousser & Phillips, *The Power of American Governors*, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-73)

Week 10: March 26-28

The Agenda-setting Powers of Governors

- Kousser & Phillips, chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 74-134)

Quiz #4: March 28

Week 11: April 2-4

Governors in the Separation of Powers

- Kousser & Phillips, chapters 6, 7, 9 (pp. 157-218, 250-260)

Section 4: State Courts

Week 12: April 9-11

Controversies Involving State Judicial Selection

- Gibson, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-56)

Weeks 13: April 16-18

Judicial Elections in the American States

- Gibson, chapters 3, 4, and 5 (pp. 57-104)

Research Papers Due: April 18

Week 14: April 23-25

Policy Outcomes and the Behavior of State Judges

- Gibson, chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 105-142)

Quiz #5: April 25

Week 15: April 31-May 2

Comparative State Policy and Review

- No readings

Final Exam: Monday, May 7 from 11:00AM-1:30PM

## **VI. Core Expectations, Communication and Citizenship**

### *Expectations of Students*

I have strong yet reasonable expectations for students. To perform well, students are expected to work - meaning a combination of recurrent attendance, frequent class participation, and careful attention to the readings is required. Students that do not attend class regularly, do not take careful class notes, and do not carefully read the assigned material will have a more difficult time with the exams. Additionally, I encourage students to see me during my office hours. Where questions arise about the content of the course or a student's grade, office hours represent important opportunities for interaction between students and their instructor. You are in charge of your education. If something is unclear to you, it is your responsibility to seek the answer in a timely manner.

### *Communication*

The University has supplied all students with an official email address. All communication will be directed to you through that address. As such, you are responsible for checking your e-mail regularly. Per university policy, I will not respond to non-university addresses. Also, remember to formalize your email by addressing the e-mail, providing a proper subject, and always signing your email. Note that one-line comments or questions are not enough for me to know what you are trying to say - be sure to provide enough detail about the context of your comment or question to allow a sufficient answer on my part.

### *Citizenship*

While each student pays a significant cost to attend this course, sometimes an individual is less interested in learning, and disturbs others during class (i.e., talking, receiving or making phone calls, or text messaging). As a result of student complaints, use of cell phones during class will result in a two-point deduction from a student's final semester grade for each offense (one offense equals 2 points, two offenses equals 4 points, etc.). I also reserve the right to ask students to leave class when cell phone use is observed. Otherwise, do not walk in late, leave early, or push around others to find a seat once class has begun - it disturbs others! Be careful with laptop computers. Unfortunately, a majority of students use their laptops to access the web for non-related material, play games or read email rather than paying attention to the lecture. Where I see a laptop being used, I assume (rather accurately) that it is being used for something other than class purposes.

### **VII. Special Notes:**

1. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices – Students are instructed to turn off their cell phones prior to class. See the comments about cell phone usage in the Citizenship section. Usage of a cell phone or other non-permitted electronic device during an examination or quiz will result in a grade of zero on that examination or quiz.
2. Test Conduct – All materials must be removed from one's desk during an examination or quiz. Additionally, headwear (e.g., hats), sunglasses, and earphones are not permitted during an examination.
3. Academic Integrity - All students are expected to obey the civil and penal statutes of the State of Texas and the United States, the Regents' Rules and Regulations of The University of Texas System, the rules and regulations of the University, and the orders or instructions issued by an administrative official of the University or U.T. System in the course of his/her duties, and to observe standards of conduct that are compatible with the University's function as an educational institution. Any student found to engage in cheating, plagiarism, or collusion will be sanctioned.
4. Inclement Weather – If a class is canceled due to inclement weather, its subject will be delayed until the following class. Similarly, all tests canceled because of inclement weather will be delivered during the following class. For information related to weather related class cancellations please call (972) 601-2049.
5. Emergency Exit Procedures - Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which can be found to the left and right behind the lecture podium. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator, but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.
6. Campus Carry - Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>.
7. Students with Disabilities - Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to speak with the instructor during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential.
8. Discrimination Policy – The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos).
9. Title IX Policy - The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. For information regarding

Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or [jmhood@uta.edu](mailto:jmhood@uta.edu).

10. Student Support Services - The University of Texas at Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. These resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. Among the support services on campus, the IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers free tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email [IDEAS@uta.edu](mailto:IDEAS@uta.edu) or call (817) 272-6593. For more information, students may contact the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107 or visit [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).
11. Syllabus Changes – The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus at any time during the semester.