

SYLLABUS
PLSC 389: State Politics
Loyola University Chicago
Fall 2019

MWF 2:45 – 3:35 pm
Crown Center 141

Instructor

Dr. Eric Hansen

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Office Location: Coffey Hall 326B

Office Hours: MWF 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm, or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Though we most often see reports about the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court in the news, the vast majority of political decision making in the United States takes place at the state and local levels of government. The actions that state and local officials take are important and consequential. Differences in state laws can determine the quality of our education, whether or not we have access to healthcare, when and where we can purchase alcohol, how much we pay in taxes, and whether we can be put to death for our crimes. State governments generally have a more immediate impact on Americans' lives than the federal government.

This course serves as an overview of American government and politics at the state level. It adopts the comparative perspective of state politics, in which we will learn about the 50 states by observing the similarities and differences between their political systems and institutions. Though Illinois is an important state among the 50, this is not a course specifically about Illinois government and politics.

Students enrolled in this class will:

- 1) Understand the variation between states in terms of the composition of their citizenries, their governmental institutions, and their laws and policies.
- 2) Learn to think critically about political decision-making and outcomes in the states.
- 3) Acquire knowledge of how to participate and engage with the political system at the state and local levels
- 4) Develop skills in articulating and expressing their thoughts through speaking and analytical writing.

Required Texts

None

Recommended Texts

Gray, Virginia, Russell L. Hanson, and Thad Kousser. 2017. *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis* (11th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

Optional Texts [Excerpts assigned for class reading will be posted on Sakai]

- Bowler, Shaun, and Todd Donovan. 1998. *Demanding Choices*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dye, Thomas R., and Susan A. McManus. 2019. *Politics in States and Communities*. 15th Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Franko, William, and Christopher Witko. 2017. *The New Economic Populism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haider-Markel, Donald P. 2010. *Out and Running*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Hall, Melinda Gann. 2013. *Attacking Judges*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hopkins, David A. 2017. *Red Fighting Blue*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Key, V.O., Jr. 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. New York: Knopf.
- Kousser, Thad, and Justin H. Phillips. 2012. *The Power of American Governors*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Masket, Seth E. 2009. *No Middle Ground*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Squire, Peverill, and Gary Moncrief. 2015. *State Legislatures Today*. 2nd Ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Grades

Final grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to individual grades based on overall performance in the course and/or extenuating circumstances. There will be **NO** extra credit provided.

Letter Grade	Percentage Score
A	93-100
A-	90-92.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99

D
F

60-66.99
59.99 or below

The proportion of each assignment as part of the overall grade is as follows:

Attendance & Participation: 10%
Reading Quizzes: 15%
State Geography Quiz: 5%
Writing Assignment: 25%
Midterm Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 25%

Attendance & Participation

Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your overall course grade. Students are expected to participate in activities and in-class discussions of the course material. Though there is no formal attendance requirement, attendance is an integral part of discussions. You can't join the conversation if you don't show up! Grades are assigned according to the following scheme:

100%: Regular attendance, daily or near-daily contributions to discussion
90%: Regular attendance, occasional contributions to discussion
80%: Intermittent attendance, occasional to rare contributions, lack of attention
70%: Rare attendance, rare contributions, disruptive behavior
60% or lower: I don't recognize your face.

A Note on Punctuality

I will begin class promptly at our designated meeting time. Students should arrive five minutes before class begins in order to find a seat and make any preparations of materials before class starts. Getting to class ahead of time is also a courtesy to other students, who may become distracted by late arrivers. Students who must routinely arrive late due to circumstances outside their control (for example, a class immediately before mine on the opposite side of campus) should inform me at the beginning of the semester.

Reading Quizzes

Students will be given six pop quizzes throughout the semester to assess their understanding of the assigned reading for the day. All assigned readings must be completed by the beginning of the class period on the day listed on the reading calendar below. Questions will assess students' comprehension of the major themes of the assigned readings. At the end of the semester, I will drop each student's lowest reading quiz grade from the calculation of the overall course grade.

All quizzes must be completed in class. No makeup quizzes will be given unless I receive written communication from another university official (e.g. dean, athletics official) requesting me to excuse an absence. I do not request or accept doctors' notes. I understand students must sometimes miss class for reasons outside their control, which is why I drop the lowest quiz grade.

State Geography Quiz

Students will be given an in-class quiz asking them to demonstrate their knowledge of the geography of the 50 states. Knowing the geography of the country is important for interpreting map-based data, understanding the geographic or demographic variables driving state-level political decision making, and keeping up with lecture and class discussion. Students will be asked to identify states on a map, as well as list capitals, major cities, and regional affiliations. Students will receive a study guide with all answers in advance, though they must complete the quiz completely from memory. (Exercises and exam questions later in the semester will also require you to apply your geographic knowledge to answer the questions correctly.)

Writing Assignment

Students will complete a ten-page research paper, worth 25% of the course grade. Students will select a law or policy adopted by any single state in the last five years, and explain what political forces led that state to adopt the law or policy in its final form. I will provide full instructions for the writing assignment within the first month of class.

Midterm & Final Exam

There will be two exams during the semester. The midterm is worth 20% of the course grade, while the final exam is worth 25% of the course grade. Exams will test students on the material covered in the half of the course preceding it. In other words, the final exam is not cumulative. Each exam will contain a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. I will not offer the final exam at any time besides the time listed below unless the student has petitioned their dean's office for a change in exam time.

Communication, Office Hours, Question about Grades

Please direct all communication with me outside class or office hours through my campus email account, which can be found in the header of this syllabus. I check my campus email account several times daily and will try to reply to student emails as quickly as possible. That being said, students should not necessarily expect me to reply immediately to emails sent to me at the last minute. I may not be able to reply to questions about course material the morning of an exam or provide resources for an assignment the night before it is to be turned in.

My office hours exist solely for you to visit me with questions about this class. If you can't make those times, email me to schedule a more convenient appointment time. Email is only for brief communications. If you have long and complicated questions, come to my office hours. I will not send grades over email—check Sakai for the latest updates. After I have graded and returned your assignments, there is a 24-hour moratorium before I will answer questions about that assignment.

Technology Use

I will not allow the use of computers, tablets, or other electronic devices during class. There may be some days when I will ask you to bring a computer with you (if there is an online activity, for example). Most of class time will involve lecture or discussion of articles and concepts related to the course—this can be accomplished without computers.

The use of cell phones or other mobile communication devices is strictly prohibited during class,

except in the event of an emergency. Cell phones minimally should be put on silent but preferably should be turned off. Students discovered using their phones during class time will be asked to turn off their phones and place them out of reach.

Student Accessibility

Loyola University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with Students Accessibility Center (SAC), located in Sullivan Center, Suite 117. Students should provide me with an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with me individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. For more information or further assistance, please call (773) 508-3700 or visit <http://www.luc.edu/sac>.

Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for adhering to university policy on academic honesty by avoiding acts of plagiarism or cheating. Students can find more information about what constitutes plagiarism at the Writing Center's website: (<http://www.luc.edu/writing/studentresources/onlineresources>). Consult the College of Arts and Sciences' statement to learn more about college policy: (<http://www.luc.edu/cas/advising/academicintegritystatement>). I reserve the right to exercise case-by-case discretion in assigning penalties for acts of academic dishonesty. Generally speaking, however, students should expect to receive a score of "0" on any assignment or exam where they are observed plagiarizing, cheating, or passing off someone else's ideas as their own. If more than one instance occurs during the semester, offending students should expect to fail my course. I report all acts of academic dishonesty to the Dean of College of Arts and Science's office.

Readings

Students are expected to complete daily reading assignments in preparation for class. Students should read carefully and be ready to discuss the material, as discussions based around these readings will form the basis of the participation grade. I reserve the right to make changes to the reading list and will inform students well in advance of any changes.

All reading assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class on the day the assignment is listed. Students are responsible for understanding the material from the assigned readings for the midterm and final exams.

All reading assignments are to be completed by the beginning of class on the day the assignment is listed. All articles/chapters will be posted on Sakai. Students may not share course materials with others outside of the class without my written permission.

<i>August</i>	
Monday 8/26 Introduction	Read course syllabus
Wednesday 8/28 Why Study States?	Read "Issues to Watch," <i>Governing</i>

Friday 8/30	NO CLASS – Dr. Hansen at conference
<i>September</i>	
Monday 9/2	NO CLASS – Labor Day
Wednesday 9/4 Federalism	Read <i>Federalist 45 & 46</i>
Friday 9/6 Federalism	Read Miller, “Representational Biases of Federalism”
Monday 9/9 Constitutions	Read Preambles and Bills/Declarations of Rights from: -U.S. Constitution -North Carolina State Constitution -Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania -Constitution of the State of Iowa
Wednesday 9/11 Constitutions	No reading State Geography Quiz
Friday 9/13 Parties	Read Key, Ch. 1 & 14
Monday 9/16 Parties	Read Masket, pp. 41-43, 108-129 (optional: pp. 129-59)
Wednesday 9/18 Parties & Elections	Read Hopkins, Ch. 2
Friday 9/20 Elections	Listen “Why Can’t We Just Burn Gerrymandering to the Ground?” and “It’s Probably Not Possible to End Gerrymandering,” <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>
Monday 9/23 Interest Groups	Read “Dynamic State Interest Group Systems,” <i>Interest Groups & Advocacy</i>
Wednesday 9/25 Direct Democracy	Read Bowler and Donovan, Ch. 1
Friday 9/27 Direct Democracy	Read “The Most Important Ballot Measure Results,” <i>Governing</i>
Monday 9/30 State-Level Media	Read “America’s Shifting Statehouse Press,” <i>Pew Research Center</i> , p. 5 - 36
<i>October</i>	
Wednesday 10/2 Review	No reading Bring questions for in-class exam review
Friday 10/4 Exam	Midterm Exam
Monday 10/7	NO CLASS – Fall Break
Wednesday 10/9 Legislatures	Read Squire & Moncrief, Ch. 1
Friday 10/11 Legislatures	Read Squire & Moncrief, Ch. 4
Monday 10/14 Representation	Read Haider-Markel, Ch. 4

Wednesday 10/16 Governors	Read Kousser & Phillips, pp. 1-22
Friday 10/18 Statewide Executives	Read “State AGs Are Increasingly Powerful – and Partisan,” <i>Governing</i>
Monday 10/21 Bureaucracy	Read “Taken,” <i>The New Yorker</i>
Wednesday 10/23 Courts	No reading
Friday 10/25 Courts	Read Hall, Ch. 2
Monday 10/28 Local Governments	Read “Governments Resisting the Urge to Merge,” <i>Governing</i> Read “Illinois: Land of 7,000 Governments,” <i>Chicago</i>
Wednesday 10/30 Local Governments	Read Dye and McManus, Ch. 11
<i>November</i>	
Friday 11/1 Local Governments	Read “In the Elusive Search for Affordable Housing, Clues Emerge,” <i>Governing</i> Read “Separated by Design,” <i>Connecticut Mirror</i>
Monday 11/4 Economic Development	Read “Giving Away Louisiana,” <i>The Advocate [Baton Rouge]</i>
Wednesday 11/6 Economic Development	No reading
Friday 11/8 Fiscal Policy	Read “Who Pays?” pp. 1-25, <i>Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy</i>
Monday 11/11 Fiscal Policy	No reading
Wednesday 11/13 Fiscal Policy	Read Franko and Witko, Ch. 2
Friday 11/15 Urban-Rural Tensions	Read Cramer, Ch. 4
Monday 11/18 Education	Read “State That Spend the Most and the Least on Education,” <i>Governing</i> Read “Despite Teachers’ Strike Success, Schools Are Still Funded Less Than a Decade Ago,” <i>Governing</i>
Wednesday 11/20 Education	Read “Americans Don’t Realize State Funding for Higher Ed Is Falling,” <i>The Hechinger Report</i>
Friday 11/22 Criminal Justice	Read “Law Enforcement Overview,” <i>NCSL</i> Read “Update: Changes in State Imprisonment,” <i>Brennan Center for Justice</i>

Monday 11/25 Criminal Justice	Final Papers Due to Sakai No reading
Wednesday 11/27 & Friday 11/29	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break
<i>December</i>	
Monday 12/2 Healthcare & Welfare	Read “Life in Obamacare’s Dead Zone,” <i>NYT Magazine</i>
Wednesday 12/4 Healthcare & Welfare	Read “Medicaid Work Requirements Hit Roadblocks,” <i>Pew Stateline</i>
Friday 12/6 Review	No reading Bring questions for in-class exam review
Thursday 12/12	Final Exam – 1:00 pm

Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. If changes are made, students will be informed through email and verbally in class, and a new syllabus document will be posted on Sakai.