

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 231
LOCAL POLITICS
3 CREDIT HOURS
FALL SEMESTER, 2009**

232 CHSS BUILDING
MWF 11:00 A.M.- 11:50 A.M.

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OFFICE HOURS: MWF 10:00A.M.--11:00A.M.
TuTh 12:30P.M.--1:30P.M.

Course Description:

This course is intended to acquaint students with the role and practice of local governments in the United States.

Local government exists in a variety of forms across the United States. Consequently, in this course we will examine the various types and structures of local governments, including counties, school districts, special districts, cities, etc. Students will address the fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories about local governments necessary to develop a base upon which to build a more complete knowledge of local governments in the U.S.

In this course we will address, among other subjects, the role of local elected and appointed officials, the local media, local interest groups, citizens, and neighborhoods as well as other participants in local politics. Students will learn to apply course materials to improve their analytical abilities, problem solving, and decision making.

The history and development of local governments will be addressed; the proper role and authority of city managers will be examined; the accountability of local government to citizens will be considered; the importance of media and communication and information shared between local governments and citizens will be analyzed. The Constitutional and legal authority of local governments will be identified.

Students will also be encouraged to develop a clearer understanding of and commitment to personal values and to apply those values to their evaluation of and participation in local government.

Course Structure:

Lecture/discussion; multiple choice and essay exams; a written project.

Course Objectives:

- Students will gain factual knowledge (terminology), classifications, methods, trends) about local government.
- Students will learn fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories about local government.
- Students will develop a clearer understanding of, and commitment to personal values about local government.
- Students will learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
- Students will acquire an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers.

Required Textbooks:

Bruce Katz and Robert E. Lang, Eds., Redefining Urban and Suburban America, Brookings Inst., Washington, D.C., 2003.

Bill Schmickle, The Politics of Historic Districts, Rowman and Littlefield, London, 2007.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance requirements are compatible with Academic Policy Statement 800401. Students should review that policy statement for a more detailed explanation of attendance policy.

Exams and Grading Plan:

There will be three examinations. Each exam will be worth 25% of the grade in the course. The tests will be a combination of multiple choice and essay. Make up exams are the responsibility of the student to call attention and see that unfinished work is completed before the end of the semester.

Grades will be precisely and specifically calculated and assigned according to traditional grading scales and procedures using letter and numerical grades. A traditional ten point breakdown of grades from A to F will be followed.

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty policies for this class are compatible with Academic policy Statement 810213. Students with any questions should consult that statement for more details.

ADA:

Policies for this class are compatible with the Americans for Disabilities Act, and students with any questions should work with the Professor to alleviate any difficulties.

Religious Holidays:

Religious Holidays are respected.

Instructor Evaluations:

Students will be asked to complete course/instructor evaluation forms toward the end of the semester.

Written Assignments:

Each student will select a research topic of some significance to local politics and government and provide at midterm a beginning bibliography of 15 sources relevant to their topic. These sources will include 5 books, 5 journal articles, and 5 miscellaneous sources that may include Internet information and/or interviews. At the end of the semester each student will provide a 5 page essay expressing their current understanding of the nature, status, and importance of the topic they have addressed.

Required Supplies:

No supplies are needed for this course unless we are talking about notebooks, pens and pencils, scantrons, etc.

Tentative Course Outline:

Monday, August 24, 2009	Introduction to Local Government 1
Wednesday, August 26, 2009	Introduction to Local Government 2
Friday, August 28, 2009	What is Politics?
Monday, August 31, 2009	What is Public Policy?
Wednesday, September 2, 2009	Types of Local Governments
Friday, September 4, 2009	The Origin of Cities
Monday, September 7, 2009	Labor Day, No Class
Wednesday, September 9, 2009	Types of Cities
Friday, September 11, 2009	History of Cities
Monday, September 14, 2009	Structures of Local Government
Wednesday, September 16, 2009	Mayor Council
Friday, September 18, 2009	City Manager
Monday, September 21, 2009	Commission
Wednesday, September 23, 2009	Special Districts
Friday, September 25, 2009	Immigration and Cities 1
Monday, September 28, 2009	Immigration and Cities 2
Wednesday, September 30, 2009	TEST 1
Friday, October 2, 2009	Big City Political Machines 1
Monday, October 5, 2009	Machines 2
Wednesday, October 7, 2009	The Rise and Fall of Machines

Friday, October 9, 2009	The Progressive Era
Monday, October 12, 2009	The Reform Movement
Wednesday, October 14, 2009	Dillon's Rule
Friday, October 16, 2009	Home Rule
Monday, October 19, 2009	City Charters
Wednesday, October 21, 2009	Initiative, Referendum, Recall
Friday, October 23, 2009	Rise of the Suburbs 1
Monday, October 26, 2009	Sprawl
Wednesday, October 28, 2009	Growth and Growth Management
Friday, October 30, 2009	Suburbs 2
Monday, November 2, 2009	Zoning
Wednesday, November 4, 2009	Transportation at the Local Level
Friday, November 6, 2009	Housing and Settlement Patterns
Monday, November 9, 2009	Community Power
Wednesday, November 11, 2009	Local Media
Friday, November 13, 2009	Local Elections
Monday, November 16, 2009	TEST 2
Wednesday, November 18, 2009	Mayors
Friday, November 20, 2009	Women and Minorities in Local Politics
Monday, November 23, 2009	Economic Development
Wednesday, November 25, 2009	Thanksgiving, No Class

Friday, November 27, 2009	Thanksgiving, No Class
Monday, November 30, 2009	Federalism
Wednesday, December 2, 2009	Historic Districts
Friday, December 4, 2009	City Councils
Monday, December 7, 2009	Counties
Wednesday, December 9, 2009	Local Interest Groups, Cultural Districts, and Local Art
Friday, December 11, 2009	Last Class Day—Review
December 14-17	Final Exams

Classroom Rules of Conduct:

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>

Section 5.2.22 defines classroom disturbances. Cell phones and other typical disturbances should be reserved for emergencies.