

American State and Local Government  
POS 2112  
[100 Williamson Hall \(WM\)](#)

Fall 2013  
MW 8:30-9:20am (Period 2)

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### Course Description

State and local governments affect the daily lives of all persons living in the United States. While they have always been important in the formulation and implementation of public policies in the US, the role of state and local government has increased considerably during the past 20 years. Some observers have called this trend a “resurgence in the states,” as state and local governments have become entrepreneurial actors in realms as diverse as health care, education, corrections, economic development and land use planning, environmental protection, and welfare. As sub-national governments have taken on more programmatic responsibilities, they have also taken over much of the fiscal responsibility for their innovations. This course examines the politics, institutions, and policy processes of state and local governments. We will strive to assess how (or if) variation in state political institutions shapes the politics and policies in different states. Specifically, we will take advantage of our location and focus on the politics, governmental structures, and policies in Florida, Alachua County, and the City of Gainesville. By examining our immediate surroundings, while noting the general patterns and differences across states and localities, we will be able to provide coherence that would not be possible in an effort to understand all state and local governments.

In order to facilitate in-class discussions, students are encouraged to keep abreast of state and local politics in Florida. There are four excellent web sites that provide links to newspaper accounts dealing with Florida state and local politics:

<http://www.flapolitics.com/>  
<http://flapolitics.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.sayfiereview.com/>  
<http://saintpetersblog.com/>

On my webpage, [www.electionsmith.com](http://www.electionsmith.com), I blog occasionally on Florida voting and election issues as well as well on ballot measures across the states as it is related to my research. You can also follow me on Twitter: [@electionsmith](https://twitter.com/electionsmith), especially the “list” I created that is dedicated to Florida state politics: <https://twitter.com/electionsmith/pos2112>.

### Course Requirements

#### **Required Text (copies on reserve at Library West)**

Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, [State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston: Cengage, 2013). (It should be bundled with the Florida Politics module.)

It’s a leading textbook in the country, so you should be able to find some used copies on-line. Be sure to get the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Bookstores mark-up the price quite heavily. You’re better off buying directly from the publisher, [online](#) (hard copy or e-book); you can even rent it or purchase individual eChapters (\$7.99 each) from the publisher, [Cengage](#).

All of the other required readings are available for free online (hypertext links are provided in the online syllabus). Print them out immediately, as the hypertext links are subject to change.

### **Attendance/Participation**

Students are expected to do the readings, attend class, and participate in discussion sections. My lectures will be organized around the topics and readings found in the schedule that follows. I tend to lecture in a quasi-interactive fashion. In order for this to be a successful course, it is imperative that you do the assigned readings *before* class, give yourself time to think about them, and prepare yourself to discuss them in class and especially in your discussion section.

Attendance in your discussion section is mandatory, and the Teaching Assistants (TAs) will take attendance. You must attend the discussion section for which you are officially enrolled. If you cannot attend class on a regular basis, I would urge you to drop this class immediately. Your attendance and participation (in your discussion section and in the general lecture) will count as 10% of your final grade.

### **Short Essays**

Students will write four short essays. These essays, which are aimed to increase student participation in discussion sections, are to be critical reflections on the questions posed in the syllabus each week. Students may choose from any of the 12 opportunities to write their four short essays. Each short essay is to be roughly 800 words (two to three double-spaced pages in 12 point font) and may be written in the first person. A reference page is only required if you're drawing from or citing research not in the syllabus.

Your essays will be graded on the following:

- 1) A clear introductory statement of your argument.
- 2) Your ability to assemble evidence to support your argument.
- 3) Your ability to write a succinct, well-organized, well-edited short essay.
- 4) Your ability to answer the question asked.

A hard copy of your short essay is **due at the start** of your designated discussion class for the week of the assignment. Each of the four short essays is worth five points, for a total of 20% of your final grade. *TAs will accept no late short essays and you may not submit an essay on a topic from a prior week.*

### **"Pop" Quizzes**

There will be 10 unannounced "pop" quizzes during my general lectures. The quizzes will be on the on-line readings assigned for that day's class. Quizzes will typically be multiple choice or true/false questions and are designed to show evidence that you've done the readings. They are not "gotcha" quizzes. Each quiz is worth two points, for a total of 20% of your final grade. Students will receive one point for an incorrect answer; two points for a correct answer. *No makeup quizzes will be permitted except for official University functions that are brought to Dr. Smith's attention **prior** to the class you know you will miss.* I do not provide any makeup quizzes for sickness, family issues, or personal trials or tribulations; we all have them, occasionally.

### **Exams**

There are two in-class exams. Both will test your knowledge of the material covered in the lectures and in the assigned readings. The exams will have multiple choice and short essay questions. Both are worth 25% of your final grade. Makeup exams are not permitted except in extenuating circumstances, and may only be arranged by Dr. Smith (and not the TAs) prior to the exam. An unexcused absence on an exam results in a grade of 0%.

### **Extra Credit**

Students may receive up to two points of extra credit toward their final grade by attending a city or county commission meeting (held downtown) and writing up a 2-3 page critical analysis of the proceedings. Here are the links to the [city](#) and [county](#) commissions' scheduled meetings. Your critical analyses must be turned to your TA during the discussion section of the week you attended the meeting.

### **Summary of Grading**

“Short Essays”	20% (4 x 5% each)
“Pop” Quizzes	20% (10 x 2% each)
Exams	50% (2 x 25% each)
Discussion Section Attendance/Participation	10%

### **Grading**

The following cutoffs will be used for grades:

A	90-100	C	70-75
A-	88-89	C-	68-69
B+	86-87	D+	66-67
B	80-85	D	60-65
B-	78-79	D-	58-59
C+	76-77	E	57 & below

### Grade Values for GPA Conversion

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0

For more information about UF’s Grades and Grade Policies:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

I do not “curve” exams or final grades. As such, everyone in class may receive an ‘A.’ Only in the rarest of circumstances will I grant an Incomplete (‘I’) grade.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

All students are expected to abide by the [UF Honor Code](#), which reads, in part: “I affirm that this work in its entirety is mine alone, and that I have received no outside assistance from anyone else, including classmates, other students, or faculty. I understand that plagiarism, seeking or receiving other unauthorized assistance, or any false representations regarding this exam [or other work] are serious offenses punishable under the Student Honor Code.” Any student transgressing UF’s Honor Code will receive an ‘E’ for the course and will be referred to the appropriate University authorities for disciplinary action.

### **Classroom Decorum**

This is a large lecture class. Please be respectful of those students around you. During lectures, you are welcome to use electronic devices in class, but only to take notes and pull up online materials. You are hereby advised that [Florida law forbids](#) the recording or filming of conversations without the consent of all parties, and any rebroadcast of my lecture is strictly prohibited. If you’d like to record my lectures for your personal use, you must get my permission first. Again, if granted, the recordings may be for your personal use only. **I expressly do not grant permission to copy, transcribe, reproduce, or otherwise publicly disseminate materials from my lectures.**

### **Students with Special Needs**

It is the responsibility of students requiring any special accommodation for this course to make an appointment to see me at the beginning of the semester. I will make every effort possible to meet your needs in accordance to University guidelines.

### **Office Hours**

If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to consult either me or your TA during our weekly office hours. You may drop by during our scheduled office hours, or you may email us.

## Course Schedule

### Section I: State Politics in a Federal System

- Lecture 1  
21 Aug      *Course Overview: Studying State & Local Governments*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 1
- Lecture 2  
26 Aug      *Political Institutions and Cultures of State & Local Governments*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 1
- Lecture 3  
28 Aug      *Florida's Political History*  
Readings:  
Colburn, "[Florida's Megatrends](#)" (Introduction)  
Weissert & Crew, "[Florida Module](#)"  
Romano, "[Sadly, Florida Politics has Even More of the Same](#)"
- Discussion 1  
29/30 Aug      *Political Institutions and Cultures of State & Local Governments*  
**Short Essay #1 Due. Topic:** Using the comparative method of political analysis, offer two hypotheses—one cultural, the other institutional—explaining why Florida has a Stand Your Ground law, but other states, such as New York, do not. Data are available from this [map](#).
- No Class: Labor Day  
2 Sept
- Lecture 4  
4 Sept      *History of American Federalism*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 2  
Hamilton, "[Federalist #17](#)"  
Madison, "[Federalist #45](#)"
- Discussion 2  
5/6 Sept      *Federalism: State Politics within a Federal System*  
**Short Essay #2 Due. Topic:** Discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of federalism, drawing on the recent passage of the legalization of marijuana in Colorado and Washington. Is there a crisis of federalism? Do you think the federal government should be able to make the possession and sale of marijuana illegal, or should it be left up to the states?
- Lecture 5  
9 Sept      *State Politics within a Federal System*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 2  
Grofum, "[Health Care Ruling Casts Doubts on Billions...](#)"  
WSJ, "[ObamaCare's Faux Federalism](#)"
- Lecture 6  
11 Sept      *A Case Study in Federalism & The Comparative Method: Conflict over Voting Rights in Florida*  
Readings:  
Herron & Smith, "[Congestion at the Polls](#)"  
Herron & Smith, "[Early Voting in Florida in the Aftermath of House Bill 1355](#)"
- Discussion 3  
12/13 Sept      *Florida's Political History*  
**Short Essay #3 Due. Topic:** Take a look at this [map](#) indicating the status of a state's health care exchange as mandated under ObamaCare. How might you use the comparative method of political analysis to explain the variation across the states? Without going into details about health care exchanges or ObamaCare, offer two rival (and testable) hypotheses for why some states might have adopted an exchange, others have partnered with the federal government, and others have completely resisted doing so?

## Section II: Linkages between Citizens and States

- Lecture 7  
16 Sept      *Participation, Elections and Representation*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 3  
Zambon, "[Balloting for the Busy](#)"  
ProPublica, "[Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know about Voter ID Laws](#)"
- Lecture 8  
18 Sept      *Participation, Elections and Representation*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 3  
Mayk, "[Group Targets Felon Voters](#)"  
Smith & Herron, "[The Effects of HB1355 on Voter Registration in Florida](#)"
- Discussion 4  
19/20 Sept      *Participation, Elections and Representation*  
**Short Essay #4 Due. Topic:** In July, 2013, the US Supreme Court in its *Shelby County v. Holder* decision struck down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, undermining the ability of the US Justice Department to "preclear" Section 5 election jurisdictions covered by the law when they make any changes affecting voting rights. Do you think the federal government should have a smaller say in how elections are administered, or do you think the states should be permitted to set their own election standards?
- Lecture 9  
23 Sept      *Direct Democracy*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 4  
Liptak, "[Secrecy Rejected on Ballot Petitions](#)"  
Dolan, "[Prop 8's Long and Winding Road to Legal Defeat](#)"
- Lecture 10  
25 Sept      *Direct Democracy*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 4  
Vock, "[Students Celebrate Approval of Maryland Dream Act](#)"  
Malewitz, "[Cost of Walker Recall Effort Topped \\$80 million](#)"
- Discussion 5  
26/27 Sept      *Direct Democracy*  
**Short Essay #5 Due. Topic:** Have citizen-initiated ballot measures have made government in Florida more or less accountable to the people in Florida? Be specific when making the affirmative or negative case.
- Lecture 11  
30 Sept      *Political Parties*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 5  
Sanders, "[California's top-two voting system changes campaigns](#)"  
Maxwell, "[You call this Fair?](#)"  
Goodman, "[Why Redistricting Commissions Aren't Immune from Politics](#)"
- Lecture 12  
2 Oct      *Political Parties*  
Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 5  
Campbell, "[North Carolina's GOP Beefs with the NYT](#)"  
NIMSP, "[Where was the Competition?](#)"

- Discussion 6 *Political Parties*  
3/4 Oct **Short Essay #6 Due. Topic:** Using the comparative method, and drawing on these [data](#), offer at least two rival hypotheses for why the campaign contributions of so many legislative candidates in some states, like Florida, are uncompetitive, whereas those in other states, like Maine.
- Lecture 13 *Interest Groups*  
7 Oct Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 6  
Nichols, "[Don't Just Pressure ALEC Sponsors, Name and Shame ALEC Legislators](#)"  
WFTV, "[League of Women Voters works to help voters understand amendments](#)"
- Lecture 14 *Interest Groups*  
9 Oct Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 6  
DeSlatte, "[\\$120m spent so far on lobbying in Tallahasee](#)"  
DeSlatte, "[Six months after he left office, Dean Cannon's lobbying firm banks \\$1.5m](#)"
- Discussion 7 *Interest Groups*  
10/11 Oct **Short Essay #7 Due. Topic:** Make an argument that interest groups are bad for the representation of ordinary citizens' interests. Provide examples from Florida in your response.
- Lecture 15 *Elections and Representation: Campaign Finance*  
14 Oct Readings:  
Shanton & Underhill, "[Citizens United and the States](#)"  
Goodman, "[Supreme Court Rules Corporations Can Spend in State Elections](#)"
- 1<sup>st</sup> EXAM (closed book, closed notes)**  
16 Oct In-Class
- 17/18 Oct No Discussion Sections
- Section III: Institutions and Processes**
- Lecture 16 *State Legislatures*  
21 Oct Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 7  
Kennedy, "[Florida's first openly gay state lawmakers say...](#)"  
Van Sickler, "[State House Speaker Will Weatherford makes \\$122K](#)"
- Lecture 17 *State Legislatures*  
23 Oct Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 7  
Goodman, "[States Brace for Huge Legislative Turnover](#)"  
Deslatte & Haughney, "[Despite Changes, Not much Difference in State Legislature](#)"
- Discussion 8 *State Legislatures*  
24/25 Oct **Short Essay #8 Due. Topic:** Make the case for legislative term limits in Florida.
- Lecture 18 *Governors*  
28 Oct Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 8  
Portnoy, "[Christy Looks Ahead to Big Victory in 2013](#)"  
Maynard, "[South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley Rallies GOP Women](#)"
- Lecture 19 *Governors*

30 Oct Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 8  
FOXNews, "[Governors' Salaries Fell Last Year Amid Budget Crises](#)"  
Vock, "[Govs enjoy quirky veto power](#)"  
Dixon, "[Gov. Rick Scott laid off more state workers last year than previous 5 combined](#)"

Discussion 9 *Governors*  
31 Oct/1 Nov **Short Essay #9 Due. Topic:** Some people argue that governors should be given maximum power to complete their jobs. Make an argument opposing this position, contending that the powers of governors should be more limited.

Lecture 20 *State Courts*  
4 Nov Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 9  
Liptak, "[Rendering Justice, with one Eye on Reelection](#)"  
Rayfield, "[Conservatives Fail to Oust Judges in Iowa and Florida](#)"

Lecture 21 *State Courts*  
6 Nov Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 9  
Davis, "[Power of the Florida court system at the center of Amendment 5](#)"  
Man, "[Political questions swirl over pending Rick Scott judge pick](#)"

No Discussions: Homecoming  
7/8 Nov

### Section III: State & Local Public Policy

Lecture 22 *State & Local Fiscal Policy*  
11 Nov Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 10  
Povich, "[Tax Revenue Swings, Federal Uncertainty](#)"  
Luppino-Esposito, "[Budget Gimmicks Update](#)"

Lecture 23 *Local Politics*  
13 Nov Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 11  
[Gainesville Mayor and City Commission](#) (explore)  
[Alachua County Board of Commissioners](#) (explore)

Discussion 10 *Local Politics*  
14/15 Nov **Short Essay #10 Due. Topic:** In August, Alachua County [added](#) sexual orientation to its human rights ordinance. Make an argument for why this was a positive change to the county's ordinance.

Lecture 24 *Morality Policy*  
18 Nov Readings:  
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 13  
Eilperin, "[A Guide to Where Abortion Laws are being Rewritten](#)"  
Wiltz, "[New Anti-Abortion Strategy Pays Off](#)"

Lecture 25      *Social Welfare and Health Care Policy*  
20 Nov      Readings:  
                 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 14  
                 Torres, "[Poverty, Homelessness Rising Sharply among Florida Students](#)"  
                 Barrow, "[Health Care Reform Forces Republican Governors to Walk Fine Line](#)"  
                 Prah, "[Medicaid Tops 'Fiscal Cliff' as Top Budget Concern](#)"

Discussion 11      *Social Welfare and Health Care Policy*  
21/22 Nov      **Short Essay #11 Due. Topic:** Write a policy memo defending Representative Artiles' legislation that would authorize state education officials to create a special category of funding for school districts with higher percentages of low income students.

Lecture 26      *Education Policy*  
25 Nov      Readings:  
                 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 15  
                 Wieder, "[Choices Often Limited in 'School Choice' Programs](#)"  
                 Frontline, "[The Education of Michelle Rhee](#)"

No Class: Thanksgiving Break  
27 Nov

No Discussions: Thanksgiving Break  
28/29 Nov

Lecture 27      *Review Session*  
2 Dec

**2nd EXAM (closed book, closed notes)**  
4 Dec      In-Class