

American State and Local Government
POS 2112
109 Little

Spring 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 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, 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 exclusively 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*](#), 3rd 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 3rd 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 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 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. The **use of electronic devices such as cell phones, smart phones, PDAs, and all other handheld devices in class is prohibited.** Please turn them off prior to the lecture. You may use a laptop to take notes if you so desire, but please limit the use of your laptop to taking notes. Because they are often a distraction to other students, use of laptops is limited to the designated section of the auditorium (in the front of the classroom, to your right when facing the podium). [Florida law forbids](#) the recording or filming of conversations without the consent of all parties. If you’d like to record my lectures, please get my permission first. 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 *Course Overview: Studying State & Local Governments*
7 Jan Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 1
- Lecture 2 *Political Institutions and Cultures of State & Local Governments*
9 Jan Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 1
- 10/11 Jan **No Discussion Sections**
- Lecture 3 *Political Institutions and Cultures of State & Local Governments*
14Jan Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 1
 Bryce, "[Nature of the American State](#)"
- Lecture 4 *Florida's Political History*
16 Jan Readings:
 Colburn, "[Florida's Megatrends](#)" (Introduction)
 Weissert & Crew, "Florida Module"
- Discussion 1 *Political Institutions and Cultures of State & Local Governments*
17/18 Jan **Short Essay #1 Due. Topic:** Use the comparative method of political analysis to offer two hypotheses—one cultural, the other institutional—explaining why public spending on K-12 public education in Florida is lower than other states, such as Massachusetts, based on data from this [map](#).
- No Class: Martin Luther King Holiday
21 Jan
- Lecture 5 *History of American Federalism*
23 Jan Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 2
 Hamilton, "[Federalist #17](#)"
 Madison, "[Federalist #45](#)"
- Discussion 2 *Florida's Political History*
24/25 Jan **Short Essay #2 Due. Topic:** Take a look at this [map](#) measuring public accountability in the American states. How might you use the comparative method of political analysis to explain the variation across the states? Without going into details about how Public Integrity measured state ethics, open records, and disclosure laws, offer two rival hypotheses for why some states might have *lower* public accountability scores.
- Lecture 6 *State Politics within a Federal System*
28 Jan Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 2
 Grover, "[Health Care Ruling Casts Doubts on Billions...](#)"
 WSJ, "[ObamaCare's Faux Federalism](#)"

Lecture 7 *A Case Study in Federalism: Conflict over Voting Rights in Florida*
30 Jan Readings:
 Herron & Smith, "[House Bill 1355 and Voter Registration in Florida](#)"
 Herron & Smith, "Early Voting in Florida in the Aftermath of House Bill 1355"

Discussion 3 *Federalism: State Politics within a Federal System*
31 Jan/1 Feb **Short Essay #3 Due. Topic:** Discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of federalism, drawing on the recent debate over 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?

Section II: Linkages between Citizens and States

Lecture 8 *Participation, Elections and Representation*
4 Feb Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 3
 Zambon, "[Balloting for the busy](#)"
 ProPublica, "[Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know about Voter ID Laws](#)"

Lecture 9 *Participation, Elections and Representation*
6 Feb Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 3
 Mayk, "[Group Targets Felon Voters](#)"
 "[Voter Registration in Four States](#)"

Discussion 4 *Participation, Elections and Representation*
7/8 Feb **Short Essay #4 Due. Topic:** In December, Senator Chris Coons of Delaware introduced legislation, the [FAST Voting Act](#), that proposes providing federal grant money to states to improve access to the ballot. Do you think the federal government should have a larger say in how elections are administered, or do you think the states should be permitted to set their own election standards?

Lecture 10 *Direct Democracy*
11 Feb Readings:
 Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 4
 Liptak, "[Secrecy Rejected on Ballot Petitions](#)"
 Connor, "[Even before Supreme Court Rules, Gay Marriage Battles Rage in the States](#)"

Lecture 11 *Direct Democracy*
13 Feb 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 *Direct Democracy*
14/15 Feb **Short Essay #5 Due. Topic:** Have citizen-initiated ballot measures have made government in Florida more accountable to the people in Florida? Why or why not?

Lecture 12 *Political Parties*
18 Feb 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 13
20 Feb *Political Parties*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 5
Goodman, "[Supreme Court Rules Corporations Can Spend in State Elections](#)"
On3PR, "[Nearly 2 Out of Every 5 Races Already Decided](#)"
- Discussion 6
21/22 Feb *Political Parties*
Short Essay #6 Due. Topic: Using the comparative method, offer at least two rival hypotheses for why so many legislative races in Florida are uncompetitive.
- Lecture 14
25 Feb *Interest Groups*
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 15
27 Feb *Interest Groups*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 6
DeSlatte, "[Companies, interests, spend \\$127m to lobby lawmakers](#)"
Saunders, "[Legislative session brought big paydays to some lobbyists](#)"
- Discussion 7
28 Feb/1 Mar *Interest Groups*
Short Essay #7 Due. Topic: Make the arguments that interest groups are good for the representation of citizen's interests. Provide examples from Florida in your response.
- 2-10 March SPRING BREAK**
- Lecture 16
11 Mar *Elections and Representation: Campaign Finance*
Readings:
Shanton & Underhill, "[Citizens United and the States](#)"
- 1st EXAM (closed book, closed notes)**
13 Mar In-Class
- 14/15 Mar No Discussion Sections
- Section III: Institutions and Processes**
- Lecture 17
18 Mar *State Legislatures*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 7
Kennedy, "[Florida's first openly gay state lawmakers say equality just part of their priority list](#)"
Deslatte & Haughney, "[Despite Changes, Not much Difference in State Legislature](#)"
- Lecture 18
20 Mar *State Legislatures*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 7
Kurtz, "[Do American Legislatures Meet International Standards?](#)"
Goodman, "[States Brace for Huge Legislative Turnover](#)"
- Discussion 8
21/22 Mar *State Legislatures*
Short Essay #8 Due. Topic: Make the case against legislative term limits in Florida.

- Lecture 19
25 Mar *Governors*
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 20
27 Mar *Governors*
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
28/29 Mar *Governors*
Short Essay #9 Due. Topic: Some people argue that governors should be given maximum power to complete their jobs. Others argue that we should limit gubernatorial power so one person won't be too powerful. Which side do you fall on, and why?
- Lecture 21
1 Apr *State Courts*
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 22
3 April *State Courts*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 9
Davis, "[Power of the Florida court system at the center of Amendment 5](#)"
Morgan, "[Leon County judge accused of using office to promote for-profit religious biz](#)"
- Discussion 10
4/5 Apr *State Courts*
Short Essay #10 Due. Topic: Make the case that states should elect their Supreme Court justices in partisan elections.
- Section III: State & Local Public Policy**
- Lecture 23
8 Apr *State & Local Fiscal Policy*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 10
"[Evidence Counts](#)"
Malewitz, "[Report: Without Major Overhauls, State Budget Crises Will Linger](#)"
- Lecture 24
10 Apr *Local Government*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 11
[Gainesville Mayor and City Commission](#) (explore)
[Alachua County Board of Commissioners](#) (explore)
- Discussion 11
11/12 Apr *State Fiscal Policy and Growth Politics*
Short Essay #11 Due. Topic: On March 19, the voters of Gainesville [considered](#) changing the timing of its city elections. Do you agree with their decision? Why or why not?

- Lecture 25
15 Apr *Morality Policy*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 13
Prah, "[Abortion Ultrasound Debate Intensifies](#)"
Wiltz, "[New Anti-Abortion Strategy Pays Off](#)"
- Lecture 26
17 Apr *Social Welfare and Health Care Policy*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 14
Torres, "[Poverty, Homelessness Rising Sharply among Florida Students](#)"
Representative Artiles, "[House Bill 31](#)"
Barrow, "[Health Care Reform Forces Republican Governors to Walk Fine Line](#)"
Prah, "[Medicaid Tops 'Fiscal Cliff' as Top Budget Concern](#)"
- Discussion 12
18/19 Apr *Social Welfare and Health Care Policy*
Short Essay #12 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 27
22 Apr *Education Policy*
Readings:
Donovan, Mooney, & Smith, chapter 15
Wieder, "[Choices Often Limited in 'School Choice' Programs](#)"
Frontline, "[The Education of Michelle Rhee](#)"
- 2nd EXAM (closed book, closed notes)**
24 Apr In-Class