

Political Science 4015
American State Politics and Policy Making
Spring 2017

Dr. Hogan
238 Stubbs Hall
Telephone: 578-3217
rhogan1@lsu.edu

114 Audubon: TTH 1:30-2:50
Office Hours: Mon. 9-11 (or by appt.)

Course Description

This course introduces students to governmental institutions, political behavior, and policy issues at the state level. Our goal is to understand how different institutions and political conditions interact and play a role in the public policy process. A comparative approach is used to assess the political contexts, governmental institutions, and policies of the various states. While Louisiana will be used as a prominent example in our study, this is not a course on Louisiana politics.

The topics to be covered are divided into four broad sections. The first part of the course focuses on various political contexts in which state governments operate. The second part explores the institutions in which policy is created and implemented (legislative, executive, and judicial). A third section gives attention to differences across states in political party structures, interest group activities, and election practices. The fourth section of the course focuses on different policy areas. We will spend time covering problems or conditions that policies are intended to alter, the specific actions governments take in response to these conditions, and whether or not such efforts have their intended effects.

In addition to our focus on the substantive aspects of state politics, we will also spend time examining the methods used by scholars to answer questions on these topics. Part of our goal is to assess the evidence obtained by scholars and to consider alternative approaches. While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in our class discussions.

Required Reading Materials

There is one textbook available for purchase in the bookstore: *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis* (10th edition) by Virginia Gray, Russell L. Hanson, and Thad Kousser (2013, Sage and Congressional Quarterly Press). However, a large share of the reading load includes the articles listed on the course schedule below. Each is available for download from the class Moodle site. Note that a few of these readings are newspaper articles that will take only a few minutes to read, but many are lengthy pieces from academic journals that will take an hour or more to fully digest. These academic articles very often form the central part of our class discussions so it is imperative that you carefully read and take notes on these pieces prior to class. I also strongly recommend printing most of the articles given that I will often make reference to the tables and graphs in the articles. Reading constitutes a substantial portion of the work for this course, so make certain that you plan accordingly for each class. I conduct class in a manner that assumes students have read the course materials assigned for the day, so come to class prepared.

Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university's definition of work required for each credit hour: "not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester." Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom (for this class it means reading, studying, and working on the course assignments).

Course Requirements

The grade for the course is determined by a student's performance in the following areas:

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|----------------|-------------|
| Participation | 15% |
| Policy Project | 25% |
| Midterm Exam | 25% |
| Final Exam | 35% |
| <hr/> | |
| TOTAL | 100% |

Letter grades are assigned as follows based on a student's final numerical average:

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|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| F <60 | D- 60-62 | D 63-66 | D+ 67-69 | C- 70-72 | C 73-76 | C+ 77-79 | B- 80-82 | B 83-86 | B+ 87-89 | A- 90-92 | A 93-96 | A+ 97 ≥ |
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Participation

Classes are generally conducted in a lecture-discussion format so it is important to keep up with the readings and to come prepared for every class. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do this, it is necessary to complete the readings *in advance* and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments at the state level since these will often be used as examples in our discussions. Participation comprises a relatively large portion of your grade (15% total) and will be determined by three equally weighted components:

- Attendance: Attending class is important and your presence will be checked regularly with a sign-in sheet or by other mechanisms. Please make certain that you come to class on time so that you will be counted as present for the day. If you attend 100% of the time when I have checked attendance, your grade is 100, attend 90% of the time and it is 90, etc.
- Class Activities: Several times during the semester I will ask you to provide written comments about a topic, answer a brief question, take a quiz, or take part in a class exercise. Your performance on these activities will be counted as a component of your overall participation grade. There will be many of these opportunities throughout the semester and your grade is determined by your successful completion of each. If you satisfactorily complete all of them, you will receive 100% for this component of your participation, complete 90% and your grade is 90, etc. Note for quizzes and some activities a grade is given, so to “satisfactorily complete” the activity is to correctly answer the questions asked (for example, if you get half the questions correct, your grade on that one activity would be 50%).
- Periodical Summaries and Presentations: At two separate points during the semester students are expected to identify a newspaper or magazine article related to the topic being covered in class for that day, write a brief summary on the article that is uploaded to Moodle, and make a very brief class presentation about the article. A separate hand-out describes what is expected for these summaries, where appropriate information can be obtained, and how these summaries should be written and presented. Due dates will be provided during the second full week of classes.

Policy Project

You are expected to complete a policy project in which you identify and write about policies recently adopted in an assigned state. Students will make brief presentations to the class on their states in late March and a 9-10 page written report is due on Thursday, April 6. Further details will be provided in a separate handout during the second full week of classes.

Exams

There is a mid-term exam and a final exam (dates listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of objective-style question (multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions). Note that a makeup exam is only administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. Note also that makeup exams are all-essay exams. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

General Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Classroom Rules

Please be respectful to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in the class. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 1:30 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Absolutely no audio or video recording devices are allowed to be used unless special permission is granted. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography or videography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violators of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students. These restrictions are in place to ensure the integrity of testing materials and to protect student privacy.

You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not simply play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

Late Assignments and Missed Work

In an effort to provide a level playing field, I take deadlines very seriously and hold everyone to an identical standard. Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official university-sponsored events, etc.). A penalty for handing in the paper late is assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points (5 points for missing the deadline, and 5 points for each 24-hour period thereafter). Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on Moodle where they must be submitted along with any accompanying documentation (a physician's note, etc.).

Graded Work

I will make grades available on Moodle as soon as your assignments are graded. Note that your individual participation grades are NOT displayed on Moodle, however, by the last week of classes I will post your overall participation grade. I will return your policy project and your exams to you in class. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance. Please note, however, I will not estimate your current grade for you (the percentage that each grade counts toward your final average is provided earlier on the syllabus). Also, I do not e-mail grades.

Graduate Credit or Honors Credit

For students taking this course for graduate credit or for those who wish to receive special Honors credit, it is the student's responsibility to contact me during the first week of classes to make appropriate arrangements.

Special Needs

For students who have special needs or who require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made. Please note, if you have a disabling condition that prevents you from completing any requirement of the course, it must be documented by Disabilities Services which is responsible for sending me a report regarding appropriate accommodations. In other words, I will NOT accept a licensed medical practitioner's note (physician, surgeon, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) for a disability that requests exemptions to course requirements. Such requests must be made through Disabilities Services.

Course Schedule

The Contexts of State Politics

January 12 ***Introduction to the Course***

- No reading assignment.

January 17 ***Why Study State Politics***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser Chapter 1.
- Reading #1: Moncrief, Gary, and Peverill Squire. 2013. "Making a Case for States," Chapter 1 in *Why States Matter: An Introduction to State Politics*, Landham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Reading #2: Lays, Julie. 2017. "Lawmakers Have Plenty to Ponder Beyond Presidential Politics," *State Legislatures Magazine*, January 1.
- Reading #3: Fehrman, Craig. 2016. "All Politics Is National" *Fivethirtyeight.com*, November 7.
- Reading #4: Chatterji, Aaron K. 2015. "Don't Look to States for New Ideas," *New York Times*, January 11.

January 19 ***Methods and Approaches Used in Studying State Politics***

- Reading #5: Chapters from *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answers: How Common Sense Fails Us* by Duncan J. Watts, 2011, New York: Crown Publishing (Preface, Chapters 1 & 2).
- Reading #6: Berry, William D., and Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. (Chapter 1) *Understanding Multivariate Research: A Primer for Beginning Social Scientists*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Reading #7: "Appendix: A Brief Introduction to Regression."
- Reading #8: "Political Science Research Fundamentals: Some Important Concepts and Definitions."

January 24 ***Methods and Approaches Used in Studying State Politics Continued***

- Reading #9: Hartney, Michael, and Patrick Flavin. 2011. "From the Schoolhouse to the Statehouse: Teaching Union Political Activism and U.S. State Education Reform Policy," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 3: 251-68.
- Reading #10: Butz, Adam M., and Jason E. Kehrberg. 2016. "Estimating Anti-Immigrant Sentiment for the American States Using Multi-Level Modeling and Post-Stratification, 2004-2008," *Research and Politics*, April-June: 1-7.

January 26 ***Political Cultures and Public Opinions***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, re-read part of Chapter 1 (20-25).
- Reading #11: Fellowes, Matthew C., 2004. "Politics and the New American Welfare States," *American Journal of Political Science*, 48: 362-73.
- Reading #12: Tierney, John. 2014. "Do You Trust Your State Government?" *The Atlantic Monthly* May 14.

January 31 ***Federalism: National and State Government Relations***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 2.
- Reading #13: Nathan, Richard P. 2006. "There Will Always Be a New Federalism," *Journal of Public Administration* 16: 499-510.
- Reading #14: Zernike, Kate. 2010. "Proposed Amendment Would Enable States to Repeal Federal Law," *New York Times*, December.
- Reading #15: Barnett, Randy and William J. Howell. 2010. "The Case for a 'Repeal Amendment,'" Cato Institute, September.
- Reading #16: Wilson, Reid. 2017. "GOP Aims to Rein in Liberal Cities," *The Hill*, January 5.
- Reading #17: Vock, Daniel C. 2016. "How Obama Changed the Relationship Between Washington, the States and the Cities," *Governing*, June.

February 2 ***Federalism and State Constitutions***

- Reading #18: Dinan John. 2016. "State Constitutional Developments in 2015," in *Book of the States*.
- Reading #19: Lupia, Arthur, Yanna Krupnikov, Adam Seth Levine, Spencer Piston, and Alexander Von Hagen-Jamar. 2010. "Why State Constitutions Differ in their Treatment of Same-Sex Marriage," *Journal of Politics* 74: 1222-1235.
- Reading #20: Bowser, Jennie Drage. 2015. "Constitutions: Amend with Care," *State Legislatures Magazine*, September.

Institutions of Governing in State Politics

February 7 **Characteristics of Legislative Institutions**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 6.
- Reading #21: Squire, Peverill, and Gary Moncrief. 2010. "99 Chambers and Why They Matter," Chapter 1 in *State Legislatures Today: Politics Under the Domes*.
- Reading #22: Galbraith, Kate. 2010. "Texas Stands Against Tide in Retaining Biennial Legislature," *The New York Times* December.

February 9 **Representation in the Legislature**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Re-read part of Chapter 6 (173-185).
- Reading #23: Greenblatt, Alan. 2012. "Can You Separate Federal Issues from State Elections?" *Governing*, October.
- Reading #24: Cooper, Christopher A., and Lilliard E. Richardson. 2006. "Institutions and Representational Roles in American State Legislatures," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 6: 174-94.

February 14 **Legislative Decision Making**

- Reading #25: Maestas, Cherie. 2003. "The Incentive to Listen: Progressive Ambition, Resources, and Opinion Monitoring Among State Legislators," *Journal of Politics* 65: 439-456.
- Reading #26: McKee, Seth C. 2015. "Politics Is Local: State Legislator Voting on Restrictive Voter Identification Legislation," *Research and Politics*, July-September: 1-7.

February 16 **Executive Branch**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 7.
- Reading #27: Windett, Jason Harold. 2011. "State Effects and the Emergence and Success of Female Gubernatorial Candidates," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4: 460-82.
- Reading #28: Dilger, Robert Jay, George A. Krause, and Randolph R. Moffett. 1995. "State Legislative Professionalism and Gubernatorial Effectiveness, 1978-1991," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 20: 553-71.

February 21 **Governors and Legislatures**

- Reading #29: Klarner, Carl E., and Andrew Karch. 2008. "Why Do Governors Issue Vetoes? The Impact of Individual and Institutional Influences," *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 574-84.
- Reading #30: Barrilleaux, Charles, and Carlisle Rainey. 2014. "The Politics of Need: Examining Governors' Decisions to Oppose the 'Obamacare' Medicaid Expansion," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 14: 437-60.

February 23 **State Courts**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 8.
- Reading #31: Bonneau, Chris W. 2007. "Campaign Fundraising in State Supreme Court Elections," *Social Science Quarterly* 88: 68-85.
- Reading #32: Hall, Melinda Gann. 1992. "Electoral Politics and Strategic Voting in State Supreme Courts," *Journal of Politics*, 55: 427-446.

February 28 **Mardi Gras Holiday**

Linking Institutions and Citizens

March 2 **Political Parties and Elections**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser Chapter 3.
- Reading #33: Masket, Seth E., Jonathan Winburn, and Gerald C. Wright. 2012. "The Gerrymanderers Are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It," *PS: Political Science and Politics* January 39-43.

March 7 **MIDTERM EXAM**

March 9 **Political Parties and Election Continued**

- No reading assignment.

- March 14 ***Interest Groups***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 4.
 - Reading #34: Whyte, Liz Essley and Ben Wieder. 2016. “Amid Federal Gridlock, Lobbying Rises in the States,” The Center for Public Integrity (May 18).
- March 16 ***Interest Group Influence***
- Reading #35: Lipton, Eric. 2014. “Lobbyists, Bearing Gifts, Pursue Attorneys General” *New York Times*, October 28.
 - Reading #36: Ozymy, Joshua. 2010. “Assessing the Impact of Legislative Lobbying Regulations on Interest Groups Influence in U.S. State Legislatures,” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 10: 397-420.
- March 21 ***Direct Democracy***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 5.
 - Reading #37: Nicholson, Stephen P. 2003. “The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 47: 403-410.
 - Reading #38: Steinhauer, Jennifer. 2015. “Fight on Guns Is Being Taken to State Ballots,” *New York Times*, Jan. 2.

Making and Evaluating Public Policies

- March 23 ***Elements of the Public Policy Process***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 14.
 - *** Policy Presentations: Set #1 ***
- March 28 ***Fiscal Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 10.
 - *** Policy Presentations: Set #2 ***
- March 30 ***Education Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 12 and 13.
 - *** Policy Presentations: Set #3 ***
- April 4 ***State Corrections Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 9.
 - Reading #39: Smith, Kevin B. 2004. “The Politics of Punishment: Evaluating Political Explanations of Incarceration Rates,” *Journal of Politics* 66: 925-38.
- April 6 ***State Corrections Policies Continued***
- Reading #40 Lind, Dara. 2014. “The Two Simple Facts that Explain Why the US Prison Population Exploded,” *Vox*, May 1.
- ***** Policy Papers Due at the Beginning of Class *****
- April 11 **Spring Break**
- April 13 **Spring Break**
- April 18 ***Environmental Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 15.
- April 20 ***Economic Development Policies***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 16.
 - Reading #41: Scott, Dylan. 2012. “Southern States Have Become Job-Training Leaders,” *Governing*, July.
 - Reading #42: Russell, Gordon, and Rebekah Allen. 2014. “Giving Away Louisiana,” *The Advocate* (Parts 1-3).
- April 25 ***Policy Outcomes: Health and Welfare Programs***
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 11.
- April 27 ***Summation and Review***
- No reading assignment.
- May 6 **FINAL EXAM** in this classroom on Saturday from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.