

# PSCI 313-001: State & Local Government

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Winter 2020  
Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00-3:50 PM  
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## 1 Overview & goals

For our purposes, “state and local government” refers to the practice of democracy in U.S. states, counties, cities, towns, special-purpose districts, and so on. Most Americans interact with government at one of these levels. Conflicts arising at these levels have shaped our national politics. Policy-seeking interests and reformers alike know this. They therefore seek to influence state and local politics, including by changing the rules of democracy at those levels of government.

The course is divided into three big sections. The first introduces theoretical perspectives on coalition-building, the politics of reform, and the role of national factors in subnational politics. These will be our most dense readings, but they will help you integrate what follows.

A second section covers basic institutions and how they came to be: forms of government, different ways elections are run, the presence or absence of initiative-and-referendum, the role of the media in local politics, and the tussle with state government over local control of policy.

The third section focuses on specific groups and how they form coalitions in these institutional contexts: professional lobbyists, women, ethno-racial minorities, national politicians, and the working class.

This is a seminar course. Rather than listen to me lecture, you will lead our class discussions, and I will work to keep the conversation focused. You also will plan and execute an independent research project. Due dates for written work are meant to help you succeed at that. In our final two sessions, you will have *the option* to present your work, get feedback, and improve your final paper. That can be a piece of academic research, or it can be a “practical” document that proposes a solution to some problem. Doing either well requires coming to class and reading items outside your area of specialization.

Overall, the course has three big goals:

1. Make you smarter about politics, whether in conversation or a policy-related job;

2. Improve your ability to do rigorous research,
3. Improve your ability to communicate the results of that research.

## 2 Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following components.

1. Attendance and participation (20%) – Write your full name and one question/comment about the day's reading(s) on a small piece of paper. Drop this into the coffee can, which I will circulate at the beginning of each class. What you write down must reflect the fact that you have done the reading. The coffee can is meant to make you read and integrate material throughout the quarter.
2. Leading discussion (10%) – On the first day of class, we will divide responsibility for presenting the readings. See this document for tips on how to do that well: <https://bit.ly/2Q9q4dh>.
3. Research question and annotated bibliography (15%) – Due at 12 AM on Saturday, February 1. More information is forthcoming.
4. Plan of empirical research (15%) – Due on 12 AM on Saturday, February 15. More information is forthcoming.
5. Term paper (40%) – Due at 12 AM on Saturday, March 14. More information is forthcoming.

## 3 How to get what you want efficiently by sending me e-mail

1. Use a subject line that indicates your need. Please don't reply to a blanket email sent through Blackboard, nor to a thread about some other issue.
2. Include the full course number (e.g., PSCI-110-001).
3. Be as specific as possible, and use complete sentences.
4. Keep all correspondence with respect to the same issue in the same thread. Start a different thread for a different issue.
5. Use your Drexel email so that I can search my inbox for your username.

## 4 Other policies

You agree to:

1. Treat guest speakers and classmates with respect.
2. Check Drexel email daily through the date of the final exam.
3. Attend class and meet course deadlines. Out-of-class written work loses five points for each 24-hour period past the time and date it is due.
4. Use Internet search or a dictionary to look up words you do not know.
5. Abide by all other Drexel policies, found at the following websites. Note that I reserve the right to use plagiarism-detection software.
  - Academic integrity: [http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic\\_dishonesty.asp](http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic_dishonesty.asp)
  - Disability accommodation: <http://drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/students/>
  - Add/Drop: <http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-add-drop>
  - Course withdrawal: <http://drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-withdrawal>

I agree to:

1. Abide by any grading guidelines in this syllabus and related instructions for assignments. Grading is on the 0-100 scale: 97 and up (A+), 93-96 (A), 90-92 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-87 (B), 80-82 (B-), and so on, down to 50 (F). Rounding occurs for final grades only, to the nearest whole number. The rounding threshold is 0.5 percentage points.
2. Answer student e-mail within 48 business hours. Business hours are 9 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, non-holiday.
3. Except for the required books, post links to readings on Blackboard, if not the readings themselves.
4. Grade written work within 10 business days of submission.
5. Notify you of changes to this syllabus at least one week in advance of affected due dates.
6. Give office hours on a by-appointment basis. (See link above.) Students who are not in Philadelphia can book these times for phone conversations.

## 5 Schedule of readings and classes

### 5.1 Introduction

**January 7** Two items:

- Write down one thing that interests you about state and/or local government. It could become the topic of your research paper.
- Rose, Shanna and Cynthia J. Bowling. 2019. “The State of American Federalism 2014-15: Pathways to Policy in an Era of Party Polarization.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 45 (3): 351-379.

**January 9** Two items:

- Santucci, Jack. 2018. “Tips on Reading Political Science.” Typescript. <https://bit.ly/2Q9q4dh>.
- Based on our last discussion, start finding readings for your annotated bibliography. Begin by reading the item just above, then reviewing this syllabus once more.

### 5.2 The logic of coalition in subnational politics

**January 14** Trounstine, Jessica. 2008. “The Logic of Political Monopolies,” Chap. 1 in *Political Monopolies in American Cities: The Rise and Fall of Bosses and Reformers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**January 16** Masket, Seth E. 2018. “Fixing Politics” and “Parties and Reforms,” Chaps. 1-2 in *The Inevitable Party: Why Attempts to Kill the Party System Fail and How they Weaken Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

**January 21** Hopkins, Daniel J. 2019. “Meanings of Nationalization, Past and Present,” Chap. 2 in *The Increasingly United States: How and Why American Political Behavior Nationalized*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### 5.3 Basic institutions and how they came to be

#### 5.3.1 Legislative, executive, and judicial power

**January 23** Two items:

- Frederickson, H. George, Gary A. Johnson, and Curtis H. Wood. 2003. “Model City Charters and Institutional Dynamics,” Chap. 6 in *The Adapted City: Institutional Dynamics and Structural Change*. Armonk: Routledge.
- Bridges, Amy and Richard Kronick. 1999. “Writing the Rules to Win the Game: The Middle-Class Regimes of Municipal Reformers.” *Urban Affairs Review* 34 (5): 691-706.

**January 28** Two items:

- Sturm, Albert L. 1982. “The Development of American State Constitutions.” *Publius* 12 (1): 57-98.
- Committee on State Government. 1921. *Progress Report on a Model State Constitution*. New York: National Municipal League.

### 5.3.2 Electoral rules

**January 30** Two items:

- Trounstine, Jessica and Melody E. Valdini. 2008. “The Context Matters: The Effects of Single-Member versus At-Large Districts on City Council Diversity.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (3): 554-569.
- McGhee, Eric and Boris Shor. 2017. “Has the Top Two Primary Elected More Moderates?” *Perspectives on Politics* 15 (4): 1053-1066.

### 5.3.3 Direct democracy

**February 4** Two items:

- Dyck, Joshua J. and Edward L. Lascher, Jr. 2019. “Agenda Setting under the Initiative Process,” Chap. 2 in *Initiatives without Engagement: A Realistic Appraisal of Direct Democracy’s Secondary Effects*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Smith, Daniel A. and Dustin Fridkin. 2008. “Delegating Direct Democracy: Interparty Legislative Competition and the Adoption of the Initiative in the American States.” *American Political Science Review* 102 (3): 333-350.

### 5.3.4 News media

**February 6** Two items:

- Black, Edwin R. and Peter Snow. 1982. “The Political Agendas of Three Newspapers and City Governments.” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 8 (2): 11-25.
- Hayes, Danny and Jennifer Lawless. 2017. “The Decline of Local News and Its Effects: New Evidence from Longitudinal Data.” *Journal of Politics* 80 (1): 332-336.

### 5.3.5 Local control

**February 11** Two items:

- Richardson, Jesse J. 2011. “Dillon’s Rule is From Mars, Home Rule is From Venus: Local Government Autonomy and the Rules of Statutory Construction.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 41 (4): 662-685.

- Flavin, Patrick and Gregory Schufeldt. 2019. “Explaining State Preemption of Local Laws: Political, Institutional, and Demographic Factors.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, early online version.

## 5.4 Making and breaking coalitions in state & local government

### 5.4.1 The politics of descriptive representation

**February 13** Two items:

- Holman, Mirya R. 2017. “Women in Local Government: What We Know and Where We Go from Here.” *State & Local Government Review* 49 (4): 285-296.
- Benjamin, Andrea. 2017. “The Co-ethnic Elite Cues Theory and Elite Black–Latino Coalitions,” Chap. 3 in *Racial Coalition Building in Local Elections: Elite Cues and Cross-Ethnic Voting*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

**February 18** Guinier, Lani. 1993. “The Representation of Minority Interests: The Question of Single-member Districts.” *Cardozo Law Review* 14: 1135-1174.

### 5.4.2 Environmental justice

**February 20** Two items:

- Wolch, Jennifer R., Jason Byrne, and Joshua P. Newell. 2014. “Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities ‘Just Green Enough’.” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 125: 234-244.
- Taylor, Dorceta. 2014. *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*, selected chapters. New York: New York University Press.

### 5.4.3 Interest-group influence

**February 25** Two items:

- Hertel-Fernandez, Alex. 2019. “Introduction” in *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States – and the Nation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Grossman, Matt. 2019. “Leviathan’s Resilience,” Chap. 1 in *Red State Blues: How the Conservative Revolution Stalled in the States*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### 5.4.4 National politicians in state & local politics

**February 27** Two items:

- Mollenkopf, John H. 1984. “Overview of the Argument” and “The New Deal and After: The Political Determination of Federal Urban Policy,” Chaps. 1-2 in *The Contested City*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Weaver, Timothy. 2020. “‘Trying out our Ideas’: Enterprise Zones in the United States and the United Kingdom,” Chap. 11 in *How Ideas Shape Urban Political Development*, edited by Richardson Dilworth and Timothy Weaver. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

#### 5.4.5 Causes and consequences of working-class disorganization

**March 3** Erie, Steven P. 1988. “Guardians of Power: The Irish Versus the New Immigrants, 1896-1928” and “Rainbow’s End: Machines, Immigrants, and the Working Class,” Chaps. 3 and 7 in *Rainbow’s End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

**March 5** Rodden, Jonathan A. 2019. “Introduction” in *Why Cities Lose: The Deep Roots of the Urban-Rural Political Divide*. New York: Basic Books.

### 5.5 Optional presentations and feedback

**March 10** Group A.

**March 13** Group B.