Political Science 4015
American State Politics and Policy Making
Spring 2018

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203 Tureaud: TTH 9:00-10:20
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* (11th edition) by Virginia Gray, Russell L. Hanson, and Thad Kousser (2018, Sage and Congressional Quarterly Press). However, a large share of the reading load includes 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 longer 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 them 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:

Participation	15%
Policy Project	30%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
TOTAL	**100%**

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

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

Participation

Classes are generally conducted in a lecture-discussion format so it is important to keep up with the readings and to come prepared. 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 two components, attendance and participation. For purposes of calculating your overall participation grade, attendance will count for 25% and class activities as 75%. Keep in mind that you have to attend in order to participate – so try not to miss class. In the event that you must miss class, let me know, and if there was a class activity on that day I will give you the opportunity to complete an alternative assignment (this will only be done if you contact me soon after missing class, not at the end of the semester).

- 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%).

State Projects

Each student will complete a state project that includes two brief presentations to the class and a final written report (9-10 pages expected). The presentations will made at two separate points during the semester (see syllabus) and the written report is due on April 17. Students will be assigned a state at the end of the second week of classes. Further details about the project including a schedule for the presentations will be provided in a separate handout.

Exams

There is a mid-term exam and a final exam (dates listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of 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 9:00 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and other electronics to silent mode. 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, during the last week of classes I will post your overall participation grade. I will return your state 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 11 ***Introduction to the Course***

- No reading assignment.

January 16 ***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: Schultz, David. 2013. Introduction and Chapter 1 in *American Politics in the Age of Ignorance: Why Lawmakers Choose Belief Over Research*, Palgrave Macmillan Publishing.
- Reading #3: Zeoli, April, and Andy Henion. 2017. "Broader Gun Restrictions lead to Fewer Intimate Partner Homicides," *MSU Today*, November 29.
- Reading #4: News Staff. 2018. "The Biggest Issues for States to Watch in 2018," *Governing*, January.
- Reading #5: Fehrman, Craig. 2016. "All Politics Is National" *Fivethirtyeight.com*, November 7.

January 18 ***Methods and Approaches Used in Studying State Politics***

- Reading #6: 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 #7: Berry, William D., and Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. (Chapter 1) *Understanding Multivariate Research: A Primer for Beginning Social Scientists*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Reading #8: "Appendix: A Brief Introduction to Regression."
- Reading #9: "Political Science Research Fundamentals: Some Important Concepts and Definitions."

January 23 ***Methods and Approaches Used in Studying State Politics Continued***

- Reading #10: 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 #11: 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 25 ***Political Cultures and Public Opinion***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 5 and re-read part of Chapter 1 (18-23).
- Reading #12: Fisher, Patrick. 2016. "Definitely Not Moralistic: State Political Culture and Support for Donald Trump in the Race for the 2016 Republican Presidential Nomination," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, October: 743-47.
- Reading #13: Fellowes, Matthew C., 2004. "Politics and the New American Welfare States," *American Journal of Political Science*, 48: 362-73.

January 30 ***Federalism: National and State Government Relations***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 2.
- 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: Medonca, Lenny and Laura D. Tyson. 2018. "The Progressive Resurgence of Federalism," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter.
- Reading #17: Wilson, Reid. 2017. "GOP Aims to Rein in Liberal Cities," *The Hill*, January 5.
- Reading #18: Hakim, Danny, and William K. Rashbaum. 2017. "New York's Attorney General in Battle with Trump," *New York Times*, December 26.

February 1 ***State Constitutions***

- Reading #19: Dinan John. 2017. "State Constitutional Developments in 2017," The *Book of the States*, Council of State Governments.
- Reading #20: 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 #21: Bowser, Jennie Drage. 2015. "Constitutions: Amend with Care," *State Legislatures Magazine*, September.

Institutions of Governing in State Politics

February 6 ***Characteristics of Legislative Institutions***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 7.
- Reading #22: Carnes, Nicholas. 2016. "Why Are There So Few Working-class People in Political Office? Evidence from State Legislatures." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4: 84-109.

***** Presentations: Legislatures *****

February 8 ***Representation in the Legislature***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Re-read part of Chapter 7 (209-212).
- Reading #23: Greenblatt, Alan. 2012. "Can You Separate Federal Issues from State Elections?" *Governing*, October.
- Reading #24: Whyte, Liz Essley and Ryan J. Foley. 2018. "Conflicted Interests: State Lawmakers Often Blur the Lines Between the Public's Business and Their Own," The Center for Public Integrity, January 3.
- Reading #25: 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 13 **Mardi Gras Holiday**

February 15 ***Legislative Decision Making***

- Reading #26: Maestas, Cherie. 2003. "The Incentive to Listen: Progressive Ambition, Resources, and Opinion Monitoring Among State Legislators," *Journal of Politics* 65: 439-456.
- Reading #27: McKee, Seth C. 2015. "Politics Is Local: State Legislator Voting on Restrictive Voter Identification Legislation," *Research and Politics*, July-September: 1-7.

February 20 ***Executive Branch***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 8.
- Reading #28: Windett, Jason Harold. 2011. "State Effects and the Emergence and Success of Female Gubernatorial Candidates," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4: 460-82.
- Reading #29: 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.

***** Presentations: Executive Branch *****

February 22 ***Governors and Legislatures***

- Reading #30: 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 #31: 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 27 ***State Courts***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 9.
- Reading #32: Bonneau, Chris W. 2007. "Campaign Fundraising in State Supreme Court Elections," *Social Science Quarterly* 88: 68-85.
- Reading #33: Hall, Melinda Gann. 1992. "Electoral Politics and Strategic Voting in State Supreme Courts," *Journal of Politics*, 55: 427-446.

***** Presentations: State Courts *****

Linking Institutions and Citizens

March 1 ***Political Parties and Elections***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser Chapter 3.
- Reading #34: Goldmacher, Shane. 2017. "How Party Bosses, Not Voters, Pick Candidates in New York," *New York Times*, September 18.

***** Presentations: Political Parties *****

March 6 **Political Parties and Elections Continued**

- Reading #35: 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 8 **MIDTERM EXAM**

March 13 ***Political Parties***

- No Reading Assignment.

March 15 ***Interest Group Influence***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 4.
- Reading #36: Whyte, Liz Essley and Ben Wieder. 2016. "Amid Federal Gridlock, Lobbying Rises in the States," The Center for Public Integrity (May 18).
- Reading #37: 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.

***** Presentations: Interest Groups *****

March 20 ***Direct Democracy***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 6.
- Reading #38: Nicholson, Stephen P. 2003. "The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness," *American Journal of Political Science*, 47: 403-410.
- Reading #39: "Ballot Measure Readability Scores, 2017," *Ballotpedia*: https://ballotpedia.org/Ballot_measure_readability_scores,_2017

Making and Evaluating Public Policies

March 22 ***Elements of the Public Policy Process***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 17 and 18.

March 27 **Spring Break**

March 29 **Spring Break**

April 3 ***State Corrections Policies***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 10.
- Reading #40: Smith, Kevin B. 2004. "The Politics of Punishment: Evaluating Political Explanations of Incarceration Rates," *Journal of Politics* 66: 925-38.

April 5 ***Education Policies***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 13 and 14.
- Reading #41: McCoy, Dana Charles, et al. 2017. "Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium- and Long-Term Educational Outcomes," *Educational Researcher*, 46: 474-87.

***** Presentations: Set #1 *****

April 10 ***Environmental Policies***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 15.

***** Presentations: Set #2 *****

April 12 ***Policy Outcomes: Health and Welfare Programs***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 12.

***** Presentations: Set #3 *****

April 17 ***Policy Outcomes: Health and Welfare Programs Continued***

- No reading assignment.

***** State Project Due at the Beginning of Class *****

April 19 ***Fiscal Policies***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 11.

April 24 ***Economic Development Policies***

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 16.
- Reading #42: Russell, Gordon, and Rebekah Allen. 2014. "Giving Away Louisiana," *The Advocate* (Parts 1-3).

April 26 ***Summation and Review***

- No reading assignment.

May 3 **FINAL EXAM in this classroom on Thursday from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.**