

**PSCI 3061: State Government & Politics**  
**Mon/Wed/Fri 12-12:50 pm, ENVD 120**  
**Spring 2018**

Instructor: Nancy Billica, Ph.D.

Office: Ketchum 122

Office hours: Mon 1:30-2:30 pm; Wed 10:30-11:30 am; and by appointment

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**Course Description**

How do political institutions, practices and policies vary across states? While we are often more focused on and knowledgeable about national politics, it turns out that our day-to-day lives are typically more directly affected by state politics. We will compare across states, identifying both patterns and differences, and draw conclusions about the nature of American politics more generally. Among other goals, this course is designed to stimulate inquiry into the following questions: What are key differences across the states, and what difference do these make? Why do policy issues, choices and outcomes differ across states and groups within those states? How do state political and institutional mechanisms influence policy developments and results?

**Learning objectives**

Students will:

- gain knowledge of the constitutional division of powers between the federal government and the state governments, and the evolution of those relationships over time.
- learn about the main state government institutions and their roles in (a) the making and implementation of public policy; and (b) the reconciliation of conflicts and demands among and between competing interests.
- practice using the states to comparatively study broader topics in political science, including how variations in institutions and political behavior affect concepts such as power, representation, and political responsiveness.
- develop critical thinking, analysis and writing skills.

**Course Readings**

The following book is required:

Virginia Gray, Russell Hanson & Than Kousser, eds., *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (CQ Press, 2018). Note that another recent edition of the same text may be substituted.

Other readings and materials listed in the schedule or announced in class will be made available via Canvas or online.

**Requirements & Grading**

<b>Date Due</b>	<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Grading</b>
	Class attendance & active participation	10%
Friday, Mar 2	Midterm exam Review sheet posted to Canvas one week before the exam	20%
Friday, Mar 16	Research Paper A: analyzing & comparing state institutions Guidelines on Canvas; submit paper electronically to Canvas	22.5%
Monday, Apr 23	Research Paper B: comparative state policy analysis Guidelines on Canvas; submit paper electronically to Canvas	22.5%
Monday, May 7 1:30 – 4:00 pm	Final Exam Review sheet posted to Canvas one week before the exam	25%

## Class & University Policies & Expectations

- **Attendance & Participation:** It is assumed that all students are enrolled with the goal of gaining maximum value from the course and will thus be in regular attendance and actively engaging with the material. Regular attendance means arriving on time, remaining for the entire class session, and avoiding unnecessary absences (more than 2 absences will negatively affect your grade). Active engagement means being attentive, asking and answering questions in the classroom and regularly participating in group discussions. Please also plan to visit me in office hours to discuss course-related matters, real-world political developments, and life generally.
- **Use of technology in the classroom:** As learning is our top priority, the use of laptops, tablets and phones will be allowed only for purposes of enhancing the classroom experience. Multitasking with technology diminishes personal learning outcomes. Further, inappropriate use of technology distracts from the learning community, with negative effects on those around you. Repeated misuse of technology will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade.
- **Late assignment policy:** All assignments are due on the scheduled due dates. Students with legitimate reasons for missing an exam or assignment deadline may consult with the professor prior to the due date for alternative arrangements and exemption from late penalties. Credible excuses for all but emergencies are communicated *prior to* missed deadlines. Emergencies require documentation. In the absence of a pre-approved exception or documented emergency, late penalties apply, with deductions as follows:

Same-day, after class (until midnight):	- 5%	3 days after due date	- 30%
Next day	- 10%	4 days after due date	- 40%
2 days after due date	- 20%	5 days + after due date	- 50%
- **Student conduct:** All communications and interactions will be conducted with courtesy and respect. We should expect to disagree with each other on at least some issues of debate, but discussion and disagreement must be expressed in a manner that recognizes the dignity of all and is open to learning from other perspectives. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. For more information, including specific requirements and the consequences for their violation, see university policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).
- **Students with disabilities or special needs:** Students needing accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning difference should contact me privately to discuss needs – before assignments are due. If you qualify for accommodation, please submit a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner explaining your required accommodations so that your needs can be addressed. Guidelines can be found on the [Disability Services website](#), including dealing with temporary medical conditions.
- **Religious observances:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled assignments or exams. Please let me know as soon as possible of any schedule conflicts – before missing class or assignments. See [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.
- **Discrimination, harassment & misconduct:** CU Boulder is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment for all. Information on discrimination, harassment and misconduct, including campus resources available to assist individuals with such issues, can be found in the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) – [OIEC website](#).
- **Honor Code:** All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [academic integrity policy](#) of the institution. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at [honorcode.colorado.edu](#).

## PSCI 3061, State Government & Politics

### Schedule of Class Lecture Topics, Readings & Assignments

\*\*\* Class schedule subject to change \*\*\*

Note: Readings listed as “PAS” refer to the text, *Politics in the American States* (Gray, Hanson & Kousser, eds.)

Week	Dates	TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS
<b>1</b>	Jan 17, 19	<p><b>Introduction to state politics</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 1</p> <p>Mooney, Christopher (2001), “State Politics &amp; Policy Quarterly and the Study of State Politics: The Editor’s Introduction,” <i>State Politics &amp; Policy Quarterly</i> 1(1):1-4 – on Canvas</p>
<b>2</b>	Jan 22, 24, 26	<p><b>Federal-state relations</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 2</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Council of State Governments (<a href="http://www.csg.org/">http://www.csg.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Governing, a magazine covering politics, policy and management for state and local government leaders (<a href="http://www.governing.com/">http://www.governing.com/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Fiscal Federalism Initiative, The Pew Charitable Trusts (<a href="http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/fiscal-federalism-initiative">http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/fiscal-federalism-initiative</a>)</li> <li>▪ Rockefeller Institute of Government, with research on Federalism &amp; Intergovernmental Relations (<a href="http://www.rockinst.org/federalism/">http://www.rockinst.org/federalism/</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	Jan 29, 31; Feb 2	<p><b>State constitutions</b></p> <p>Rdg: “Constitutions: Operating Instructions,” Chap 3 in Kevin Smith &amp; Alan Greenblatt (2014), <i>Governing States &amp; Localities</i>, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (CQ Press) – on Canvas</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constitution of the State of Colorado (<a href="https://leg.colorado.gov/colorado-constitution">https://leg.colorado.gov/colorado-constitution</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	Feb 5, 7, 9	<p><b>State legislatures</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 7</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Conference of State Legislatures; located in Denver, CO (<a href="http://www.ncsl.org/">http://www.ncsl.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Stateline, an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts, provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy (<a href="http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline">http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline</a>)</li> <li>▪ Ballotpedia, providing links to information on state legislatures, policy proposals and elections (<a href="https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page">https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page</a>)</li> <li>▪ Colorado General Assembly, the bicameral state legislature of the state of Colorado (<a href="http://leg.colorado.gov/">http://leg.colorado.gov/</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	Feb 12, 14, 16	<p><b>Governors &amp; state executives</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 8</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Governors Association (<a href="https://www.nga.org/cms/home">https://www.nga.org/cms/home</a>)</li> <li>▪ National Association of Attorneys General (<a href="http://www.naag.org/">http://www.naag.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper (<a href="https://www.colorado.gov/governor/">https://www.colorado.gov/governor/</a>)</li> </ul>

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>TOPICS &amp; ASSIGNMENTS</b>
<b>6</b>	Feb 19, 21, 23	<p><b>State judicial systems</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 9</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Center for State Courts (<a href="http://www.ncsc.org/">http://www.ncsc.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Court Statistics Project, a joint project of the National Center for State Courts and Conference of State Court Administrators (<a href="http://www.courtstatistics.org/">http://www.courtstatistics.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Colorado Judicial Branch (<a href="https://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Index.cfm">https://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Index.cfm</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	Feb 26, 28; Mar 2	<p><b>Review of state institutions</b></p> <p><b><u>Midterm exam</u>: Friday, Mar 2</b></p>
<b>8</b>	Mar 5, 7, 9	<p><b>Bureaucracy &amp; state fiscal policy</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 11 &amp; 17</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ American Society for Public Administration, professional organization for those involved in public management (<a href="http://www.aspanet.org/">http://www.aspanet.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ National Association of State Budget Officers, which provides analysis of state budget policies and proposals (<a href="https://www.nasbo.org/home">https://www.nasbo.org/home</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	Mar 12, 14, 16	<p><b>State parties &amp; elections</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 3</p> <p>Karl Kurtz (2017), “Polarized, Not Paralyzed: Why states can get things done when Congress can’t,” <i>State Legislatures</i>, July/Aug 2017, National Conference of State Legislatures – on Canvas</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vote Smart, providing unbiased information on candidates and elections (<a href="https://votesmart.org/">https://votesmart.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Follow the Money, National Institute on Money in State Politics, with reporting on both campaign and lobbying expenditures (<a href="https://www.followthemoney.org/">https://www.followthemoney.org/</a>)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>DUE Friday, Mar 16</u>: Research Paper A, analyzing &amp; comparing state institutions</b></p>
<b>10</b>	Mar 19, 21, 23	<p><b>Interest group power across the states</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS Chap 4</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State comparison, lobbyist activity report requirements, National Conference of State Legislatures (<a href="http://www.ncsl.org/research/ethics/50-state-chart-lobbyist-report-requirements.aspx">http://www.ncsl.org/research/ethics/50-state-chart-lobbyist-report-requirements.aspx</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
<b>11</b>	Apr 2, 4, 6	<p><b>Public opinion &amp; state citizen action</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 5 &amp; 6</p>

Week	Date	TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS
12	Apr 9, 11, 13	<p><b>State policy comparisons: state corrections and state health &amp; welfare programs</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 10 &amp; 12</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bureau of Justice Statistics, a component of the Office of Justice Programs in the US Department of Justice, the primary source for criminal justice statistics (<a href="https://www.bjs.gov/">https://www.bjs.gov/</a>)</li> <li>▪ The Sentencing Project, an advocacy group promoting reforms in sentencing policy and efforts to address racial disparities in the criminal justice system (<a href="https://www.sentencingproject.org/">https://www.sentencingproject.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ America’s Health Rankings, United Health Foundation (<a href="https://www.americashealthrankings.org/">https://www.americashealthrankings.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control &amp; Prevention (<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/index.htm">https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/index.htm</a>)</li> <li>▪ Kaiser Health News, nonprofit news service covering health care policy and politics (<a href="https://khn.org/">https://khn.org/</a>)</li> </ul>
13	Apr 16, 18, 20	<p><b>State policy comparisons: environmental concerns and economic development &amp; infrastructure</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 15 &amp; 16</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Environmental Council of States (<a href="https://www.ecos.org/">https://www.ecos.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ State environmental policy for each state, from Ballotpedia, an encyclopedia of American politics (<a href="https://ballotpedia.org/State_environmental_policy_pages">https://ballotpedia.org/State_environmental_policy_pages</a>)</li> </ul>
14	Apr 23, 25, 27	<p><b>State policy comparisons: K-12 and higher education</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 13 &amp; 14</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Nation’s Report Card, a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics within the US Department of Education (<a href="https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/">https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/</a>)</li> <li>▪ Education Commission of the States (<a href="https://www.ecs.org/">https://www.ecs.org/</a>)</li> <li>▪ National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, providing comparative state policy information; located in Boulder, CO (<a href="http://www.higheredinfo.org/">http://www.higheredinfo.org/</a>)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>DUE Monday, Apr 23: Research Paper B, comparative state policy analysis</u></b></p>
15	Apr 30; May 2	<p><b>Economic and political inequality across the states</b></p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 18</p>
<p><b>FINAL EXAM: Mon, May 7, 1:30 – 4:00 pm</b></p>		