

PSCI 3061: State Government & Politics

Spring 2019 • Tu/Th 11:00-12:15 • HLMS 241

Professor: Nancy Billica

Office: Ketchum 214 • Office Hours: Tu & Th 1:00-3:00 pm, 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 decisions and programs adopted at the state and local levels. 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 states and communities, and what difference do these make? Why do policy issues, choices and outcomes differ across states and groups within those states? How do state and local political, organizational 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*, 11th 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.

Course Requirements

Date Due	Assignments	Grading
	Class attendance & active participation	10%
Thurs, Feb 28	Midterm exam, in-class Review sheet posted to Canvas one week before the exam	25%
Tues, Mar 12	Research Paper A: analyzing & comparing state institutions Guidelines on Canvas; submit paper electronically to Canvas	20%
Tues, Apr 23	Research Paper B: comparative state policy analysis Guidelines on Canvas; submit paper electronically to Canvas	20%
Mon, May 6 Due by 10 pm	Take-home final exam Final requirements posted to Canvas one week before the due date	25%

Class & University Policies & Expectations

- **Classroom etiquette:** The basic rule is one of respect. The goal is to create a community where all feel free to participate in classroom discussion and are open to the ideas and contributions of others. 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. Disrespectful language and/or behavior will not be tolerated.
- **Use of technology in the classroom:** Laptop computers and other electronic devices distract from the classroom learning environment and thus are not to be routinely used in class without the prior consent of the instructor.
- **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 unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade). Active engagement means being attentive, asking and answering questions in the classroom and regularly participating in group discussions.
- **Assignments:** Students are responsible for ensuring that assignments are successfully submitted to Canvas on time and accessible for grading purposes (submitted in .doc, .docx or .pdf formats). If you're having trouble with Canvas, you may submit a back-up copy of assignments via email as well. Assignments are due on the due dates. Students with legitimate, documented reasons for missing an exam or assignment deadline should consult with the professor prior to the due date for alternative arrangements and exemption from late penalties. In the absence of a pre-approved exception or documented emergency, late penalties apply, with deductions, as follows: Same day, after class begins: -10%; next day: -20%; each day thereafter, an additional 10% deduction, with papers 4 or more days overdue accepted at 50% credit.
- **Accommodation for Disabilities:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.
- **Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).
- **Honor Code:** All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct

will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

- **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation:** The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

- **Religious Holidays:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. 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.

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
1	Jan 15, 17	Introduction to state politics Rdg: PAS, Chap 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mooney, Christopher (2001), “State Politics & Policy Quarterly and the Study of State Politics: The Editor’s Introduction,” <i>State Politics & Policy Quarterly</i> 1(1):1-4 – on Canvas
2	Jan 22, 24	Federal-state relations Rdg: PAS, Chap 2 Take a look at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council of State Governments (http://www.csg.org/) ▪ Governing, a magazine covering politics, policy and management for state and local government leaders (http://www.governing.com/) ▪ Fiscal Federalism Initiative, The Pew Charitable Trusts (http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/fiscal-federalism-initiative) ▪ Rockefeller Institute of Government, with research on Federalism & Intergovernmental Relations (http://www.rockinst.org/federalism/)

Week	Dates	TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS
3	Jan 29, 31	<p>State constitutions</p> <p>Rdg: “Constitutions: Operating Instructions,” Chap 3 in Kevin Smith & Alan Greenblatt (2014), <i>Governing States & Localities</i>, 4th ed. (CQ Press) – on Canvas</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constitution of the State of Colorado (https://leg.colorado.gov/colorado-constitution)
4	Feb 5, 7	<p>State legislatures</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 7</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Conference of State Legislatures; located in Denver, CO (http://www.ncsl.org/) ▪ Stateline, an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts, provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy (http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline) ▪ Ballotpedia, providing links to information on state legislatures, policy proposals and elections (https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page) ▪ Colorado General Assembly, the bicameral state legislature of the state of Colorado (http://leg.colorado.gov/)
5	Feb 12, 14	<p>Governors & state executives</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 8</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Governors Association (https://www.nga.org/cms/home) ▪ National Association of Attorneys General (http://www.naag.org/) ▪ Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper (https://www.colorado.gov/governor/)
6	Feb 19, 21	<p>State judicial systems</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 9</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Center for State Courts (http://www.ncsc.org/) ▪ Court Statistics Project, a joint project of the National Center for State Courts and Conference of State Court Administrators (http://www.courtstatistics.org/) ▪ Colorado Judicial Branch (https://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Index.cfm)
7	Feb 26, 28	<p>Review of state institutions</p> <p><u>Midterm exam</u>: in class, Thursday, Feb 28</p>
8	Mar 5, 7	<p>Bureaucracy & state fiscal policy</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 11 & 17</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ American Society for Public Administration, professional organization for those involved in public management (http://www.aspanet.org/) ▪ National Association of State Budget Officers, which provides analysis of state budget policies and proposals (https://www.nasbo.org/home)

Week	Dates	TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS
9	Mar 12, 14	<p>State parties & elections</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vote Smart, providing unbiased information on candidates and elections (https://votesmart.org/) ▪ Follow the Money, National Institute on Money in State Politics, with reporting on both campaign and lobbying expenditures (https://www.followthemoney.org/) <p><u>DUE Tuesday, Mar 12: Research Paper A, analyzing & comparing state institutions</u></p>
10	Mar 19, 21	<p>Interest group power across the states</p> <p>Rdg: PAS Chap 4</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State comparison, lobbyist activity report requirements, National Conference of State Legislatures (http://www.ncsl.org/research/ethics/50-state-chart-lobbyist-report-requirements.aspx)
SPRING BREAK		
11	Apr 2, 4	<p>Public opinion & state citizen action</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 5 & 6</p>
12	Apr 9, 11	<p>State policy comparisons: state corrections and state health & welfare programs</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 10 & 12</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 (https://www.bjs.gov/) ▪ The Sentencing Project, an advocacy group promoting reforms in sentencing policy and efforts to address racial disparities in the criminal justice system (https://www.sentencingproject.org/) ▪ America’s Health Rankings, United Health Foundation (https://www.americashealthrankings.org/) ▪ National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/index.htm) ▪ Kaiser Health News, nonprofit news service covering health care policy and politics (https://khn.org/)
13	Apr 16, 18	<p>State policy comparisons: environmental concerns and economic development & infrastructure</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 15 & 16</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental Council of States (https://www.ecos.org/) ▪ State environmental policy for each state, from Ballotpedia, an encyclopedia of American politics (https://ballotpedia.org/State_environmental_policy_pages)

Week	Dates	TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS
14	Apr 23, 25	<p>State policy comparisons: K-12 and higher education</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chaps 13 & 14</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Nation’s Report Card, a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics within the US Department of Education (https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/) ▪ Education Commission of the States (https://www.ecs.org/) ▪ National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, providing comparative state policy information; located in Boulder, CO (http://www.higheredinfo.org/) <p><u>DUE Tuesday, Apr 23: Research Paper B, comparative state policy analysis</u></p>
15	Apr 30, May 2	<p>Economic and political inequality across the states</p> <p>Rdg: PAS, Chap 18</p> <p>Take a look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Mapping Poverty in America,” <i>The Economist</i>, 16 Oct 2018: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pUhViiNtxg
<p>Take-home FINAL EXAM: due no later than 10:00 pm on Monday, May 6</p>		