

Political Science 206
State Government and Politics
Fall 2009
PLS 206-001 3:30 - 4:45 pm LH 110

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Objectives

This course will examine state governments in the United States in a federal (or intergovernmental) context and analyze the structure, functions, and politics of state governments in a general fashion. It will be important for the student to appreciate the differences and similarities among state governments and to be familiar with the comparative approach to the study of state government.

Ideally, the student, at the conclusion of the course, will be able to incorporate his knowledge of state governments into the broader framework of American federalism, especially in terms of the distribution and sharing of services among the three levels of government-national, state, and local. The student will also recognize the potential of state and local governments to cope with current major problems (e.g. budget, welfare, education, and urban services) and the governmental reforms needed before this potential is realized. Since most of one's governmental and political contacts occur with the state and its creatures, local governments, the course is designed to provide the student with the understanding of government necessary to be an active participant or at least a knowledgeable observer of one's immediate political environment.

Approaches to the Study of State and Local Government

This course combines several approaches to the examination of state and local government. At the outset, the course will deal (in a very limited way) with the historical and constitutional roles of state and local government. Then, considerable attention will be devoted to the institutions of state and local government-what might be called the structural approach. The final third of the course is primarily problem-oriented. While the analysis of state governments is comparative in scope, special attention will be given to North Carolina state government and politics.

Course Requirements

The student is responsible for all assigned readings in the syllabus. The required textbook is Thomas R. Dye's Politics in States and Communities. Examinations will be based on the assigned readings and class lectures.

The average final grade in this class is a "C." The final grade for the course will be determined according to the following formula: 1/3 for the final examination; 2/3 for the two term examines (1/3 each). All exams are objective! Class participation is most important, too. Only 2 unexcused cuts are allowed; over cuts will lower one's final grade by one letter grade. Grading is on a 10 point scale. There are no make-up exams! If you can't take exams when they are scheduled, you will receive a grade of zero for that exam. Do not bring cell phones or ipods to class!

COURSE OUTLINE

1. THE SETTING OF STATE POLITICS

I. Introduction to State and Local Government

Dye, ch. 1, pp. 1-27 and Luebke, ch. 1&2, pp. 1-46. (RR Randall)

II. Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations

Dye, Ch 3, pp. 52-87.

Recommended:

Daniel J. Elazar, American Federalism: The View from the States, 2nd ed.

III. Participation in State Politics

Dye, ch. 4, pp. 88-124 Luebke, ch. 6, pp. 111-128. (RRR)

Recommended:

Jennings and Zeigler, "The Salience of American State Politics", in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 3-24.
State and Local Government: 3rd Century of Federalism, 1988 Prentice-Hall.

L. Harmon Zeigler and Hendrik Van Dalan, "Interest Groups in the States," in Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines, eds., Politics in the American States, 3rd ed., pp. 93-138.

IV. Parties in State Politics

Dye, ch. 5, pp. 125-155 Luebke, ch. 9, pp. 189-206. (RRR)

Recommended:

Preston Edsall and J. Oliver Williams, "North Carolina: Bipartisan Paradox," in Harvard, ed., Changing Politics of the South. Also Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics," in Jacob and Vines, pp. 51-92.

V. EXAMINATION**

2. STRUCTURES OF DECISION-MAKING AT THE STATE LEVEL

VI. State Constitutions

Dye, ch. 2, pp. 28-51.

VII. State Legislatures

Dye, ch. 6, pp. 156-190 Luebke, ch. 3, pp. 47-76.

Recommended:

CCSL, "Evaluation of State Legislature," in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 176-189.

Erikson, "Partisan Impact of State Legislative Reapportionment," in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 190-202.

Samuel C. Patterson, "American State Legislatures and Public Policy," in Jacob and Vines, pp. 139-175; Malcolm Jewell, The State Legislature: Politics and Practice, 2nd ed.

VIII. Governors and State Administration

Dye, ch. 7, pp. 191-215; Luebke, ch. 7 & 8, pp. 129-188. (RRR)

Recommended:

Thad L. Beyle and J. Oliver Williams, eds. The American governor in Behavioral Perspective.

Wright, "Executive Leadership in State Administration," in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 134-155.

IX. State Courts and Corrections

Dye, ch. 8, pp. 216-257.

Recommended:

Crowther, "Crimes, Penalties and Legislatures," in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 351-364.

Click, "Policy Making and State Supreme Courts," in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 203-218.

X. EXAMINATION** (Institutions)

3. PROBLEMS IN STATE GOVERNMENT

XI. Education

Dye, ch. 15, pp. 410-438.

Recommended:

Gittell, "Education: The Decentralization-Community Control Controversy," in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 367-391.

Frederick Wirt, "Education Politics and Policies," in Jacob and Vines, pp. 284-348.

II Welfare

Dye, ch. 17, pp. 460-479

Recommended:

Daniel P. Mcynihan, "The Politics of a Guaranteed Income." Also Robert Albritton, "Welfare Policy," in Jacob and Vines, pp. 349-388; Fry and Winters, "The Policies of Redistribution," in Leach and O'Rourke, pp. 25-49.

XIII. State and Local Finance

Dye, ch. 18, pp. 480-502. Luebke, ch. 4 & 5, pp. 77-110; and ch. 10, pp. 207-236. (RRR)

Recommended:

Clara Penniman, "The Politics of Taxation," in Jacob and Vines, pp. 328-464. Also L. L. Ecker-Racz, The Politics and Economics of State and Local Finance.

XIV FINAL EXAMINATION

Tuesday, December 8th (3-6pm)