



Course Syllabus

Honors Seminar in State Politics and Government

GVPT 460H
Fall 2022

Course Description and Learning Objectives

The American system of Federalism forges a unique relationship between national government and state and local governments. The U.S. Constitution was written to address concerns about the division of power between the federal and state governments, but this relationship is not static and is subject to much debate and interpretation. The decisions made by state and local governments affect the daily lives of individuals much more so than decisions made in Washington, D.C. Ironically, however, citizens pay more attention and participate at much higher levels when choices about the national government are involved. As “policy laboratories,” state and local governments are at the forefront of new ideas and solutions that are later adopted by the federal government.

The goal of this course is to show students how to critically think about the role and operation of state and local governments in the United States. This includes the **structure and function** of state, county, and local governments; changes in the **relationship between the federal and sub-national governments** (i.e. the nature of federalism); and the role of sub-national governments in **specific policy areas**.

Learning Goals

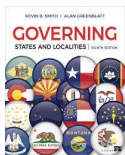
After successfully completing this course, you will:

- Have knowledge of definitions and theories related to state politics
- Understand responsibilities of state and local governments
- Understand the debate about the role of federalism in the U.S.
- Have knowledge about political attitudes and participation
- Understand the role of political parties and interest groups in the states

Required Resources

ELMS Course website:

<https://umd.instructure.com/courses/1329589>



Governing State and Localities, 8th Edition

Kevin B. Smith and Alan Greenblatt

ISBN # 978-1544-3886-01



The Divided States of America: Why Federalism Doesn't Work

Donald F. Kettle

978-0691-1822-78

*Available as a free e-book through UMD Library

Dr. Stella Rouse

srouse@umd.edu

Phone: 301-405-4194

Office: 1137 Tydings Hall

Class Meets

Tuesdays & Thursdays

11:00 am – 12:15 pm

0101 Tydings Hall

Office Hour

Tues. and Thurs. 9:45-10:45 am (via Zoom or in person) and by appointment

Zoom link:

<https://umd.zoom.us/j/5049732508>

Passcode: AmPol

Course Communication

We will be using **SLACK** for class related communications. SLACK can be used for full class, small group and one-on-one conversations. It will also ensure that class-related emails do not get lost in usual email traffic. **Please use SLACK rather than email to communicate with me.** Here is the [link](#) to join the class SLACK (link also on ELMS class homepage). Join using your UMD email. Your username should be:

“yourfirstname.yourlastname.”

We will use ELMS for article or link postings and for assignment completions. Students are responsible for ensuring they know how to use ELMS and that their email is registered.

- If you are unable to obtain the “Governing State and Localities” book in the first or few weeks of the semester, you may use this link to preview the first two chapters of the book: <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/governing-states-and-localities/book270091#preview>. You can also rent or purchase the book with this link.
- Weekly required readings (in the form of articles or webpages) are provided through ELMS
- Washington Post Local (on-line) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/>
- Pew Stateline <http://www.stateline.org/live/states/Maryland>

The following are books that we will be using in the course, but for which I will be providing copies of the relevant chapters. **You do not need to purchase these books** but if you are interested in having a copy or reading beyond what we cover in class, here is the information:

- Hopkins, Daniel J. 2018. *The Increasingly United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fischel, William. 2001. *The Homevoter Hypothesis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Course Expectations

In line with the expectations of an upper division honors seminar course, students will be assigned a fair amount of reading and will be expected to come to our classes prepared for lively discussions on the assigned topics. Further, students are expected to exhibit the ability to be analytical, to grasp concepts and theories, and to convey an understanding of the material both during class discussions and through written assignments.

Students are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to learning. As such, our classroom space will be a place where people can feel comfortable expressing diverse opinions without fear of ridicule or intimidation. It is expected that students will remain respectful of others, regardless of whether or not they share similar opinions and beliefs. Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed.

Students are expected to give their attention to the lecture or discussion during our class sessions. As such, please try to limit other interruptions and distractions as much as possible, including the use of computers, cell phones, or other devices. This also means coming to class on time and not leaving early (unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been communicated to the instructor).

A Note about Our Educational Experience (COVID is not over)

If the Covid pandemic has taught us anything it is that we should prioritize intellectual nourishment, social connection, and reasonable personal accommodations. I will be understanding about deadlines should circumstances arise that make it difficult to keep up with class. However, **two things are critical. First**, deadlines and course assessments are necessary components of a course. While I will be lenient, I will not remove assignments or push deadlines beyond certain dates. Please try to plan ahead in completion of assignments. **Second**, it is important that I know about problem(s) at the onset, not once you have missed multiple class sessions or assignments, or at the end of the semester when there are more limited options for addressing issues.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and [excused absences](#)
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

In particular, I will highlight two policies:

- 1) **Academic Honesty:** The work done in this course is expected to be solely the effort of each individual student. Cheating and plagiarism (representing the words or ideas of others as one's own or copying the work of another without giving proper credit) will not be tolerated. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the course (regardless of prior class achievement) and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you are unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the Office of Student Conduct's "What is Academic Dishonesty?" **This is especially important, as you will be independently completing graded assignments online. Please note that I reserve the right to use Turnitin to check for plagiarism.**
- 2) **Students with Disabilities:** Every effort will be made to accommodate students who are registered with the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) Office. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with ADS or who do not provide documentation. These students will be referred to the ADS office. Please provide information about disability and registration with ADS as early as possible in the semester, **but no later than September 10, 2022.** I will not allow make-ups to ADS students if the information is provided after assignments are taken. If you have any questions, please visit the ADS website: <https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>

More information about campus-wide policies can be found here: www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html

Use The Resources that You Pay For!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for your own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so I encourage you to consider visiting <http://ter.ps/learn> and schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting <http://ter.ps/writing> and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit <http://www.counseling.umd.edu>.

These resources are available because **everyone needs help** at some point... all you have to do is ask for it.



Learning Assessments

Learning Assessments	#	Points Each	Category Total	Category Weight
Quizzes	7	20	140	25%
Short Critical Essay	1	30	30	15%
Biography Project and Presentation	1	50	50	15%
Midterm Exam	1	100	100	20%
Final Exam	1	100	100	25%
Total Points:			420	100%

Grading Procedures

Grades for the course are determined by a student's performance in the following areas:

- **Quizzes:** There will be **seven quizzes** administered through ELMS. The quizzes will have certain due dates (posted with sufficient notice), will be timed, and will generally cover specific readings and lectures. The information you are responsible for knowing for each of these quizzes will be made available ahead of time and is posted on the course schedule below. The first course material quiz is on information contained in the syllabus (i.e., a syllabus quiz). This is an easy way to earn 20 points. Therefore, read the syllabus!
***All quizzes are to be completed by 10:00am (Eastern Time) on the due date. Please do not wait until the last minute to complete the quizzes, as technical problems may arise that would require time to resolve.**
- **Short Critical Essay:** Each student will be responsible for writing a short (4-5 pages) critical response paper on a topic approved by the professor. A menu of topics will be offered, or students will have the opportunity to select a topic of their own. **Topic selection for the critical essay is due October 18, 2022. The critical essay is due on Tuesday, November 15, 2020, at 10:00 am.** More information about the critical essay will be provided during the semester.
- **Biography Project and Presentation:** Each student will be required to produce a biography of one current state or local official. This biography should provide an overall sense of what the public official does and what they focus on in their elected or appointed position. Students should select their subject as possible. An important component of this project is to arrange an interview with the state or local official so the earlier this is planned and arranged, the better. The biography project will culminate in a paper that will be worth 40 points and a presentation worth 10 points. **The biography paper is due December 6, 2022, and biography presentations will take place December 6 and 8, 2022.** More information about the biography project will be provided during the semester.
- **Midterm Exam:** The midterm exam will take place on **October 13, 2022.** The midterm exam will be open book format and will be administered via ELMS. It will cover Week 1- Week 7 readings and lectures. The exam will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, concept matching, short answers, and essay questions. **You are allowed to consult all course material, but you are not allowed to consult other class members. If it is discovered that any students consulted with class members during the exam, this will result in a failed exam and referral to the Office of Student Conduct.** You will have 2 hours to complete the exam once you have accessed it, and there will be a window from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm to access the exam.
- **Final Exam:** The final exam will take place on **December 14, 2022.** The final exam will be open book format and will be administered via ELMS. It will cover Week 8 – Week 14 readings and lectures. The exam will consist of a combination of multiple-choice questions, concept matching, short answers, and essay questions. **You are allowed to consult all course material, but you are not allowed to consult other class members. If it is discovered that any students consulted with class members during the exam, this will result in a failed exam and referral to the Office of Student Conduct.** You will have 2 hours to complete the exam once you have accessed it, and there will be a window from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm to access the exam. Note: The final exam is not comprehensive, but concepts in the course build upon each other, so it is important to understand the material in the course holistically.

Grades

Grades are not given but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually. If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades, or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to discuss. Grade appeals must first be done in writing. I reserve the right to look over the entire assignment when considering grade appeals.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. **Grades will be rounded to the first decimal with .5 being the cutoff to round up to the next letter grade (exp. 79.4 is a C+ and 79.5 is a B-).** To be fair to everyone, I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut. It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others. **Please do not email me requesting exceptions to this rule.**

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	88.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%		
A	93.00%	B	85.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%		

Late Assignments

I will only consider quiz make-ups or late assignments under specific and compelling emergencies. I try to avoid due dates on major religious holidays. However, if for some reason a quiz or assignment is due on a religious holiday a student observes, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, prior to the end of the second week of the semester and arrange to take the quiz or turn in assignment prior to that date. Penalty for unexcused late assignments are as follows: a deduction of 2 points if assignment is completed after due date and time but on the same day; a deduction of an additional 3 points for every day late after due date (including weekends).

An Important Note about Course Schedule:

There we will be **three asynchronous meetings (materials can be accessed at any time; no live class) during the semester.** Students are expected to complete the readings and be prepared to discuss them during the next in-person class. Students are expected to attend all in-person class sessions and complete all the assigned readings. Attendance is not graded, but students should understand that there is a strong correlation with attending class regularly and doing well in the course. If unforeseen circumstances prevent attendance or completion of assignments, please notify me as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

Bold= Course Topic

Red= Assignment Due

Highlighted= Asynchronous Day (no live class)

DATE	TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS	ASSIGNMENT DUE	READINGS/VIEWINGS FOR ASSIGNMENT
Week 1 Tues 8/30	Course overview and class procedures		
Thu 9/1	Introduction to State and Local Government -Read: Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 1 “Introduction to State and Local Government” - Voters in Kansas Decide to Keep Abortion Legal in State, Rejecting an Amendment		
Week 2 Tues 9/6	Introduction to State and Local Government (cont.) -Read: Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 1; “Introduction to State and Local Government” - Voters in Kansas Decide to Keep Abortion Legal in State, Rejecting an Amendment		
Thu 9/8	Federalism -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 2 “Federalism” -Kettle Chapter 1 “Madison’s Balancing Act” - “What is Operation Lone Star? Gov. Greg Abbott’s controversial border mission, explained.”		
Week 3 Tues 9/13	Federalism (cont.) -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 2 “Federalism” -Kettle Chapter 1 “Madison’s Balancing Act” - “What is Operation Lone Star? Gov. Greg Abbott’s controversial border mission, explained.”	Quiz #1 Due by 10:00 am	Course Syllabus
Thu 9/15	State Constitutions -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 3 “Constitutions” -Kettle Chapter 2 “E Pluribus Unum” - “With Roe overturned, state constitutions are now at the center of the abortion fight”		
Week 4 Tues 9/20	State Constitutions (cont.) -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 3 “Constitutions” -Kettle Chapter 2 “E Pluribus Unum” - “With Roe overturned, state constitutions are now at the center of the abortion fight”		
Thu 9/22	Finance: State Revenues -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 4 “Finance” -Fischel (The Homevoter Hypothesis) “An Asset-Market Approach to Local Government (ELMS)” - State Local Revenues (Urban Institute)	Quiz #2 Due at 10:00 am	Readings through 9/13
Week 5 Tues 9/27	Finance: State Revenues -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 4 “Finance” -Fischel (The Homevoter Hypothesis) “An Asset-Market Approach to Local Government (ELMS)” - State Local Revenues (Urban Institute)		
Thu 9/29	Political Attitudes and Participation in the States -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 5 “Political Attitudes and Participation”		

		Kettle Chapter 3 “The Search for Unity” -Hopkins (The Increasingly United States) “Introduction” (ELMS)		
Week 6 Tue	10/4	Political Attitudes and Participation in the States -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 5 “Political Attitudes and Participation” -Kettle Chapter 3 “The Search for Unity” -Hopkins (The Increasingly United States) “Introduction” (ELMS)	Quiz #3 Due at 10:00 am	Readings through 9/27
Thu	10/6	Parties and Interest Groups in the States -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 6 “Parties and Interest Groups” -Hopkins (The Increasingly United States) “Meaning of Nationalization Past and Present” (ELMS)		
Week 7 Tues	10/11	Parties and Interest Groups in the States -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 6 “Parties and Interest Groups” -Hopkins (The Increasingly United States) “Meaning of Nationalization Past and Present” (ELMS) Exam Review		
Thu	10/13	Midterm Exam		
Week 8 Tues	10/18	State Legislatures -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 7 “Legislatures” -Hopkins (The Increasingly United States) “The Nationalization of American Elections” <u>-State Legislatures are Torching Democracy</u>	*Critical Essay Topic Due	
Thu	10/20	State Legislatures -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 7 “Legislatures” -Hopkins (The Increasingly United States) “The Nationalization of American Elections” <u>-State Legislatures are Torching Democracy</u>		
Week 9 Tues	10/25	No in-person class (Asynchronous Assignments) State Executives -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 8 “Governors and Executives” -Kettle Chapter 4 “Washington Rising” <u>-Governors’ Powers and Authority</u>	Quiz #4 due at 10:00 am	Readings through 10/11
Thu	10/27	No in-person class (Asynchronous Assignments) State Executives -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 8 “Governors and Executives” -Kettle Chapter 4 “Washington Rising” <u>-Governors’ Powers and Authority</u>		
Week 10 Tues	11/1	State Courts -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 9 “Courts” -Kettle Chapter 5 “America’s Struggle with Inequality” <u>-Comparing Federal & State Courts</u>		
Thu	11/3	State Courts -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 9 “Courts” -Kettle Chapter 5 “America’s Struggle with Inequality” <u>-Comparing Federal & State Courts</u>		
Week 11 Tues	11/8	No in-person class- Election Day (Asynchronous Assignments)	Quiz #5 due at 10:00 am	Readings through 10/27

		State Bureaucracy -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 10 “Bureaucracy” -Kettle Chapter 9 “Can Some States Lead?” <u>-State Bureaucratic Undermining</u>		
Thu	11/10	State Bureaucracy -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 10 “Bureaucracy” -Kettle Chapter 9 “Can Some States Lead?” <u>-State Bureaucratic Undermining</u>		
Week 12 Tues	11/15	Local Government and Relationship to the State -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 11 “Local Government” -Hopkins (The Increasing United States) “Local Context in a Nationalized Age” -Fischel (The Homevoter Hypothesis) “Local Government’s Corporate Form”	*Critical Essay Due	
Thu	11/17	Local Government and Relationship to the State -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 11 “Local Government” -Hopkins (The Increasing United States) “Local Context in a Nationalized Age” -Fischel (The Homevoter Hypothesis) “Local Government’s Corporate Form”	Quiz #6 due at 10:00 am	Readings through 11/10
Week 13 Tues	11/22	No Class- Thanksgiving Holiday		
Thu	11/24	No Class- Thanksgiving Holiday		
Week 14 Tues	11/29	Metropolitics: Another Level of Government -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 12 “Metropolitics” -Fischel (The Homevoter Hypothesis) “The Race to the Top in Environmental Protection”		
Thu	12/1	Metropolitics: Another Level of Government -Read Smith and Greenblatt Chapter 12 “Metropolitics” -Fischel (The Homevoter Hypothesis) “The Race to the Top in Environmental Protection”		
Week 15 Tues	12/6	Biography Project Presentations	Quiz #7 due at 10:00 am *Biography Project due at 10:00 am	Readings through 12/1
Thu	12/8	Presentations (cont.)/Exam Review		
Wed	12/14	Final Exam		Week 8-Week 15 Material

Note: This is a tentative schedule and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for up-to-date deadlines.