

PS 105 State Politics Spring 2014

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Required Texts

Smith, Kevin and Alan Greenblatt. 2014. *Governing States and Localities*, 4th edition. CQ Press.

Holbrook, Thomas ed. *Crane and Hagensick's Wisconsin Government and Politics*, 10th edition. McGraw Hill.

The Holbrook text is available as an e-book. You can get the information at the following link:

<http://www.coursesmart.com/1259195163>

Course Description

This course provides an overview of state and local political institutions. Emphasis will be placed on learning why political institutions and political cultures differ across the American states, and how politics in Wisconsin is similar to/different from politics in other states. Topic coverage includes three broad areas: political institutions, political behavior, and public policy.

The institutional coverage will focus on the basic players involved in state government, such as governors, legislatures, and courts. Since local units of government are very influential in state politics, we will also examine the key institutions involved in local politics.

The behavior component of the course focuses on the forces in society that try to influence government, including political parties, interest groups, and citizens (through voting and grass-roots efforts).

The public policy section of the course will focus primarily on how state and local governments make social welfare, criminal justice, and educational policies. We will also focus on how budgetary issues affect the policymaking climate in states and communities.

This course satisfies the Social Science General Education Requirement by providing a broad overview of how state/local political institutions work and the ways groups and citizens can influence political processes.

Grading and Course Policies

1. Three exams = 100 percent of final grade

There will be three (3) exams. The questions will multiple choice and true false in format.

The third exam is not a cumulative final. It will only cover the course material presented after the second exam.

Two highest scoring exams = 35 percent of grade (each)
Lowest scoring exam = 30 percent of grade

Exam grades will be posted on D2L. If you think there is an error in your grade or you do not see a grade for an exam, you must notify me within a week after the grades have been posted. If you've not notified me within a week, any missing exam grades will be considered zeroes for grading purposes.

2. Optional Extra Credit (up to 10 points)

There will be short answer chapter review assignments based on the textbooks. The primary focus will be review questions about Wisconsin politics from the Holbrook text, but reviews may also cover topics presented in the Smith and Greenblatt text.

If you don't have both course textbooks, you will not be able to do a credible job on the extra credit assignments.

For each review, you'll simply have to answer a few multiple choice/true false questions and three to four short answer questions (each answer should be about three to four sentences). You will receive a separate handout on the grading criteria for chapter reviews. Simply doing a chapter review does not entitle you to full credit. Your review has to meet the guidelines discussed in the grading criteria.

Separate dropboxes for each chapter review assignment will be set up on D2L. All chapter review assignments should be submitted to the dropboxes.

There will be 8 chapter review assignments posted on D2L this semester. You can do up to 4 of these assignments for extra credit points (choose any 4 of the 8 assignments).

In the assigned readings section of the syllabus, if you see the words Chapter Review in bold after a particular chapter, this means a review will be available for that chapter (not all chapters have review assignments).

Each chapter review is worth up to 2.5 points (added to your final course grade). You can do up to 4 of these assignments throughout the semester.

Simply turning in a chapter review does not mean you will get the full 2.5 points; you have to hand in a quality review that meets the grading standards for the review assignments. This is why there is a grade range for the extra credit points. You will not get ANY extra credit points if you hand reviews where you blatantly ignore the standards for review assignments.

Here is an example of how the extra credit points work. Let's say you end up with a final grade of 78 (based on exams) and turn in four chapter reviews. Assuming you receive full credit for the reviews, 10 points will be added on to your final course grade. This would move you from a 78 to an 88 for the course.

Let's say you do the chapter reviews but do not get full credit for each assignment. In this case, your percentage grade will be multiplied by 2.5 (per review) to determine how many extra credit points you get for a review.

Ex.	Review 1 = 80	$(.80*2.5) = 2$
	Review 2 = 85	$(.85*2.5) = 2.125$
	Review 3 = 75	$(.75*2.5) = 1.875$

In this case, this individual who did 3 reviews would get a total of 6 extra credit points for the semester.

The decision on whether to do an extra chapter review assignment is up to you. To be perfectly clear, you can simply do the three exams to earn your grade for the course. You do NOT need to do chapter review assignments, but you can if you want extra credit points.

Extra Credit Guidelines

- You can only do four (4) chapter review assignments. The extra credit is there to give a boost to your exam grades and should not be viewed as an excuse to have a casual attitude toward the exams. I will only grade four chapter review assignments per student. For example, you can't do them all and ask me to only count the ones that earn the highest grades.

-Chapter reviews are due BEFORE the exams that cover those chapters. Part of the idea behind these reviews is to help you study for the exams. For this reason, you

cannot hand in chapter reviews whenever you want. Once one chapter review assignment closes, it's closed and you cannot submit a review for extra credit.

I do not post due dates for the chapter reviews on the syllabus because the amount of time it takes to adequately cover topics varies each semester. I will make an announcement in class (and post a reminder in the "News" section of the D2L course site) each time a new chapter review is available. You will always have a minimum of 8 days from the time a chapter review is assigned until the dropbox for that review closes. A rough estimate of the schedule for reviews is 3 in February, 3 in March, and 2 in April.

Unlike some classes where extra credit is in the form of one assignment toward the end of the semester, the approach in this class is clearly different. If you're not doing the chapter review assignments as they are assigned, you cannot hand in a batch of them at the end of the semester. If you'd like to improve your grade with extra credit, you have to do so THROUGHOUT the semester, as there will NOT be any additional one-time big extra credit assignment toward the end of the semester.

Grading Scale used to determine final course grade

A 93-100	A- 90-92.9		
B+ 87-89.9	B 83-86.6	B- 80-82.9	
C+ 77-79.9	C 73-76.9	C-70-72.9	
D+ 67-69.9	D 63-66.9	D-60-62.9	F 0-59.5

Attendance

Please keep in mind that some of the material on the exams will be presented only in lecture and not in the textbook. I do not give out my lecture notes for any reason, so if you miss a class, you should make arrangements to obtain the notes from another student.

While I generally expect to stick to the topic outline on the syllabus, the order in which we cover topics may change slightly throughout the semester. For example, this means that a topic that's scheduled for the first exam might be put off until the second exam, or vice versa.

Chronic absenteeism does not excuse you from being familiar with course policies and changes in exam dates.

Exams

While I will try to stick to the exam schedule listed below, the exam dates on the syllabus are subject to change. It is not always easy to predict how quickly particular

topics will be covered, so flexibility is needed in case we fall behind in covering the material. **Any changes to exam dates will be announced both in class and on D2L (in the “News” section) at least a week before the exam dates currently listed on the syllabus.**

Makeup exams will only be given under the following circumstances.

Number 1. You have a University excused absence. An absence is considered excused if you can provide official documentation of a medical condition, such as a note from a physician.

If you do not have official documentation (such as a doctor’s note, a court order, etc.), then I am not required to give you a makeup exam.

If I decide to allow a makeup exam in the case of an unexcused absence, the maximum grade you can receive is the class average for the test you missed. For example, if you receive an 88 on a makeup but the class average on the exam was a 78, you will receive a 78 for your grade. If your grade is below the class average, then there will be no adjustment in your grade.

Number 2. You must contact me prior to the exam, or by 5pm on the day of the exam if you need to take a makeup.

Makeup exams must be completed within a reasonable amount of time (normally before the next class session). While the regular exams will be multiple choice in format, the makeup exams will be essay exams. The content of the makeup exams (such as topics covered) will differ from the content covered on the regular exams.

Showing up excessively late for an exam is considered an unexcused absence, and I reserve the right to give alternate versions of the exam to those who do not show up for the exam on time.

Missing an exam because you were not in attendance to find out a revised exam date is not considered a valid excuse. Any changes in exam dates will be announced in class and will be posted on the D2L site for this course.

When notifying me of an excused absence, please provide me with a contact (phone number, e-mail address, etc.) that you check often.

Special accommodations

Students with special needs are encouraged to contact me at the beginning of the semester (outside of class) to work out any necessary arrangements.

Academic Misconduct

The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Any instances of cheating will be referred to the appropriate university authorities for disciplinary action.

Estimated Work Hours

The UWM Faculty Senate has asked instructors to include information about the work hours associated with the course for the semester. The work effort for a 3 credit course is supposed to equal 144 hours. An estimate follows:

Lecture	38 hours
Reading assignments	60 hours
Studying for Exams	30 hours
Optional Extra Credit	16 hours

Topics

Readings

Political Culture	Smith et al., pages 9-16 (start at "Culture and History; stop at "Geography and Topography") Holbrook, Chapter 1 (no chapter review)
State Constitutions	Smith et al., Chapter 3 and pages 134-140 (start at "Direct Democracy; stop at "Public Opinion" Holbrook, Chapter 3 (First Chapter Review)
Federalism	Smith et al., Chapter 2
Political Parties and Political Behavior	Smith et al., Chapters 5 and 6 Holbrook, Chapter 5 (Second Chapter Review)
Interest Groups	continue Smith et al. Chapter 6 Holbrook, Chapter 6 (Third Chapter Review)

First Exam (approximately Tuesday, Feb. 25th)

State Legislatures	Smith et al, Chapter 7 Holbrook, Chapter 8 (Fourth Chapter Review)
Governors	Smith et al, Chapter 8 Holbrook, Chapter 7 (Fifth Chapter Review)
State and Local Courts	Smith et al., Chapter 9 Holbrook, Chapter 9 (Sixth Chapter Review)
Local Government	Smith et al., Chapter 11 and pages 391 to 400 (start at "Government Consolidation;" stop at "Rural Metropolitcs") Holbrook, Chapter 4 (Seventh Chapter Review)

Second Exam (approximately Thursday, April 3rd)

Economic Policy	Smith et al., Chapter 4
Criminal Justice	Smith et al., Chapter 14
Social Welfare Policy	Smith et al., Chapter 15
Education Policy	Smith et al., Chapter 13

Eighth Chapter Review (finish after reading all of Holbrook Chapter 11...this is the only chapter in this section of the course eligible for the chapter review assignments)

Environmental Policy	Smith et al., Chapter 16
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Third Exam (Wednesday, May 14th 12:30-2pm)