

Pol Sci 105  
State Politics  
Spring 2018  
Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30PM to 1:45PM  
BOL B46

Professor T. Holbrook  
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[holbrook@uwm.edu](mailto:holbrook@uwm.edu)  
T, R 2:30-4:00

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M, W 10:00-11:30

**Required Textbook:**

Bowman, Ann O'M, and Richard C. Kearney. 2016. *State and Local Government*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, Cengage Learning.

This book is available via the [UWM ecampus site](#). A new hard copy of this book is quite expensive, so please make sure you buy the least expensive version (e.g., rental or eBook) that you can find.

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on state politics and political systems in the U.S. There is remarkable variation in how the states conduct business and in the policies produced by the states. For instance: some states have highly professional state legislatures, where the job is considered full-time, while others are part-time and considered "amateur"; some states produce relatively liberal and expensive public policies while others produce conservative policies; and some states use elections to select judges, while in other states the judges are appointed. The list of differences could go on for quite a while. At the same time, because all fifty states are bound by the U.S. Constitution, as well as the broader U.S. political culture, there are many similarities in how states conduct business. For instance, all states have governments modeled after the U.S. government, with three independent and interconnected branches of government: the legislative, judicial, and executive branches. It is these and other similarities and differences that are the focus of this class.

While the primary focus of this course is on politics across the fifty states, special attention will be given to Wisconsin politics; in particular how Wisconsin fits into the patterns found across the fifty states. We will also spend some time studying the structure of local governments and how they are connected to state governments.

**GER:**

This course fulfills the Social Science General Education Requirement (GER) through its focus on: a) the study of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and/or socio-cultural factors associated with individual behavior, collective action, or societal development. b) the study of human collectivities, organizations, institutions, and cultures, their infrastructures, and interrelationships.

This course meets these requirements through our examination of the varied personal, social, and cultural forces that shape individual and collective political behavior. We will also examine the institutions and organizations on which state political and governmental systems are built.

**Expected Time Commitment:**

This is a three-credit course, so the expected time commitment from students is approximately 144 hours over the next 15 weeks. The bulk of your time should be spent doing the course readings (textbook, PowerPoint slides, your lecture notes), but you should set aside plenty of time for exam preparation and the writing assignments.

**Drop Deadline:**

The last day to drop this course is April 8. You should have plenty of information about your grade by that point, so I encourage you to make a well-informed decision that benefits you in the long run.

**Grades:**

Your grade in this course will be determined by three exams (75% of your grade) and three brief assignments (25% of your grade).

Event	Date
Assignment 1	February 23

Exam 1	February 27
Assignment 2	April 6
Exam 2	April 10
Assignment 3	May 10
Final Exam	May 18

The following scale will be used for assigning letter grades:

A	93-100	A-	89-92
B+	86-88	B	82-85
B-	78-81	C+	75-77
C	71-74	C-	67-70
D+	64-66	D	60-63
D-	56-59	F	0-55

**Exams :**

The exams will be multiple-choice in format and will cover material presented in the assigned textbook chapters and in lecture.

**Assignments :**

Assignments will be data-based and require that you do some very simple analysis of state political outcomes. For instance, you might be asked to look at information on something like state expenditures on primary and secondary education and discuss the types of states that spend a lot (Wealthy? Liberal? Urban?) and the types of states that spend relatively little (Poor? Conservative? Rural?). More detailed instructions will be provided for each assignment and we will spend time in class reviewing what you need to do.

**Make-up Policy:**

As a general rule, I do not allow students to make up missed assignments and exams, or turn in late papers. I will make exceptions to this policy only in the most severe and rare circumstances (death in the family, severe illness, etc.). This means that it is better to turn in a partially completed assignment and receive partial credit than to turn it in late and receive no credit.

**Accommodations**

Students with physical or learning differences that require some sort of accommodation should see me right away so we can address your needs.

### Other Policies

Information on campus policies related to grade appeals, religious observances, military call ups, and similar issues can be found at: <http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf>

### Course Schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Textbook Readings</b>
January 21	Introduction and the Context of State Politics	Chapter 1
28	Federalism	Chapter 2
February 4	State Constitutions	Chapter 3
11	Participation and Elections	Chapter 4
18	Parties, Groups, and Campaigns (Assignment # 1 due 2/23)	Chapter 5
25	<b>Exam on February 27</b> State legislatures	Chapter 6
March 4	State legislatures	
11	Executive Branch I	Chapter 7
18	<b>Spring Break</b>	
25	Executive Branch II	Chapter 8
April 1	State Courts (Assignment #2 due 4/6)	Chapter 9
8	<b>Exam on April 10</b>	Chapter 10

	Local Governments	
15	Local Governments	
22	Revenue Sources	Chapter 13
29	Education Policy	Chapter 15
May 6	Health, Welfare, and Criminal Justice policy (?) (Assignment #3 due 5/10)	Chapters 17, 16(?)

**Final Exam Friday, May 18, 7:30 am**