The George Washington University
PPPA 6085 – State Politics and Policy
Wed. 6:10 - 8:00 p.m. Bell 105

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Required Texts/Readings

Virginia Gray and Russell Hanson, Thad Kousser, eds. 2013. Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis, 10th edition (Sage). Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester.

Objectives

The purpose of this course is to introduce the important concepts of state politics and government with a particular emphasis on how those concepts affect the formulation and implementation of policy. The student will become familiar with the functions of state government and the political, economic, and legal issues that lead to state public policies. At the conclusion of the course, the student will be able to identify the varied internal and external influences on state government policy, including but not limited to political parties and interest groups. The student will also know, generally, how policy options are considered, evaluated, and implemented at the state level.

Course Requirements/Grading

Students have the option of completing a research paper or a take home exam. Both the paper and exam are due May 4. If you are contemplating the paper, you should read: Sean Nicholson-Crotty and Kenneth Meier. 2002. Size Doesn’t Matter: In Defense of Single-State Studies. State Politics and Policy Quarterly 2,4: 411-422.

Grades will be based on the following:

Class participation  20%
Class 1, Jan 14

**Introduction to Studying the States**


Class 2, Jan 21

**Federalism and the States**


Class 3, Jan 28

**POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS**


Class 4, Feb 4

**STATE LEGISLATIVE POLITICS AND POLICY**


Class 5, Feb 11

STATE LEGISLATIVE POLITICS AND POLICY (II)


Class 6, Feb 18

INTEREST GROUPS IN THE STATES


Class 7, Feb 25

GOVERNORS

Readings to be assigned. No Class Next Week

Class 9, Mar 18

DIRECT DEMOCRACY


Class 10, Mar 25

DIFFUSION AND INNOVATION


Class 11, Apr 1

Health and Education Policy

(http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf); Jim Taylor, Seven Reasons I really Dislike Education Reform (available at SFGATE.com), Diane Ravitch, Obama’s Race to The Top Will Not Improve Education (available on HuffingtonPost.com).

Class 12, April 8  
**FISCAL POLICY AND BUDGETS**

Gray, Chapter 10; E&Y/COST, State and Local Business Tax Burden (available online at www.cost.org); National Association of State Budget Officers, Budget Processes in the States, Summer 2008 (available at www.nasbo.org).

Class 13, Apr 15  
**State Economic Development Policy**

Gray, Chapter 16. Additional readings will be assigned.

Class 14, Apr 23  
**Recap Exams Distributed**