

Fall 1990

State and Local Government 1990 Syllabus

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DESCRIPTION

A study of the operation of state and local government within the American federal system with an emphasis on operative principles and practical issues. The course objectives are as follows:

1. To provide the student with frameworks for understanding, evaluating, and interacting with the structures, functions, and policies of state and local governments in the context of the federal system.
2. To examine areas of constitutional and political continuity and change within our federal system.
3. To develop skills in political research and effective citizenship.
4. To enable students to explore the role of beliefs, values, and ideologies that help shape contemporary social and political issues.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student is responsible for all assigned readings, including handouts and other supplementary materials. Students should keep lecture notes and supplementary materials in a looseleaf notebook.
2. Students will be tested on their knowledge of material covered in the reading assignments and classroom lectures through four regularly scheduled exams (20% apiece). The remaining 20% of the grade is divided between a report on a Mock Senate issue (10%) and an area study of a particular state (10%). Extra credit adds 2% to the overall score.
3. The area study and the report each consists of a five to seven minute presentation in class or testimony at the Mock Senate, followed by questions. Prepare a 3-5 page outline or text to accompany each report.
4. Area studies may be presented any time after the fourth week. Each presentation must cover a different state, other than Michigan. The first part should note the state's political culture, including political history and political geography. The second part should deal with two or three broad issues, such as education, criminal justice, transportation, the environment, social welfare, or urban growth.
5. Reports on Mock Senate issues should include background information, a summary of the key points of contention, and an analysis of the competing values and viewpoints represented in the controversy. Be prepared to act as a witness in the Mock Senate on the evening of November 19. A few students will be given the option to serve as judges in the Mock Senate. Service is voluntary but rewarding, and involves a commitment of three evenings (November 19, November 26, and December 4 from 7:30-9:20 PM). Assignments will be made in November.
6. A 4-5 page book review may be substituted for one exam. The review will be graded on a pass-fail basis. It must be well written, topically organized, neatly typed, and double spaced. Reviews may be written on any book drawn from the list below and are due a full week before final exams.

7. Two extra credit points may be earned by attending two talks by Russell Kirk during his Presidential Lectures, November 14th-16th.
8. Attendance is mandatory. One week's absence may be excused for good cause. Two weeks' absences subtract 2% from the overall score. Three weeks' absences require a withdrawal or result in a failing grade.
9. It is imperative that assignments be completed on time. Tardiness subtracts 1% each time and 2% if work is at least three days overdue.
10. The grading scale is 93-100=A, 91-92=A-, 89-90=B+, 83-88=B, 81-82=B-, 79-80=C+, 73-78=C, 71-72=C-, 69-70=D+, 63-68=D, 61-62=D-, 0-60=F.

READING

Dye, Thomas R. Politics in States and Communities, 6th ed. [D]
 Eidsmoe, John. God and Caesar: Biblical Faith and Political Action [E]
 Supplementary Readings (on reserve)

Books for Extra Credit Reports:

- Grant, George. Bringing in the Sheaves.
- Hekman, Randall. Justice for the Unborn.
- Williams, Walter E. The State Against Blacks.

CALENDAR

8/29 Introduction	8/31 E. 1-4	9/3 E. 5-9
9/5 E. 10-12; D. 1	9/7 D. 2	9/10 D. 2
9/12 D. 3	9/14 D. 3	9/17 D. 4
9/19 D. 4	9/21 D. 5	9/24 D. 5
9/26 First Exam	9/28 D. 6	10/1 D. 6
10/3 D. 7	10/5 D. 7	10/8 Fall Recess
10/10 D. 8	10/12 D. 8	10/15 E. 19
10/17 D. 9	10/19 D. 9	10/22 D. 10
10/24 Second Exam	10/26 D. 11	10/29 D. 11
10/31 D. 12	11/2 D. 13	11/5 D. 14
11/7 D. 14	11/9 D. 17	11/12 E. 13
11/14 Third Exam	11/16 D. 16	11/19 D. 16
11/21 E. 14	11/23 Thanksgiving	11/26 E. 15
11/28 E. 16	11/30 D. 15	12/3 D. 15
12/5 D. 18	12/7 D. 18	Final Exam