

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **State and Local Government**

#### **Course Description**

PO 142. State and Local Government. 3 hours credit. This course will enable the student to synthesize facts related to state and local government, including constitutions, elections, and structure. The student will be able to recognize relationships between state and local government and current events as well as the concerns of diverse populations including citizenry, parties, and interest groups.

#### **Course Relevance**

Political science classes provide the student with knowledge concerning the foundation of government branches and agencies which make up the political system. State and Local Government provides the student with the opportunity to analyze the characteristics and workings of the state and local governments, their elected officials, agencies, processes, and relationships with those outside the government.

#### **Required Materials**

Bowman and Kearney (2008). *State and local government* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

The intention is for the student to be able to:

1. Analyze the characteristics and responsibilities of state and local government – foundation, elected officials, agencies, and processes.
2. Analyze the characteristics of the relationship of state and local governments to outside entities.

#### **Learning PACT Skills that will be DEVELOPED and/or documented in this course**

Through involvement in this course, the student will develop ability in the following PACT skill area(s):

##### **Analytical Thinking Skills**

1. Critical thinking
  - Through written essays, class discussion, and the MSAT, the student develops critical analysis of the responsibilities and relationships between the federal government and state and local government.

##### **Communication Skills**

1. Creation and delivery of messages
  - Through the MSAT and written essays, the student develops effective communication skills.

##### **Technology Skills**

1. General computer use

- Through electronic-facilitated research and preparation of computer-generated assignments, the student develops basic computer skills.

### **Major Summative Assessment Task(s)**

These learning outcomes and the Learning PACT skills will be demonstrated by:

1. Completing a computer-generated (T skill) critical analysis (A skill) written essay (C skill) the student will analyze general patterns of state legislatures and governors in one particular state. The student will apply current events involving legislators and governors to compare with the routine foundations of state government. The student will describe examples of the lawmaking process, the governor's state of the state address, budget concerns, and the personal and political relationships between governors and legislators.

### **Course Content**

- I. Skills/Competencies – Actions that are essential to achieve the course outcomes:
  - A. Write clear and mechanically accurate sentences
  - B. Read with understanding and comprehension
  - C. Memorize basic facts and concepts
  - D. Apply basic facts and concepts
- II. Themes – Key recurring concepts that run throughout this course:
  - A. Elected officials and agencies
  - B. Government processes
  - C. Relationships between governments and outside entities
- III. Issues – Key areas of conflict that must be understood in order to achieve the intended outcome:
  - A. Characteristics of government officials, agencies, and processes
  - B. Responsibilities of government officials and agencies inside and outside of the government structure
- IV. Concepts – Key concepts that must be understood to address the issues:
  - A. Government agencies and processes
  - B. State Constitutions
  - C. Relationships between government and outside entities

### **Learning Units**

- I. State and local government basics
  - A. Examples of the increasing capacity of state governments
  - B. Definitions of political culture – traditionalistic vs. moralistic vs. individualistic
- II. Federalism
  - A. Distinguish characteristics of federal system of government – federal, unitary and confederation
  - B. Steps in the history of U. S. federalism
  - C. Reasons for the growth of national power over the states
  - D. Distinguishing characteristics of historical periods of models of federalism – dual, cooperative, and contemporary

- E. Characteristics of the intergovernmental financial relations between states and the national government
- F. Definitions of federal mandates
- G. Reasons why federal mandates cause tension between the states and national government

### III. State constitutions

- A. Characteristics of the first state constitutions
- B. Steps in the evolution of state constitutions from providing
- C. legislative supremacy to increased executive power
- D. Weaknesses of state constitutions
- E. Characteristics of informal and formal methods for constitutional
- F. change

### IV. Citizen participation and elections

- A. Reasons for patterns of participation and nonparticipation
- B. Distinguishing characteristics of primaries, runoff elections, general
- C. elections, and nonpartisan elections
- D. Uses of initiatives and recall type elections

### V. Political parties, interest groups, and campaigns

- A. Characteristics of the nature of the two-party system
- B. Steps in the transformation of political parties in recent years
- C. Characteristics of types of interest groups
- D. Techniques used by interest groups at the state level
- E. Characteristics of the new era of campaigns – the media, negative
- F. campaigning, and political consultants

### VI. State legislatures

- A. Characteristics of the basic functions of state legislatures
- B. Characteristics of the transformation of states organizing into
- C. legislative districts, mal-apportionment and re-apportionment
- D. Steps in how a bill becomes a law
- E. Reasons why and how state legislatures are organized into
- F. committees
- G. Characteristics of the norms of state legislatures
- H. Characteristics of patterns of relationships with governors

### VII. State governors

- A. Steps in the development/history of the office of governor
- B. Characteristics of the duties and responsibilities of state governors
- C. Characteristics of the formal and informal powers of the governor
- D. Characteristics of the roles of attorney general
- E. Characteristics of the roles of lieutenant governor
- F. Characteristics of the roles of treasurer
- G. Characteristics of the roles of secretary of state

- VIII. Budgeting and the bureaucracy in state government
  - A. Distinguishing characteristics of the phases of the budget cycle in a fiscal year
  - B. Characteristics of line item budgets
  - C. Characteristics of capital budgets
  - D. Characteristics of performance budgets
  - E. Steps in the evolution of personnel policy in state government – patronage, the merit system, and affirmative action
  - F. Uses of total quality management in reforming the bureaucracy
  - G. Uses of privatization in reforming the bureaucracy
  - H. Uses of e-government in reforming the bureaucracy
  
- IX. The judiciary
  - A. Distinguishing characteristics of original jurisdiction and appellate jurisdiction courts
  - B. Procedures used in selection of judges – partisan election, nonpartisan election, merit plan, legislative appointment, and gubernatorial appointment
  - C. Distinguishing characteristics of bench trials and trials by jury
  - D. Factors influencing judicial decision-making – institutional arrangements, precedent, caseload pressures, and access to the system
  - E. Characteristics of judicial activism
  - F. Use of judicial activism in judicial decisions
  
- X. The structure of local government
  - A. Distinguishing characteristics of general purpose and single-purpose local governments
  - B. Characteristics of the organization of county governments into county commissioners and a county council-elected executive plan
  - C. Characteristics of the incorporation process as it relates to cities
  - D. Services performed by municipalities
  - E. Distinguishing characteristics or organizations of city governments – mayor-council, commission and council-manager plans
  - F. Characteristics of issues of land use in city governments
  - G. Definitions of zoning, annexation, and extraterritorial jurisdiction
  - H. Definitions of special districts
  - I. Controversies surrounding rapidly growing numbers of special districts
  - J. Characteristics of trends of school districts
  - K. Roles of school boards and administrators

### **Learning Activities**

Learning activities will be assigned to assist the student to achieve the intended learning outcomes through lecture, discussion, homework, group and individual projects, quizzes, exams, class writings, and other activities at the discretion of the instructor.

**Grade Determination**

The student will be graded on learning activities and assessment tasks. Grade determinants may include the following: daily work, quizzes, chapter or unit tests, comprehensive examinations, projects, presentations, class participation, and other methods of evaluation employed at the discretion of the instructor.