Instructor: Dr. Jason Windett
Office: 127 McGannon Hall
Office Hours: M 1-4 and by appt.

Course Description

This is a graduate seminar in American State Politics. This course will focus on the comparative study of U.S. state politics. The topics we cover within this course will range widely across those commonly examined in political science, including studies of elections, mass behavior, public opinion, the specific institutions of government, and policy making. Our over-arching focus will be on the process of representation in democracies with a particular interest in how different state contextual and institutional factors help structure this process.

Learning Objectives

1. To understand the basic conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of political science research in multiple areas of American State politics

2. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on the variation institutional design and outcomes in state political systems, with a focus on legislative, executive, judicial, and bureaucratic institutions.

3. To understand the theoretical underpinnings of research focusing on political behavior, with a focus on political parties, interest groups, and campaigns and elections

Course Structure

This course is designed as a seminar. As such, an emphasis will be placed on critical discussion of the assigned reading material. Students should come to class prepared and ready to participate actively in these discussions.

My Teaching Philosophy

I believe that my role in the classroom is to help you learn the class material, as well as skills such as clear writing, speaking, and critical thinking. Towards this end, I develop a class that calls upon students to engage in reading, writing, talking, and listening. I want you to learn; I try to help make the material and tasks as clear as possible so that you are able to learn. I have an open door policy and will work with you to help you master class and reading material, as well as critical thinking skills.
Your Learning Philosophy

If you want a high grade with a minimum amount of work, you should enroll in another class. You will need to be dedicated to keeping up with the reading load and course assignments. If you want to learn as much as possible on the topic of state politics, this class should be highly satisfactory. As graduate students, I expect that you will consistently come to class prepared and ready to participate.

Readings

The following book has been ordered for the course.


Course Requirements

Participation: 30%

This course is reading and discussion intensive. You are expected to be an active participant in our discussions and classroom activities. An emphasis will be put not only on quantity of participation, but the quality of comments. If speaking in class is difficult for you, come see me.

Class attendance is required. You will be allowed one unexcused absence over the course of the semester. After that, each additional unexcused absence will lower your grade by one letter grade. **If you miss more than 2 classes, you will fail the course.** If you know you will be missing a class, please let me know as soon as possible.

Writing Assignment: 35%

You will write a full blown research paper for this course that may be co-authored with one of your classmates. It should take the basic form of a refereed journal article (like many you will be reading for this course). That is, you need a research question grounded in theory, hypothesis generated from that theory, an empirical evaluation of those hypothesis and a conclusion. I won’t require the paper be quantitative, but my tendency is to think in those terms. There is no specific page requirement, but my experience suggests that papers that are 15 pages of text or less tend to be under-developed, while papers over 25-30 pages of text would often be better if they were shorter. Note that one acceptable alternative would be a replication and extension of an existing published paper. However, the extension needs to be meaningful. For those of you with ideas about a thesis, this might be a great opportunity to pursue that work. The paper is due Monday, May 5th in class.

We will talk regularly about the paper over the course of the semester in class, and I expect I’ll see most of you in my office outside of class as well. I have several deadlines throughout the semester where I expect you to show me progress. However, the only aspect of the paper that I will grade will be the final version of the paper you turn in. That said, it is **VERY** important that you get started right away. You cannot write a quality paper over the weekend, and you need to build in time for the inevitable problems with data, writing, etc. that occur.
Final Exam: 35%

There will be an in-class written final exam. The final exam will be held during the final class meeting, Monday, May 12th at 4. This will be a cumulative examination on material covered throughout the semester.

Grade Scale

Final grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to grades based on overall performance in the course. There will be no extra credit offered in the course, nor will there be curving grades.

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<td>80-82</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>83-87</td>
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Honor Code

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. Academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of an F for the course and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml
Expectations and Procedures

Technology
Put everything on mute. You do not need to use your lap top for this course. Please take notes the old fashion way. This will dissuade the trend of college students to browse the web, check e-mail, and frequent social networking sites during lecture. I will post all lecture powerpoints on blackboard after the daily lecture. If I use additional material I will post it on blackboard so you may access it at a later point.

Communication
I will post grades, send class e-mails, etc... with Blackboard. Be sure that you can access the e-mail address listed. I will only send e-mail out to your SLU e-mail accounts listed on the course roster in Blackboard. I will not keep track of any other e-mail addresses you may use.

I am very accessible both during and after normal work days. Please feel free to contact me or stop by my office if you need to talk. Also, please contact me immediately if you are going to miss an exam or need to reschedule. I do not like to give make up exams, but under extenuating situations, I will make allowances. Please contact me prior to the exam if you need to reschedule, I will not allow make up exams if contacted after the exam period.

Disabilities
In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Tentative Course Outline
Please complete the readings prior to class time on the day assigned so that you can fully participate.

January 13th  Introduction and Course Overview
January 20th  No class, Martin Luther King Day
January 27th  Political Behavior and Participation in the States

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


February 3rd  Campaigns and Elections

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


February 10th Identity Politics

Turn in a one-page statement regarding your proposed research paper


Windett, Jason. 2011 “State Effects and the Emergence and Success of Female Gubernatorial Candidates.” State Politics and Policy Quarterly. 11 (4)


Bratton, Katheen, Kerry Haynie, and Beth Reingold. 2007.“Agenda Setting and African American Women in State Legislatures”. Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy. 28:3


Recommended Readings


February 17th **Governors**

*Required Readings*


Recommended Readings


February 24th State Legislatures

Required Readings


**Recommended Readings**


**March 3rd State Courts**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**March 10th No Class: Spring Break**

**March 17th State Public Opinion**


Recommended Readings


March 24th Policy Innovation and Diffusion

Required Readings


Recommended Readings

11
March 31st  

**Policy Responsiveness and Representation**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


April 7th In class data session. Meet in the computer lab. Please bring all of your data with you.

April 14 No Assigned Class readings. Bring rough drafts to class for a writing session.

April 21st No class, Easter Monday

April 28th No Assigned Class readings. Peer Review day, bring full rough drafts to class

May 5th Final Papers Due. Paper Presentations

May 12th Final Exam. 4-5:50