

# Course Syllabus

**Department:** Social Sciences

**Date:** 4/1/12

**I. Course Prefix and Number:** POL 110

**Course Name:** State and Local Government

**Credit Hours and Contact Hours:** 3 credit hours and 3 contact hours

**Catalog Description including pre- and co-requisites:** no pre-requisites or co-requisites

An exploration of the organization, functions and processes of State and Local Government, highlighting the activities of governors, mayors, legislatures, bureaucrats and courts, the role of political parties and lobbies, the mechanics of campaigns and elections, public administration and finance, and important areas of public policy such as taxes, health, education, welfare, immigration, energy, housing, infrastructure, environmental conservation, crime and policing.

## II. Course Outcomes and Objectives

### Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the methods political scientists use to explore political phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and the employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of state and local government (including the organization, functions and processes of state and local government, the activities of governors, mayors, legislatures, bureaucrats and courts, the role of political parties and lobbies, the mechanics of campaigns and elections, public administration and finance, and important areas of public policy such as taxes, health, education, welfare, energy, housing, infrastructure, environmental conservation, crime and policing), so as to better equip themselves with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to be involved in their communities.
- Demonstrate the ability to comprehend, interpret, analyze and evaluate college-level primary and secondary source readings in the field of state and local government.
- Identify, analyze and evaluate arguments made by some of the major authors in the field of state and local government, and, in their own writing, will demonstrate well-reasoned arguments when interpreting political science-related subject matter.

- Demonstrate the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, use and share information from a range of published and electronic political science-related resources.

**Relationship to Academic Programs and Curriculum:**

This course fulfills the SUNY Gen Ed requirement of 3 credits of Social Science coursework. It is also a Social Science elective.

**College Learning Outcomes Addressed by the Course:**

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> computer literacy     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> oral communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> ethics/values                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> reading           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> citizenship           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mathematics                  | <input type="checkbox"/> global concerns                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> critical thinking | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> information resources |

**III. Instructional Materials and Methods**

**Types of Course Materials:**

Textbook, published primary source reader (or electronic equivalent), assigned political science monograph or issues-debate reader, College learning management system.

**Methods of Instruction:**

Lecture, reading and discussion

**IV. Assessment Measures:**

- Essay exams and/or quizzes will be employed to assess students’ understanding of the methods political scientists use to explore political phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis. (Critical Thinking competency)
- Essay exams and/or quizzes will be employed to assess students’ knowledge of the major concepts, models and issues of state and local government (Critical Thinking and Citizenship competencies).
- Essay exams and/or quizzes will be employed to assess students’ ability to comprehend, interpret, analyze and evaluate college-level primary and secondary source readings in the field of state and local government (Reading competency).

- An assigned paper (critical book review or research paper) will be employed to assess students' ability to gather information from a range of published and electronic political science-related sources, to identify, analyze and evaluate arguments made by some of the major authors in the field of state and local government, and to develop a well-reasoned and evidence-supported argument (Critical thinking, Computer Literacy and Information Management competencies).

## **V. General Outline of Topics Covered:**

What a Political Scientist Does: Methods, Research, Analysis and Interpretation

The Setting of State and Local Government

Federalism and the States

State Constitutions

Governors and State Leadership

State and Local Legislatures & Bureaucracies

Public Administration

Mayors and Local Leadership

State and Local Judiciaries

State and Local Government Relations

Political Participation: State & Local Campaigns and Elections

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Financing State and Local Government: Taxing & Spending

Courts, Police & Corrections

Other Public Policy Areas: Health, Education, Welfare, Energy, Natural Resource Management, Environmental Conservation, Immigration, Housing, Infrastructure, and Transportation.

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