

Bowie State University
Department of History and Government
GOVT 232 State and Local Politics
Spring 2010
T 4:55-7:25

Dr. D. Osei Robertson
Office: 0209 MLK Bldg
Office Hours: TBA
phone: 301/860-3613 or 301/860-3601
email: dorobertson@bowiestate.edu

Course Description

_____ This course provides an examination of the constitutional basis, organization, and function of state and local governments, including their political processes and intergovernmental relations. The course is divided into two parts. The first half of the semester examines the major dynamics associated with state politics, such as elections, legislative processes, gubernatorial behavior, and budgetary concerns. In the second part of the semester the main components of municipal governance are analyzed, such as mayoral elections, urban regimes, economic development, and local decision-making processes. Although this is a course in State and Local Politics, this does not eliminate the need to stay abreast of the larger political environment. Students are encouraged to keep up with contemporary political events and activities. Reading the *Washington Post* or *New York Times*, or watching TV programs such as the *News Hour*, *Meet the Press*, or *This Week* are recommended for information on current political trends. _____

*******Special Needs:** Students who have a disability and who would like accommodations should report immediately to Disability Support Services (DSS), located in Room 1328 in the Business and Graduate Studies Building or call Mr. Michael S. Hughes, DSS Coordinator at 301-860-4067. _____

Requirements and Evaluation

1. **Class Readings:** Students will be responsible for weekly readings taken from textbooks and supplemental articles. The required texts are:

Kevin Smith, Alan Greenblatt, and John Buntin, *Governing States & Localities* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007).

James Woodworth et al., *Camelot: A Role Playing Simulation of Political Decision Making* (Belmont: Thompson/Wadsworth Pub., 2006).

Additional readings and state&city data will be provided to students on a DATA CD or posted on Blackboard.

Pedagogical Articulations

I: General Education Competencies

- 1) Written and Oral Communication
 - Write 2 book reviews on pre-selected texts
 - Participate in local politics (Camelot) simulation
- 2) Critical Thinking and Reasoning
 - Carefully interpret, analyze, and evaluate evidence statements, graphics, and questions
 - Construct well-supported (evidence based), clearly articulated, and sustained arguments
- 3) Scientific Analysis Using Quantitative and Qualitative Sources
 - Apply descriptive statistics (such as census and public opinion data) to evaluate claims and current literature
 - Use decision-maker and policy documents to access the accuracy of claims made by politicians
- 4) Technology Competence
 - Use word processor to create a text document
 - Use Graphics program (such as Excel or Word) to create tables and graphs for data analysis
- 5) Information Literacy
 - Use a Library Database (such as EBSCO Academic) or the internet to conduct research for class

II: Student Learning Objectives

- 1) Define the basic concepts and themes of state & local politics, such as: federalism, devolution, state & local finances political parties, urban regimes, pro-growth, caretaker, and progressive policies;
- 2) Understand how the primary institutions of state & local government operate, including: Governors,, Legislative bodies, City-Council, Mayors, County Executives, and State Supreme Courts
- 4) Identify the key actors in state & local government, including: governors, legislators, lobbyists, and interest groups, and community organizations
- 5) Use the requisite skills for research in political science;
- 6) Demonstrate this knowledge in the use of technology and library resources.

III: Expected Outcomes: Students will be required to complete the following:

- 1) Two Tests to evaluate their mastery of key concepts, themes, institutions, and actors (learning objectives 1-4). Tests will be composed of multiple choice, short answers, and essays.
- 2) Write 2 book reviews (learning objectives 1-3).
- 3) Complete 2-4 diagnostic quizzes to evaluate mastery of key concepts, themes, institutions, and

2. Tests and Papers: Students will take two exams and complete two papers as a part of the evaluation process in this course. The tests will be a composed of short answers and essays covering material reviewed in the prior weeks. Students will also have to complete two papers: one short six page paper, and one longer 8 page paper.

Book Reviews (Students must choose 2-one state, one urban)

Kerry Haynie, *African American Legislators in the American States* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2001).

J.L. Jefferies, *Virginia's Native Son: The Election and Administration of Governor L. Douglas Wilder* (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 2000).

Karen Kaufman, *The Urban Voter: Group Conflict & Mayoral Voting Behavior in American Cities* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2004).

Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta: 1946-1988* (Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1989).

J. Philip Thompson, *Double Trouble: Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press., 2006).

3: City Politics Simulation: As a part of the evaluation process, students will participate in a decision-making simulation of municipal politics (in class). Over the course of three weeks students will occupy the role of mayor and city council members attempting resolve various issues and pass legislation. In addition to participation, students will turn in a short report detailing their experience in the simulation due on the final day of class.

4: Class Attendance and Participation: Attendance is a mandatory component of this course. Moreover, the participation element of the course will be partially derived from class discussions of the readings. While quizzes are not formally part of the course requirements, if students fail to keep up with the weekly reading assignments the instructor reserves the right to conduct pop quizzes. If any student misses more than four classes, the instructor reserves the right to automatically fail the student. *University professors are not obligated to honor any excuse or explanation for an absence, regardless if the absence is due to illness, family issues, or athletic events. If any student misses class, she or he must bring the appropriate documentation (outlining specific details) for the professor to determine if the absence can or will be excused. Students are solely responsible for any materials that are covered or assigned (for example, if a test or paper date is altered) during their absence.*

Grading Scale	
First Test:	20%
First Paper:	15%
Second Test:	20%
Second Paper:	25%
City Politics Simulation	10%
Attendance and Participation . . .	5%
Quizzes	5%

**** Although test and paper due dates are listed below, the instructor reserves the right to alter these dates during the course of the semester if necessary. Any changes to the schedule, however, will be announced in advance to the class.**

Course Schedule

Week 1: Jan. 25-Jan. 29

State and Local Government: An Overview

Required Reading: Bryce, "Nature of the American State;" Smith et al., "Chapter 1"

Suggested Reading: Saffell and Basehart, "The Setting of State and Local Government"

Week 2: Feb. 1-5

Federalism: Original and Contemporary Perspectives

Required Readings: Pound, "Federalism at a Crossroads," Smith et al. "Chapter 2;" Zimmerman, "Congressional Preemption";

Suggested Reading: Federalist Papers 17 and 45

Week 3: Feb.8-12

Federalism Cont. and State Constitutions

Required Readings: Boulard, "Eminent Domain;" Ehrenhalt, "Devolution;" Smith et al., "Chapter 3"

Suggested Reading:

Week 4:Feb. 15-19

Elections in the States

Required Readings: Jewell and Morehouse, "Intro"; Smith et al., "Chapter 4: Home State Blues;"

Suggested Reading: Dautrich and Yalof, "The State of State Elections"

Week 5: Feb. 22-26

Parties and Interest Groups

Required Readings: Jewell and Morehouse, "Two-Party Competition;" Smith et al., "Chapter 5;"

Suggested Reading: Ehrenhalt, "Theory of Partisan Relativity"

Week 6: March 1-5
Review/ 1st Test

1st Test

Week 7: March 8-12
State Legislatures

Required Readings: Jewell and Morehouse, "Legislative Elections"; Smith et al., "Chapter 6"

Suggested Reading: Rosenthal, "Legislators and Legislatures"

Week 8: March 15-19

Spring Break

Required Reading: Jewell and Morehouse, "Gubernatorial Elections"

Week 9: March 22-26
State Governors

Required Readings: Smith et al., "Chapter 7"; Beyle, "Being Governor"

Suggested Reading:

Week 10: March 29-Apr.2
Municipal Government
(Film Street Fight)

1st Paper Due

Required Reading: Smith, "Chapter 10;"

Suggested Reading: Judd and Kantor, "Intro",

Week 11: April 5-9
Urban Regimes

Required Readings: Woodworth et al., "Chapters 1-4;" Stone, "Urban Regimes"

Suggested Reading: Sites, "The Limits of Urban Regime Theory"

Week 12: April 12-16

City Politics and Racial Issues

Required Reading: Woodsworth et al., "Chapters 5-8;" Pinderhughes, "Urban Racial and Ethnic Politics"

Suggested Reading: Masci and Greenblatt, "Latino's Future;" Robertson, "Property and Security"

Week 13: April 19-23

Camelot Simulation Part 1

Required Reading: Woodsworth et al., "Chapters 9-12;" Swanstrom, "Semisovereign Cities: The Politics of Urban Development"

Suggested Reading: Lemann, "The Myth of Community Development"

Week 14: April 26-30

Camelot Simulation Part 2

2nd Test

Required Reading: Woodsworth et al., "Chapters 9-12"

Suggested Reading: Bingham, "Economic Development"

Week 15: May 3-7

Camelot Simulation Part 3

Required Readings: Woodsworth et al., "Chapters 9-12"

Suggested Reading: Danielson, "Suburban Autonomy"

Week 16: May 10-14

Camelot Reports Due/Course Review

The Final Paper Is Due On The Exam Date and Time Scheduled By The University. I will not accept any papers or assignments after this date.

Supplemental Readings:

James Burns et al., *State and Local Politics: Government By the People* (Upper Saddle Reiver, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004).

Stephen Elkin, *City and Regime in the American Republic* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987).

Robert Erikson, Gerald Wright, and John McIver, *State House Democracy: Public Opinion and the American States* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994).

Virginia Gray and Russell Hansen, eds., *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*, 4th edit. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2003).

Dennis Judd and Paul Kantor, eds., *The Politics of Urban America: A Reader* (New York: Longman, 2002).

V. O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

Grant Reeher, *First Person Political: Legislative Life and the Meaning of Public Service* (New York: NYU Press, 2006).

Alan Rosenthal, *Heavy Lifting: The Job of the American Legislature* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2004).

Kevin Smith, ed., *State and Local Government* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2006).

Bruce Stinebrickner, ed., *Annual Editions: State and Local Government*, 13th edit (Dubuque: McGraw-Hill Pub., 2007).

Carl Van Horn, ed., *The State of the States* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2006).