

**Political Science 4015**  
**American State Politics and Policy Making**  
**Spring 2015**

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138 Lockett: TTH 10:30-11:50  
Office Hours: Mon. 9:00-11:00 or by appt.

### Course Description

This course introduces students to governmental institutions, political behavior, and policy issues at the state level. Our goal is to understand how different institutions and political conditions interact and play a role in the public policy process. A comparative approach is used to assess the political contexts, governmental institutions, and policies of the various states. While Louisiana will be used as a prominent example in our study, this is not a course on Louisiana politics.

The topics to be covered are divided into four broad sections. The first part of the course focuses on various political contexts in which state governments operate. The second part explores the institutions in which policy is created and implemented (legislative, executive, and judicial). A third section gives attention to differences across states in political party structures, interest group activities, media coverage, and election practices. The fourth section of the course focuses on different policy areas. We will spend time covering problems or conditions that policies are intended to alter, the specific actions governments take in response to these conditions, and whether or not such efforts have their intended effects.

In addition to our focus on the substantive aspects of state politics, we will also spend time examining the methods used by scholars to answer questions on these topics. Part of our goal is to assess the evidence obtained by scholars and to consider alternative approaches. While this is not a course on political science methodology, issues involving research design and analysis will play prominently in our class discussions.

### Required Reading Materials

Bookstore: Two books are available for purchase:

- *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis* (10<sup>th</sup> edition) by Virginia Gray, Russell L. Hanson, and Thad Kousser editors (2013, Sage and Congressional Quarterly Press).
- *The Best Job in Politics: Exploring How Governors Succeed as Policy Leaders* by Alan Rosenthal (2013, Sage and Congressional Quarterly Press).

Library Electronic Resource: Available for free download

- Caress, Stanley M., and Todd T. Kunioka. *Term Limits and Their Consequences* (2012, Albany: State University Press of New York). Electronic Resource Available at the following: <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/ebooks/#all>

Moodle Readings: Available for free download

- Readings listed on the syllabus are saved as files that are accessible through the Moodle course page.

Note that the syllabus lists each day's readings. It is assumed that student have thoroughly read these materials prior to the class meeting for which it is assigned.

### Course Requirements

The grade for the course is determined by a student's performance in the following areas:

Participation	15%
Book Review	15%
Policy Report and Presentation	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Letter grades will be determined as follows: A = 90 – 100 percent, B = 80 – 89 percent, C = 70 – 79 percent, D = 60 – 69 percent, and F = Below 60 percent.

### *Participation*

Classes are generally conducted in a lecture-discussion format so it is important to keep up with the readings and to come prepared for every class. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in class discussions. In order to do this, it is necessary to complete the readings *in advance* and to spend time thinking about them in a critical manner. Also, please keep up with current political developments at the state level since these will often be used as examples in our discussions. Participation comprises a relatively large portion of your grade (15% total) and will be determined by three equally weighted components:

- Self-Reported Class Participation: During each class period I will ask questions about the day's readings and will expect to receive answers. If you have questions about the readings or comments about the substantive topics in the course, please ask them. I will track your participation based upon your self-reported participation. If you have participated in the day's class either in asking questions, answering questions, or providing comments, please hand in a sheet of paper at the end of class indicating what your contribution was for that day (briefly restating your question, answer, or comment). It is expected that you will participate on 6 different days during the course of the semester. If you provide substantive comments or ask questions (that a reasonable person would say enlightened the discussion) on 6 separate days, you will receive 100% for this portion of your participation grade (if you participate 5 times your score will be 83%, 4 times 67%, and so on).
- Class Activities: Several times during the semester I will ask you to provide written comments about a topic, answer a brief question, take a quiz, or take part in a class activity. Your performance on these activities will be counted as a component of your overall participation grade. There will be many of these opportunities throughout the semester and your grade is determined by your successful completion of each. If you complete all of them, you will receive 100% for this component of your participation, complete 90% and your grade is 90, 80% is a grade of 80, etc.
- Attendance: Attending class is important and your presence will be checked regularly with a sign-in sheet or by other mechanisms. Please make certain that you come to class on time so that you will be counted as present for the day. As with the other forms of participation, if you attend 100% of the time when I have checked attendance, your grade is 100, attend 90% of the time and it is 90, etc.

### *Book Review and Policy Report*

Students are required to write a review of *The Best Job in Politics* by answering a series of questions that will be provided at least one week prior to the review's due date (Thursday, February 12). There is also a policy report that requires you to identify and write about policies recently adopted in an assigned state. Students will make brief presentations to the class on their states (on March 24 or 26) and the final report is due on Thursday, April 2. Further details on both the book review and policy report will be provided in separate handouts.

### *Exams*

There is a mid-term exam and a final exam (dates listed on the syllabus). These tests will consist of objective-style question (multiple-choice, short-answer, and/or brief essay questions). Note that a makeup exam is only administered when a student can produce a valid written excuse. Note also that makeup exams are all-essay exams. If you anticipate a problem, please let me know as soon as possible. Also, for anyone who has special needs or who requires accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation in advance of the exams so arrangements can be made.

## **General Policies**

### *Academic Honesty*

Students are required to abide by the academic conduct policies outlined in the LSU Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

### *Classroom Rules*

Please be respectful to those around you who are trying to listen, take notes, and participate in the class. Please make every effort to be on time to class. Be seated and ready to begin at 10:30 and leave early only for emergencies. Turn cell phones and pagers to silent. Most importantly, do not talk during class. Disruptive students will be asked to leave immediately.

Absolutely no audio or video recording devices are allowed to be used unless special permission is granted. Please do not take photographs of the overheads. Photography or videography of any kind is forbidden. This rule is strictly enforced during exams and during review of exam materials. All violators of this policy will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students. These restrictions are in place to ensure the integrity of testing materials and to protect student privacy.

You are free to use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class purposes (e.g., taking notes, looking up relevant information, etc.). But please do not simply play on the internet, check e-mail, or use social networking sites.

### *Late Assignments and Missed Work*

Make every effort to take scheduled exams and hand in work on time. However, I recognize there are legitimate reasons for missing a deadline or an exam. The following reasons are some, but probably not all, of the excuses that are considered acceptable: a documented illness, a family emergency, some severe mechanical failure (related to transportation, computing, etc.), or a scientifically documented anomaly in the space-time continuum. Please note that most job-related issues are not considered acceptable excuses (although see university regulations concerning military duties, official university-sponsored events, etc.). For late assignments, penalties are assessed based upon the circumstances, but will generally involve a substantial loss of points per day. Recognize that for reasons of fairness to other students in the class, credit cannot be given at the end of the semester for missed exams or papers not handed in. In other words, when you experience a significant problem that prevents you from meeting a deadline or taking a test, it is your responsibility to let me know about it in a timely manner and to make arrangements to make up the missed work. Excuses must be provided within one week of your return, NOT at the end of the semester. Excuse forms are available on this course's Moodle site where they must be submitted along with any other accompanying documentation (a doctor's note, etc.).

### *Graded Work*

I do not make grades available on Moodle and I will not e-mail grades. I return major assignments and will allow time in class for you to view your mid-term exam. Coming to class on a regular basis makes it very easy to keep track of your grades, including your participation grade. You are also free to come by during my office hours to look at your last exam. During office hours I am happy to review grades with you and talk with you about ways to improve your performance.

### *Graduate Credit or Honors Credit*

For students who wish to take this course for graduate credit or would like to receive special Honors credit, it is the student's responsibility to contact me at the beginning of the semester to make appropriate arrangements.

### *Special Needs*

For students who have special needs or require accommodations through Disability Services, please advise me of your situation so arrangements can be made.

## **Course Schedule**

### **The Contexts of State Politics**

**January 15**      **Introduction to the Course**

**January 20**      **Why Study State Politics**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser Chapter 1.
- Readings #1: Moncrief, Gary, and Peverill Squire. 2013. "Making a Case for States," Chapter 1 in *Why States Matter: An Introduction to State Politics*, Landham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Reading #2: Wilson, Reid. 2015. "Republicans in State Governments Plan Juggernaut of Conservative Legislation," *Washington Post*, January 3.
- Reading #3: Vara, Vauhini. 2015. "How California Bested Texas," *New Yorker*, January 8.
- Reading #4: "2015's Top 10 Legislative Issues to Watch," *Governing*, January.

January 22

**Methods and Approaches Used in Studying State Politics**

- Reading #5: Chapters from *Everything is Obvious Once You Know the Answers: How Common Sense Fails Us* by Duncan J. Watts, 2011, New York: Crown Publishing (Preface, Chapters 1 & 2).
- Reading #6: Berry, William D., and Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. (Chapter 1) *Understanding Multivariate Research: A Primer for Beginning Social Scientists*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Reading #7: “Appendix: A Brief Introduction to Regression.”
- Reading #8: “Important Definitions”
- Reading #9: Hartney, Michael, and Patrick Flavin. 2011. “From the Schoolhouse to the Statehouse: Teaching Union Political Activism and U.S. State Education Reform Policy,” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 3: 251-68.

January 27

**Political Cultures and Public Opinions**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, re-read part of Chapter 1 (20-25).
- Reading #10: Fellowes, Matthew C., 2004. “Politics and the New American Welfare States,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 48: 362-73.
- Reading #11: Tierney, John. 2014. “Do You Trust Your State Government?” *The Atlantic Monthly* May 14.

January 29

**Federalism: National and State Government Relations**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 2.
- Readings #12: Moncrief, Gary, and Peverill Squire. 2013. “States and the Federal System,” Chapter 2 in *Why States Matter: An Introduction to State Politics*, Landham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Reading #13: Nathan, Richard P. 2006. “There Will Always Be a New Federalism,” *Journal of Public Administration* 16: 499-510.
- Reading #14: Zernike, Kate. 2010. “Proposed Amendment Would Enable States to Repeal Federal Law,” *New York Times*, December.
- Reading #15: Barnett, Randy and William J. Howell. 2010. “The Case for a ‘Repeal Amendment,’” Cato Institute, September.
- Reading #16: Stern, Mark Joseph. 2014. “Federalist Rolling Papers,” *SLATE*, December 30.

February 3

**Federalism and State Constitutions**

- Reading #17: Dinan John. 2012. “State Constitutional Developments in 2011,” in *Book of the States*, pp. 3-10.
- Reading #18: Lupia, Arthur, Yanna Krupnikov, Adam Seth Levine, Spencer Piston, and Alexander Von Hagen-Jamar. 2010. “Why State Constitutions Differ in their Treatment of Same-Sex Marriage,” *Journal of Politics* 74: 1222-1235.

**Institutions of Governing in State Politics**

February 5

**Executive Branch**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 7.
- Reading #19: Windett, Jason Harold. 2011. “State Effects and the Emergence and Success of Female Gubernatorial Candidates,” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4: 460-82.
- Reading #20: Dilger, Robert Jay, George A. Krause, and Randolph R. Moffett. 1995. “State Legislative Professionalism and Gubernatorial Effectiveness, 1978-1991,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 20: 553-71.

February 10

**Governors and Legislatures**

- Reading #21: Klarner, Carl E., and Andrew Karch. 2008. “Why Do Governors Issue Vetoes? The Impact of Individual and Institutional Influences,” *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 574-84.
- Reading #22: Barrilleaux, Charles, and Carlisle Rainey. 2014. “The Politics of Need: Examining Governors’ Decisions to Oppose the ‘Obamacare’ Medicaid Expansion,” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 14: 437-60.

February 12

**Governors as Policy Leaders**

- Book: Rosenthal, Alan. 2013. *The Best Job in Politics: Exploring How Governors Succeed as Policy Leaders* CQ Press: Washington, DC.

\*\*\*\*\* Book Review Due at the Beginning of Class on February 12 \*\*\*\*\*

February 17

**Mardi Gras Holiday**

- February 19      Characteristics of Legislative Institutions**
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 6.
  - Reading #23: Squire, Peverill, and Gary Moncrief. 2010. "99 Chambers and Why They Matter," Chapter 1 in *State Legislatures Today: Politics Under the Domes*.
  - Reading #24: Galbraith, Kate. 2010. "Texas Stands Against Tide in Retaining Biennial Legislature," *The New York Times* December.
- February 24      State Legislators: Who They Are and How They Got There**
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Re-read part of Chapter 6 (173-183).
  - Reading #25: Hogan, Robert E. 2004. "Challenger Emergence, Incumbent Success and Electoral Accountability in State Legislative Elections" *Journal of Politics*, 66: 1309-29.
  - Reading #26: Greenblatt, Alan. 2012. "Can You Separate Federal Issues from State Elections?" *Governing*, October.
  - Reading #27: Zurik, Lee, and Manuel Torres. 2013. "Louisiana Purchased" Nola.com and The Times-Picayune.
- February 26      Representation in the Legislature**
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Re-read part of Chapter 6 (183-185).
  - Reading #28: Konisky, David M., and Michiko Ueda. 2011. "The Effects of Uncontested Elections on Legislator Performance," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36: 199-229.
  - Reading #29: Butler, Daniel M., Christopher F. Karpowitz, and Jeremy C. Pope. "A Field Experiment on Legislators' Home Styles: Service versus Policy," *Journal of Politics* 74: 474-86.
- March 3            MIDTERM EXAM**
- March 5            Legislative Decision Making**
- Reading #30: Cooper, Christopher A., and Lilliard E. Richardson. 2006. "Institutions and Representational Roles in American State Legislatures," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 6: 174-94.
  - Reading #31: Maestas, Cherie. 2003. "The Incentive to Listen: Progressive Ambition, Resources, and Opinion Monitoring Among State Legislators," *Journal of Politics* 65: 439-456.
- March 10          Term Limits**
- Book: Caress, Stanley M., and Todd T. Kunioka. *Term Limits and Their Consequences* (2012, Albany: State University Press of New York). Electronic Resource Available at the following: <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/ebooks/#all>
- March 12          State Courts**
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 8.
  - Reading #32: Bonneau, Chris W. 2007. "Campaign Fundraising in State Supreme Court Elections," *Social Science Quarterly* 88: 68-85.
  - Reading #33: Hall, Melinda Gann. 1992. "Electoral Politics and Strategic Voting in State Supreme Courts," *Journal of Politics*, 55: 427-446.
  - Reading #34: See report by Joanna Shepherd and Michael S. Kang at <http://skewedjustice.org/>
- Linking Institutions and Citizens**
- March 17          Political Parties and Elections**
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser Chapter 3.
  - Reading #35: Masket, Seth E., Jonathan Winburn, and Gerald C. Wright. 2012. "The Gerrymanderers Are Coming! Legislative Redistricting Won't Affect Competition or Polarization Much, No Matter Who Does It," *PS: Political Science & Politics* January 39-43.
- March 19          Interest Groups**
- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 4.
  - Reading #36: Nownes, Anthony J., and Krissy Walker DeAlejandro. 2009. "Lobbying in the New Millennium: Evidence of Continuity and Change in Three States," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 9(4): 429-55.
  - Reading #37: Lipton, Eric. 2014. "Lobbyists, Bearing Gifts, Pursue Attorneys General" *New York Times*, October 28.
  - Reading #38: Grasse, Nathan, and Brianne Heidbreder. 2011. "The Influence of Lobbying Activity in State Legislatures: Evidence from Wisconsin," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36: 567-89.

**March 24 Interest Group Influence**

- Reading #39: Ozymy, Joshua. 2010. "Assessing the Impact of Legislative Lobbying Regulations on Interest Groups Influence in U.S. State Legislatures," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 10: 397-420.

**\*\*\* Policy Presentations: Set #1 \*\*\***

**March 26 News Media in State Politics**

- Reading #40: Pew Research Center. 2014. "America's Shifting Statehouse Press Can New Players Compensate for Lost Legacy Reporters," July 10, 2014.

**\*\*\* Policy Presentations: Set #2 \*\*\***

**March 31 Direct Democracy**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 5.
- Reading #41: Nicholson, Stephen P. 2003. "The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness," *American Journal of Political Science*, 47: 403-410.
- Reading #42: Lewis, Daniel C. 2011. "Bypassing the Representational Filter? Minority Rights Policies under Direct Democracy Institutions in U.S. States," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 11: 198-222.
- Readings #43: Steinhauer, Jennifer. 2015. "Fight on Guns Is Being Taken to State Ballots," *New York Times*, January 2.

**Making and Evaluating Public Policies**

**April 2 Elements of the Public Policy Process**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 14 and 15.

**\*\*\*\*\* Policy Papers Due at the Beginning of Class \*\*\*\*\***

**April 7 Spring Break**

**April 9 Spring Break**

**April 14 Social Regulation**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 9.
- Reading #44: Smith, Kevin B. 2004. "The Politics of Punishment: Evaluating Political Explanations of Incarceration Rates," *Journal of Politics* 66: 925-38.

**April 16 Crime and Punishment**

- Reading #45 Lind, Dara. 2014. "The Two Simple Facts that Explain Why the US Prison Population Exploded," *Vox*, May 1.

**April 21 Fiscal Policies**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 10.

**April 23 Education Policies**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapters 12 and 13.

**April 28 Economic Development Policies**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 16.
- Reading #46: Scott, Dylan. 2012. "Southern States Have Become Job-Training Leaders," *Governing*, July.
- Reading #47: Russell, Gordon, and Rebekah Allen. 2014. "Giving Away Louisiana," *The Advocate* (Special Report Parts 1-3).

**April 30 Policy Outcomes: Health and Welfare Programs**

- Text: Gray, Hanson, and Kousser, Chapter 11.

**May 6 FINAL EXAM in this classroom on Wednesday, May 6 from 3:00- 5:00 p.m.**