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## American Public University System

*The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind*

**School of Arts and Humanities**  
**POLS312**  
**State and Local Politics**  
**3 Credit Hours**  
**8 Weeks**  
**Prerequisite(s) None**

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**Course Description (Catalog)**

This is a course designed to serve as a comparative analysis of state and local political systems in the United States. Emphasis is placed on the contemporary role of states and localities in the development and implementation of public policies. Additionally, there is an examination of the role of grass roots social movements in shaping local politics.

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**Course Scope**

This course is a study of US politics and government below the national level. Students will identify elected officials, identify critical issues of concern, and learn how to interact with the public officials

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regarding the political issues. Practical actions will be interspersed with traditional topics that will include constitutional and assumed authorities at the state and local levels.

This course is intended for students who are majoring or taking Political Science as a minor. This course is also designed for students who are seeking practical and hands on knowledge about governmental functions.

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### Course Objectives

**Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:**

- CO 1** Explain a governor's policy within their own individual state.
- CO 2** Identify important issues passed by their own state legislature.
- CO 3** Explain effective forms of local government.
- CO 4** Explain the powers of elected and unelected officials.
- CO 5** Identify an important issue at the state or local level.

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### Course Delivery Method

This course will offer the student a highly interactive virtual classroom. Each week's lesson will have a course announcement, assigned readings, a discussion group question based on either course readings or an internet-based project, and lecture notes provided by the instructor. The course will provide the student with the necessary knowledge of the fundamental principles of state and local politics so that students can better appreciate and comprehend our federal system of government, public participation, and policy making.

Since the student is expected to fully participate in discussions and interact with the instructor and other students, reading assignments and assigned projects should be completed by **Sunday 11:55 pm (ET)** each week.

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### Course Materials

1. Lecture Notes
2. Web Resources and Assigned Readings

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### Evaluation Procedures

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Grades for this course will be based upon two grading instruments; 8 Forum discussion questions, a mid-term exam, and one term paper. Forum responses should be posted by 11:55 pm ET on Friday. The grade scale for each of the evaluation tools is provided below:

<b><u>Grade Instruments:</u></b>	<b><u>% of Final Grade</u></b>
Forum Discussion Topics	50%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Term Paper	20%
Quizzes	10%

### **Forums**

The forum is the primary means of class interaction and the source of over half the student's grade, as noted above. Each forum requires that the student post one original response to the forum question. Ideally, it should be at least one page in length. Further, it should be supported by academic sources used by the student (at least one from the assigned readings), and listed at the bottom. The forums are set up so students must post their responses before being able to read what other students have researched and submitted.

Students are encouraged to use the APUS online library as well as scholastic websites. **Research using About.com, WiseGeek.com, general purpose dictionaries, and wiki sources, such as Wikipedia, is highly discouraged, and instructors may not accept those sources as credible.**

Please be sure that you have completed and proofread your work before posting it. You will not be able to delete or edit your work once you've submitted it, similar to the way exams and papers will not be returned for corrections after they have been submitted.

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Additionally, each forum submission requires that the student interact and discuss responses with other students. (Again, see the rubric for specifics on grading criteria). Criteria for substantiveness may include the following, either individually or in combination:

1. The reply is in complete paragraphs, and not just one or two sentences.
2. The reply genuinely adds something to the forum, in terms of new information or fresh insight.
3. It explains the responding student's reasoning: "You're right" is not substantive, but "I agree with you because..." stands a higher chance of being so.
4. It does not simply summarize what another student has said. **Example:** "I really like your post, especially when you said..."
5. After your initial posts, your instructor may ask follow up questions to help you further develop your responses or to help you think further about the initial questions.

**Note:** Meeting forum minimum requirements will result in a satisfactory grade of a C or higher (A, B, or C). It is not a guarantee that an A will be earned.

### **Submission of Assignments:**

*Your original response to the forum question is due **Friday** at 11:55 p.m. ET (Eastern Time) each week. Replies to classmates' posts and exams are due Sunday evening at 11:55 p.m. ET. Any late submissions submitted will be subject to a late penalty, unless the student provides evidence to the instructor ahead of time about an extenuating situation and receives permission to submit work after the established course deadline.*

*Late penalties are assessed thusly. For each day that the assignment is late, the assignment is penalized 5% of the maximum grade. Repeated late submissions may result in failure of the course.*

### **Term Paper**

In 8-10 pages (double-spaced), analyze the issue that most concerns you at the state or local level. Then, propose how you would convince your state or local government to approve your proposed solution.

### **Forum Participation**

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In order to receive full credit for your Forum postings, please adhere to the following rubric. Asynchronous discussion enhances learning as you share your ideas, perspectives, and experiences with the class. You develop and refine your thoughts through the writing process, plus broaden your classmates' understanding of the course content. Use the following feedback to improve the quality of your discussion contributions.

**Quizzes**

There are three Quizzes in this class, in week 2, 5, and 7. They are 30 minute timed quizzes, and need to be completed by Sunday at 11:55 PM Eastern of the week. They cover the material of the previous weeks, but only include the weeks since the last quiz.

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**Course Outline**

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>	<u>Learning Objective(s)</u>	<u>Assignment(s)</u>
1	<p>Your Public Servants</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <p>"State and Local Governments" American Government. Copyright ©2008-2014 ushistory.org, owned by the Independence Hall Association in Philadelphia.</p> <p>Nelson, Robert H. "Homeowners Associations in Historical Perspective." <i>Public Administration Review</i>. Jul/Aug2011, Vol. 71 Issue 4, p546-549. 4p.</p>	CO-3	<p><b>Forum:</b> Virtual Introduction &amp; Week 1 Question:</p> <p>Post a list of your state &amp; local elected officials. Include their party affiliation, if any.</p>
2	<p>Framers Intent for State Governments</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <p>Read Article I, II, III and IV of the US Constitution</p> <p><i>Federalist Paper #46:</i>  <i>Federalist Papers #28 and #32</i> for commentary on the ability of state governments to resist the national government            Kelleher, Christine A. and Jennifer Wolak. "Explaining Public Confidence in the Branches</p>	CO-2  CO-5	<p><b>Forum:</b> Week 2 Question</p> <p>The federal government has usurped powers over the intervening 200+ years. Has that</p>

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	<p>of State Government." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> Vol. 60, No. 4 (Dec., 2007), pp. 707-721</p> <p>Larcinese, Valentino, Leonzio Rizzo and Cecilia Testa. "Allocating the U.S. Federal Budget to the States: The Impact of the President." <i>The Journal of Politics</i>. Vol. 68, No. 2, May 2006</p> <p>NOTE: The <i>Federalist Papers</i> were written in 1787 and 1788 as part of a public campaign to drum up support for the newly drafted Constitution. Written in the language of the day, you may find some words unfamiliar, or their use unfamiliar. Go to a dictionary to find the meaning used in that time period. These papers give you excellent insight into how the framers (of a Federalist inclination) intended for the Constitution to be applied.</p>		<p>greatly weakened the fourth separate power established by the US Constitution? Why is that good or bad?</p> <p>Week 2 Quiz</p>
3	<p>The State Governor</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <p>"Introduction to Governors: Chapter 2" <i>The Executive Branch of State Government: People, Process and Politics</i> edited by Margaret R. Ferguson. 2006 by ABC-CLIO, Inc.</p> <p>Read the state-of-your-state speech delivered by your governor. Look one up in the your state's archives:</p>	<p>CO-1</p> <p>CO-2</p> <p>CO-5</p>	<p><b>Forum:</b> Week 3 Question:</p> <p>Post a summary of your governor's latest speech on the State of your State.</p> <p>Identify a key issue raised by your governor and his/her proposal(s) on that issue</p> <p>What action(s) has the governor taken since the state of the state speech to address the issues raised in the speech?</p>
4	<p>The State Legislature</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <p>Feldman, Daniel L. Gerald Benjamin. 2010. <i>Tales from the Sausage Factory: The Social Construction of Failure</i> State University of New York Press.</p> <p>Read "About State Legislatures" on the <i>National Conference of State Legislatures</i></p>	<p>CO-2</p> <p>CO-5</p>	<p><b>Forum:</b> Week 4 Question</p> <p>Evaluate an issue that most concerns you;</p> <p>Report on the</p>

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	<p>Find your state legislature homepage Find the issue or issues that your state is currently giving priority. Are there more pressing issues you think they should be addressing.</p>	<p>action, if any, taken by your state legislature on the issue;</p> <p>Explain whether or not the governor approved the action taken by the legislature;</p> <p>Review and comment on other students' postings.</p> <p><b>Mid-Term Exam</b></p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Local Governments</p> <p>Bernard H. Ross and Myron A. Levine. Urban Politics: Cities and Suburbs in a Global Age, Eighth Edition M. E. Sharpe, Inc. © 2012. Chapters 1-2</p> <p>"Forms of Municipal Government." National League of Cities. 2013.</p> <p>Video: Council-Manager Form of Local Government</p> <p>U.S. Conference of Mayors Website</p>	<p>CO-3 <b>Forum:</b> Week 5 Question</p> <p>CO-5 Report on the type of government that your local government uses.</p> <p>Evaluate whether you believe it to be the most effective form of government.</p> <p>Does it include responsibility for schools? If not, how are schools governed?</p> <p>Review and comment on</p>

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			other students' postings Week 5 Quiz
6	<p>Bureaucracy</p> <p>Feser, Claudio. "Long live bureaucracy!" <i>Leader to Leader</i>. Summer2012, Vol. 2012 Issue 65, p57-62.</p> <p>Brown, J. David, John S. Earle, and Scott Gehlbach. "Helping Hand or Grabbing Hand? State Bureaucracy and Privatization Effectiveness." <i>The American Political Science Review</i> Vol. 103, No. 2 (May 2009), pp. 264-283</p> <p>Li, Tania Murray. "Beyond "The State" and Failed Schemes." <i>American Anthropologist</i> Vol. 107, No. 3 (Sep., 2005), pp. 383-394.</p> <p>Craw, M. Deciding to Provide: Local Decisions on Providing Social Welfare. <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>, 2010.</p> <p>"Professional Local Government Management" at ICMA site</p>	<p>CO-4</p> <p>CO-5</p>	<p><b>Forum:</b> Week 6 Question</p> <p>Who has more power: elected or unelected officials? Explain your answer and use supporting details.</p> <p>Review and comment on other students' postings.</p>
7	<p>Seeking Political Office</p> <p>Fox, Richard L. and Jennifer L. Lawless. "To Run or Not to Run for Office: Explaining Nascent Political Ambition." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> Vol. 49, No. 3 (Jul., 2005), pp. 642-659</p> <p>"Why &amp; How to Run for Local Elected Office." League of Women Voters</p> <p>Tulloch, Alexander. "Running for Office." <i>English Today</i> 102, Vol. 26, No. 2 (June 2010): 55-56.</p>	<p>CO-3</p> <p>CO-4</p>	<p><b>Forum:</b> Week 7 Question</p> <p>Assume that you are willing to enter public service at the state or local government level; declare whether you will seek an elected or unelected position.</p> <p>Describe the position you would seek and why.</p> <p>List your credentials for serving in the</p>

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			<p>position.</p> <p>Explain the steps you need to take to achieve that position.</p> <p>Review and comment on other students' postings.</p> <p>Week 7 Quiz</p>
8	<p>Social Responsibility</p> <p>Submit Community Service Project Proposal</p> <p>Morrison, Michael. Community Service: Benefits and Challenges." <i>Concrete International</i>. Oct. 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may choose to use the material provided in the weekly lessons, or other approved sources that you may find helpful. (Remember that <i>Wikipedia</i> and <i>Wisegeek</i> are among the sources that are NOT approved sources.)</li> </ul>	CO-5	<p><b>Forum:</b> Week 8 Question</p> <p><b>Term Paper Due</b></p>

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### Grading Scale

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) (click here) to reference the University's [grading scale](#)

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### Policies

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked question about policies are listed below.

[Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

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[Extension Process and Policy](#)

## **PLAGIARISM PENALTY**

The instructor has the option of awarding any assignment that has been found to have been plagiarized a zero. Subsequent violations may result in an F in the class.

## **WRITING EXPECTATIONS**

All written submissions should be submitted in a font and page set-up that is readable and neat. It is recommended that students try to adhere to a consistent format, which is described below.

- Typewritten in double-spaced format with a readable style and font and submitted inside the electronic classroom (unless classroom access is not possible and other arrangements have been approved by the professor).
- Arial 12-point font.
- Page margins Top, Bottom, Left Side and Right Side = 1 inch, with reasonable accommodation being made for special situations and online submission variances.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. Five points will be deducted from your Forum weekly grade for each day the assignment is late. As adults, students, and working professionals I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can determine an acceptable resolution. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and will result in 5% deducted from your grade.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

This institution complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. In compliance with federal and state regulations, reasonable accommodations are provided to qualified students with disabilities.

A request for accommodation is deemed reasonable if the request:

- is based on documented individual needs.
- does not compromise essential requirements of a course or program.
- does not impose an undue financial or administrative burden upon APUS.

A qualified student can, with or without reasonable accommodations, perform the essential functions of program or course requirements. The essential requirements of an academic course or program need not be modified to accommodate an individual with a disability.

Final responsibility for selection of the most appropriate accommodation rests with the University's Disability Support Services Committee and is determined on an individual case-by-case basis, based on the nature of the student's disability. Students are encouraged email [registrar@apus.edu](mailto:registrar@apus.edu) to discuss potential academic accommodations and begin the review process. It is the student's responsibility to:

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- follow the accommodation procedure outlined in this section,
- identify the disability to the staff and/or faculty of the university,
- provide (and incur expense for) current appropriate documentation of disability and accommodation needed from a qualified medical or other licensed professional, and
- request specific accommodations or services.

### **NETIQUETTE**

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate--both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and "flaming." Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple.
- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add "emoticons" to help alert your readers: ;-)

### **DISCLAIMER STATEMENT**

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

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## **Academic Services**

### **ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES**

The Online Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Online Library provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to [librarian@apus.edu](mailto:librarian@apus.edu).

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.
- **Turnitin.com:** [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com) is a tool to improve student research skills that also detect plagiarism. Turnitin.com provides resources on developing topics and assignments that

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encourage and guide students in producing papers that are intellectually honest, original in thought, and clear in expression. This tool helps ensure a culture of adherence to the University's standards for intellectual honesty. Turnitin.com also reviews students' papers for matches with Internet materials and with thousands of student papers in its database, and returns an Originality Report to instructors and/or students.

- **Tutor.com:** Students have access to ten free hours of tutoring service per year through [Tutor.com](http://tutor.com). Tutoring is available in the following subjects: math (basic math through advanced calculus), science (biology, chemistry, and physics), accounting, statistics, economics, Spanish, writing, grammar, and more. Additional information is located in the Online Library. From the Online Library home page, click on either the "Writing Center" or "Tutoring Center." All login information is available.
- **Request a Library Guide for your course:** (<http://apus.libguides.com/index.php>)
- The AMU/APU Library Guides provide access to collections of trusted sites on the Open Web and licensed resources on the Deep Web. The following are specially tailored for academic research at APUS:
  - ⦿ Program Portals contain topical and methodological resources to help launch general research in the degree program. To locate, search by department name, or navigate by school.

## **COURSE MATERIALS/READINGS-How to Run for Public Office for Rhode Island**

<http://sos.ri.gov/documents/elections/run-for-office10.pdf>

### **Activity/Reading/Web links/Running for Public Office**

<http://politicalcalculations.blogspot.com/2008/07/do-you-dare-run-for-public-office.html>

[http://www.devvy.com/pdf/running\\_for\\_public\\_office.pdf](http://www.devvy.com/pdf/running_for_public_office.pdf)

<http://www.statelocalgov.net/>

### **POWERPOINT ON BUREAUCRACY**

<http://dept.lamar.edu/polisci/political/Bureaucracy.pdf>

### **WEB LINK TO GOVERNOR SPEECHES/TECHNOLOGY/VIDEO TOOLS**

<http://www.stateline.org/live/issues/Govs'+Speeches>