

SYLLABUS

Code: POLI 115

Title: State, County, and Local Government

Institute: Business and Social Science

Department: Political Science

Course Description: This course will introduce you to State, County, and Local Government. During the semester you will become familiar with a number of the concepts and theories central to the study. We will cover federalism, state constitutions, political culture, legislative politics, executive politics, judicial politics, policy making, state political parties, elections, and more.

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

Prerequisites or Corequisites: None

Credits: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Lab/Studio Hours: 0

Required Textbook/Materials:

Instructor will inform students on Day 1 of class.

Additional Time Requirements:

For information on Brookdale's policy on credit hour requirements and outside class student work refer to [Academic Credit Hour Policy](#).

Course Learning Outcomes:

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

- Summarize American federalism and the New Jersey Constitution
- Describe the three branches of state government and how they check and balance one another
- Explain the electoral process and how candidates are selected to represent us at the state and local level
- Compare the political platforms of the New Jersey Republican and Democratic parties
- Recognize metropolitan politics and the relationship between levels of government
- Describe the public policy process and how state and local laws and regulations are crafted

Grading Standard:

0-64=**F** 65-69=**D** 70-76=**C** 77-79=**C+** 80-82=**B-** 83-86=**B** 87-89=**B+** 90-92=**A-** 93-100=**A**

Please see individual instructor addendums for additional grading standards and/or policies.

Course Content:

UNIT 1: State and Local Politics and American Federalism

- State and local government duties and responsibilities
- State and local governments flourishing before national
- The framers shaping of the national constitution

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- Why do citizens feel “closer” to city & county government?
- Why don't citizens take more of an interest in local government?
- Federalism: [def./types]: dual / cooperative / regulated / new
- Umpire of Federalism
- Unitary System / Confederations
- Why Federalism? The Advantages.
- # of governments in the USA
- Constitutional Structure
- Powers of the National Govt.
 - express powers
 - implied powers
 - necessary & proper clause
 - national supremacy
 - mandates
- Powers of the States
 - 10th Amendment
 - concurrent powers
- Interstate Relations: full faith & credit / privileges & immunities / extradition
- McCulloch v. Maryland
- Preemption
- Centralists v. Decentralists
- Federal Grants [def. / purpose / types]: categorical-formula / project / block
- politics of: Republicans / Democrats
- welfare reform example
- the growth of big government
- Devolution Revolution

UNIT 2: State Constitutions, New Jersey's Constitution, Terms of Office, and Officeholders

- New York constitutional revision
- roots of state constitutions
- constitutional rigidity & evasion
- getting around the constitution: Judicial Interpretation / New Judicial Federalism
- Amending State Constitutions:
 - Legislative Proposals [revision commission]
 - Initiative Petitions

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- Constitutional Conventions
- Politics of Constitutional Revision
- New Jersey State Constitution
- Terms of Office:
 - NJ Governor
 - NJ Senate
 - NJ Assembly
 - NJ Supreme Court
- Current Office Holders:
 - NJ Governor
 - NJ's 2 US Senators
 - *Your* US Representative
 - *Your* State Senator
 - *Your* State Assemblypersons
 - NJ Senate President
 - NJ General Assembly Speaker

UNIT 3: State and Local Political Parties and Elections

- federalism and elections
 - electoral process [decentralization]
 - electoral college [focus winning states]
 - diversity in state parties, candidates, voters, and rules
- primary v. general elections
- “preferred position” of Republicans & Democrats v. others
- Two kinds of ballots: Office Block v. Party Column
 - party-line voting (straight ticket) v. split-ticket voting
- party activities in elections / soft money / issue advocacy
- how voters decide (in order of importance):
- (1) party identification, (2) candidate appeal, and (3) issues
- nonpartisan elections
- Primaries: Closed, Open, Blanket, and Louisiana
- differences in frequency & timing
- The Electoral College
- The NJ Democratic Party v. The NJ Republican Party

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UNIT 4: The Three Branches of State Government: Legislative, Executive, Judicial

- Role of Branches of Government:
 - Executive
 - Legislative
 - Judicial
- bicameral v. unicameral
- House v. Senate
- citizen v. professional legislatures
- What do state legislators do?
- How does a bill become law? (the legislative process)
- Committee roles
- Who are state legislators?
- legislative caucuses / party unity / legislative committees
- trustee v. delegate
- term limits
- redistricting / reapportionment / gerrymandering
- Initiative / Referendum / Recall
- NJ legislature
- In New Jersey Government: Know your state lawmakers and the leaders of the NJ legislature
- Gubernatorial powers and expectations
- on the spot manager and most important role
- executive branch: Lt. governor / secretary of state / attorney general
- NJ governors [most recent] / uniqueness & power of the position
- NJ v. others / US president compared to state governors
- State of the State Address
- Line of Succession

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- When elections are held
- Reelection prospects
- William Livingston
- Woodrow Wilson
- Strongest and weakest governorships
- Governor's Cabinet
- Judicial Process
- Role of the judiciary
- Justice
- Judicial Independence
- Judicial Review
- How state judges are chosen:
 - Governor
 - Legislature
 - Election
 - Merit
- State judges compared to federal judges
- Tort Law
- New Jersey State Judges
- Municipal judges
- Jury Duty and the role of the jury in the justice system
- Writ of habeas corpus
- New Judicial Federalism
- Types of courts and roles
- Reforms for improving the administration of justice
- Role of prosecutors and assigned counsel
- Pro bono work
- Plea bargaining and sentencing
- Crime victim movement and victim's bill of rights

UNIT 5: Local Government and Making State and Local Public Policy, Policy Implementation and Funding Public Policy

- State-local relations v. national-state relations
- Constitutional home rule

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- County government structure and functions
- New England town meeting
- Growth of suburbia
- Major forms of city government and their effectiveness
- At-large v. district electoral systems
- Roles and powers of the mayor
- Development of education as a public function
- Structural arrangements governing public education
- Areas of educational reform
 - Charter schools
 - Vouchers
 - No Child Left Behind (2001)
- Welfare reform (1996)
- Major tasks of public health programs
- State police forces and other police forces
- Zoning and orderly growth
- Protecting the environment
- Transportation policy
- Economic development
- Public utilities
- Working condition regulations
- Merit systems
- Civil service commissions
- Merit v. collective bargaining personnel systems
- Growth in public unionization
- Growth in privatization
- Impact of rising citizen demands
- State taxation decisions
- Property tax
- Lotteries and legalized gambling
- User fees and grants
- Borrowing

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Department Policies:

- Attendance is mandatory and being on time is imperative.
- Lateness and/or early departure are not acceptable behaviors and will be penalized.
- Cheating and/or plagiarism are unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly, including severe penalties and disciplinary action.
- Electric devices are not permitted during class.
- Students are expected to be *attentive* and *courteous* to everyone in the class. Rudeness and other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Rude behavior includes inappropriate talking, sleeping, reading unrelated material, texting, etc. If a student is engaging in rude conduct, they will be dismissed from class and further penalties will follow.
- Reading the textbook is required. Supplemental readings may be required.
- Paying close attention to relevant current events is necessary.
- Students are supposed to be fully engaged in all aspects of the course.

College Policies:

As an academic institution, Brookdale facilitates the free exchange of ideas, upholds the virtues of civil discourse, and honors diverse perspectives informed by credible sources. Our College values all students and strives for inclusion and safety regardless of a student's disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, country of origin, immigration status, religious affiliation, political orientation, socioeconomic standing, and veteran status. For additional information, support services, and engagement opportunities, please visit www.brookdalecc.edu/support.

For information regarding:

- ◆ Brookdale's Academic Integrity Code
- ◆ Student Conduct Code
- ◆ Student Grade Appeal Process

Please refer to the [BCC STUDENT HANDBOOK AND BCC CATALOG](#).

NOTIFICATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Brookdale Community College offers reasonable accommodations and/or services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who wish to self-identify must contact the Disabilities Services Office at 732-224-2730 (voice) or 732-842-4211 (TTY) to provide appropriate documentation of the disability, and request specific accommodations or services. If a student qualifies, reasonable accommodations and/or services, which are appropriate for the college level and are recommended in the documentation, can be approved.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT/LABS:

See the Tutoring Center for information <https://www.brookdalecc.edu/academic-tutoring/tutoring-center/>.

MENTAL HEALTH:

- Mental Health Crisis Support: From a campus phone, dial 5555 or 732-224-2329 from an external line; off-hours calls will be forwarded to BCC police (2222 from a campus phone)
- Psychological Counseling Services: 732-224-2986 (to schedule an appointment during regular hours)

The syllabus is intended to give student guidance in what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. However, the faculty member reserves the right to modify, supplement, and make changes as the need arises.