

**University of Wisconsin-Madison**  
**Department of Political Science**

PS 205: Introduction to State Government  
Mo, We, Fr 8:50 - 9:40 AM  
Office Hours: Mo 10 AM - noon (or by appointment)  
Class Location: 6102 Sewell Social Sciences  
Instructor: Regina Wagner  
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**Goals of the Class:**

State and local governments greatly influence the daily lives of citizens, and the economic and political structures in which they operate. However, most Americans tend to focus their attention on the national (=federal) government, all but ignoring the lower, seemingly less important levels of government. In this course, we will explore the role of state (and, to a lesser extent, local) governments in the American context. We will make comparisons - across states and across time - to highlight different approaches to different challenges, and we will investigate the reasons for these differences. We will examine the interaction between state, local and national governmental structures and institutions for a better, in-depth understanding of how the American political system functions, and how it influences the day-to-day lives of its citizens.

**Reading/Required Texts:**

The following texts are required for this class, and can be purchased at the UW Bookstore:

- \* Smith & Greenblatt (2013): **Governing States and Localities**. CQ Press. 4th edition
- \* Wood (2010): **Taking Sides: Clashing Views in State and Local Government**. McGraw-Hill. 1st Edition.

All other assigned readings will be available on Learn@UW, via email, or handed out in class.

If you choose to purchase the required texts online or at a different bookstore, make sure to buy the correct edition.

**Assignments & Evaluations:**

The following assignments are to be completed over the course of the semester:

- 30% Two Midterms (15% each)
- 20% Final Paper
- 15% 5 short Quizzes (3% each)
- 10% Attendance of and Report on the Meeting of a State/Local Government Body
- 10% Co-Leadership of one Discussion Session

Additionally, class participation is worth 15% of your overall grade.

**Midterms:**

The midterms will be in-class, 50-minute examinations. They are scheduled for the Friday of the 6th and 12th week of class, respectively. The exact dates can be found in the class schedule below. Midterms will consist of multiple choice and short ID questions, plus one 1-page essay question. A review session will be held in class the Wednesday before each exam. The exams are not cumulative. All material covered in lecture, discussion, and the readings is fair game.

**Final Paper:**

Think of this as a take-home essay. You will receive a choice of 3 topics two weeks before the essay is due. The topics will be emailed to you. Pick one, and write a 10 - 12 page, double spaced essay answering the question. You will be expected to use in-class material, but also do outside research. Cite at least 5 different sources (multiple chapters in the text book and multiple chapters in "Taking Sides" can count as separate sources, but you should make sure not to rely on these exclusively).

**Quizzes:**

The quizzes will be short tests of your knowledge of important terms and concepts. The dates of the quizzes are listed in the class schedule. The quizzes are supposed to serve as a check of your progress in mastering concepts and terms essential to this class, and can also be seen as an indicator of the topics you need to devote more attention when preparing for the midterms. Each quiz will consist of 3-5 multiple choice or definition questions. I expect to be able to hand them back the Monday following each quiz.

**Attendance of and Report on a State/Local Government Meeting:**

State and Local government bodies meet with high frequencies, and these meetings are open to the public. I will provide a list of such meetings on Learn@UW, but this list is by no means exclusive. You are free to pick a government body meeting not listed. You are expected to attend one such meeting during the first two months of class, and write up a short (1-2 page) report on the meeting you attended. Which government body did you pick? What was the meeting about? How did the meeting proceed? What does this tell you about state/local politics here in Wisconsin? Was there anything that surprised you about the meeting. This assignment is meant to relate the theoretical concepts, the terms, processes and procedures of state and local government that are discussed in this class to real-life events.

**Co-Leadership of one Discussion Session:**

The Friday periods of most weeks will be dedicated to an in-class discussion of class-related material. These sessions will be lead by a team of students, and each team is expected to have planned out about 30 minutes of class time. That leaves time for questions, and a few minutes for wrap-up. A sign-up sheet will be passed around the first day of class. Since approximately 45 students are enrolled in this class, and nine Fridays are reserved for discussion sessions, about five of you should sign up for each session. You should view this as a team activity, and you will receive a group grade. Discussion sessions are supposed to help us engage on a deeper level with the week's topics and readings. It is up to you and your group to decide what you want the session to look like. Do you want the class to discuss concepts and readings in greater depth? Do you want to break the class up into smaller groups and have them analyze different readings or answer different questions? Do you want to bring in newspaper articles that relate to the week's topics and readings?

Do you want to have an in-class debate of a controversial issue? Do you want to play a game, like jeopardy, or have your class members do a role-playing exercise? You can design your 30 minutes however you and your group want.

**Participation:**

Lecture and discussion are a collaborative effort. This class will only be a challenging, educational, and interesting experience for all of us if everyone contributes. That means that you are expected to come to class prepared to participate.

**Grading:**

The following scale will be used to grade all assignments:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
A	93-100
AB	88-92
B	83-87
BC	78-82
C	70-77
D	60-69
F	59 and below

**Class Expectations:**

As college students, you are all adults. In this class, we will treat each other as such. This means taking each others' opinions seriously, treating your classmates and your instructor respectfully, and listening to what others have to say. It also means that you carry a lot of the responsibility regarding your own success in this class. It is up to you to take the assignments seriously or not, but you should also be aware that you will not be able to succeed in this class without devoting time and effort to it.

There is a no-laptop policy in this class, and for good reason. We all know how easy it is to be distracted, even unintentionally, by online content or email messages. While your own distraction could be considered your responsibility, for which you have to accept the consequences, laptop screens are also distracting to your fellow students. It is almost impossible for any one of us not stare at a screen when somebody sitting in front of us is surfing on the internet, or playing a game, or looking at Facebook. Therefore, out of respect towards your classmates, laptops (and, it almost goes without saying, other electronic devices such as cell phones, iPads, iPods etc.) will remain switched off and put away for the duration of class. Please take notes using a notebook.

I expect all of you to fully adhere to UW's code of academic integrity. Whenever using ideas that are not your own, you need to make that clear by using proper citations. You are free to use any citation style you want, as long as you are consistent in using it. If you have any questions regarding when or how to cite, or regarding any other aspect of academic integrity, please do not hesitate to ask. I expect that there be no cheating of any kind in this class. All and any forms of academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism will be severely penalized in this class. Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, such things as copying a fellow student's work, copy-pasting from the internet, using an author's ideas without giving credit and the like. Please feel free to come to me if you have any specific questions about this or are unsure as to what constitutes Academic Misconduct. Consequences for cheating range from zero credit on the assignment in question, a failing grade in the course, to other consequences dependent on the form of violation of academic integrity. See „Student Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures“ (<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/pdf/UWS14.pdf>) for procedures and consequences.

**Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please come and talk to me if you need any special accommodations in order to fully participate in this class. Students using the McBurney Disability Resource Center should come talk to me within the first two weeks of class, to make sure they can be fully accommodated.

**Attendance, Missed Classes, and Late Assignment Policy:**

I will not be taking attendance in this class. You can miss classes at your own risk. However, I will not be providing lecture slides or class notes to students who have missed classes without the provision of a doctor's note.

Assignments are to be turned in IN CLASS IN PERSON unless specified otherwise. Late assignments will be reduced by a full letter grade for every 24-hour period they are late. Make-Up assignments are at my discretion, and may not match the original assignment completely. If you have to miss class, have to miss an assignment or turn an assignment in late due to circumstances such as illnesses or family emergencies, contact me PRIOR to your absence (or at the earliest possible time) in order to ensure full consideration, and in order for us to work out alternative arrangements where necessary.

## Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1	09/04 (W)	Introduction; Syllabus	
	09/06 (F)	NO CLASS	
Week 2	09/09 (M)	Definition of Politics	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 1
	09/11 (W)	Political Culture	
	09/13 (F)	In-Class Discussion	
Week 3	09/16 (M)	Federalism	- Federalist Papers 10 & 51 - Smith & Greenblatt, CH 2 - Taking Sides, Issue 1 & 3
	09/18 (W)	Federalism	
	09/20 (F)	In-Class Discussion <b>1st QUIZ</b>	
Week 4	09/23 (M)	State Constitutions	- Wisconsin State Constitution - Smith & Greenblatt, CH 3
	09/25 (W)	State Constitutions	
	09/27 (F)	In-Class Discussion	

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Week 5	09/30 (M)	Governors	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 8 - Taking Sides, Issue 2
	10/02 (W)	Governors	
	10/04 (F)	In-Class Discussion <b>2nd Quiz</b>	
Week 6	10/07 (M)	GUEST SPEAKER	
	10/09 (W)	REVIEW SESSION	
	10/11 (F)	<b>6-WEEK EXAM</b>	
Week 7	10/14 (M)	Legislatures	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 7 - Taking Sides, Issue 10 & 11
	10/16 (W)	Legislatures	
	10/18 (F)	In-Class Discussion	
Week 8	10/21 (M)	Courts	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 9 - Taking Sides, Issue 8
	10/23 (W)	Courts	
	10/25 (F)	In-Class Discussion <b>3rd Quiz</b>	

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Week 9	10/28 (M)	GUEST SPEAKER	
	10/30 (W)	Bureaucracy	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 10
	11/01 (F)	In-Class Discussion  <b>Report on State/ Local Government Meeting Due</b>	
Week 10	11/04 (M)	Bureaucracy	
	11/06 (W)	Parties	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 6 - Taking Sides, Issue 5
	11/08 (F)	In-Class Discussion	
Week 11	11/11 (M)	Interest Groups	
	11/13 (W)	Voting & Elections	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 5
	11/15 (F)	In-Class Discussion  <b>4th Quiz</b>	
Week 12	11/18 (M)	Direct Democracy	
	11/20 (W)	REVIEW SESSION	
	11/22 (F)	<b>12-WEEK EXAM</b>	

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Week 13	11/25 (M)	Local Government	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 11 - Taking Sides, Issue 14
	11/27 (W)	Local Government <b>FINAL PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT</b>	
	11/29 (F)	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 14	12/02 (M)	Policy: Fiscal	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 4 - Taking Sides, Issue 12
	12/04 (W)	Policy: Education	- Smith & Greenblatt, CH 13 - Taking Sides, Issue 17 &19
	12/06 (F)	In-Class Discussion <b>5th Quiz</b>	
Week 15	12/09 (M)	Policy: Morality	Taking Sides, Issue 6 &16
	12/11 (W)	Wrap-Up Session	
	12/13 (F)	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE</b>	