

State and Local Politics
RPOS 321/RPAD 321
University at Albany, SUNY
Political Science Department

Spring 2019
Professor Timothy Weaver

Building & Room: HU 020
Meeting day and time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:45am-1:05pm

NOTE: This is a preliminary syllabus and is subject to change

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Office Hours: Thursdays 2pm-4pm

Course Description

This course focuses on the role of state and local governments in the American federal system; the roles and responsibilities of governors, legislatures, and courts in policy-making and implementation; the organization, functions, and jurisdiction of local governments; and the interaction of political parties and interest groups with formal institutions and processes. Special attention will be paid to state-level variation in: mass incarceration, economic policy, and approaches to the legalization of marijuana. We will also consider how cities and states can pursue alternatives to the path set by the federal government on environmental and social policy.

Course Objectives

- To enable students to develop a clear understanding of the distribution of power through the federal system.
- To familiarize students with the ways federalism works both to limit states' powers and to enable states to experiment with policy and citizenship rights.
- To provide students with a wide variety of examples of state and local variation across a range of policy domains.
- To give students concrete case studies of urban-level efforts to confront some of the most pressing challenges of our time—economic inequality, mass incarceration, and climate change.
- To encourage students to develop their expertise in regarding specific political challenges in particular states and their presentational skills.

Academic dishonesty

The University at Albany takes academic dishonesty extremely seriously. Please familiarize yourself with the University's policies in this regard. I recommend you watch this video on plagiarism that will help you avoid it: <http://library.albany.edu/infolit/plagiarism1>

Often students leave themselves open to the charge of academic dishonesty because they fail to provide proper citations in their written work. Please be sure to always remember the following: if they are not your words, you must use quotation marks and citations; if it is not your idea, you must cite the source from which the idea came.

Course requirements

Attendance: In order to do well in this class regular attendance is crucial. If you must miss class you will be expected to provide a doctor's note or do so for exceptional circumstances.

Absence due to religious observance. New York State Education Law (Section 224-a) – Campuses are required to excuse, without penalty, individual students absent because of religious beliefs, and to provide equivalent opportunities for make-up examinations, study, or work requirements missed because of such absences. Faculty should work directly with students to accommodate religious observances. Students should notify the instructor of record in a timely manner.

This course will combine lectures and in-class discussion. Therefore, it is essential that you participate meaningfully in class discussion. This means that you will come to class having read and thought carefully about the reading material assigned. You will be assessed according to the quality of your participation in class, in a presentation, in a mid-term exam, and in a final exam.

Class presentation: In the second week of classes, students will be assigned a state to monitor and a week in which they will make an in-class presentation relating to the theme of the week. The presentations are to be 10 minutes long and should draw on research from news sources or relevant magazines, such as [governing.com](http://www.governing.com). The goal is to connect the week's theme with a recent state- (or city-) level development.

Your grade breakdown is as follows:

Class participation	10%	
Presentation	10%	
Mid-term exam	35%	In-class Thursday March 14
Final exam	45%	Take-home exam due May 13

Questions for the final exam will be distributed on May 7.

Students will be expected to meet all deadlines. Extensions will only be granted in cases of medical or personal emergency.

Grading

The grading scale will be as follows:

A= 93-100, A-= 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B-= 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, E=below 60.

If you feel you have been awarded an unfair grade, you may contest it. However, if you want to do so, it must be done *in writing* and no sooner than 48 hours after you have received the grade. In your written complaint you need to provide a specific account of what in particular you are concerned about.

Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 130, 518-442-5490, DRC@albany.edu). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

Readings

The following required books are available for purchase at university bookstore:

Zimmerman, Joseph F. *Contemporary American Federalism: The Growth of National Power*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2009.

Schragger, Richard. *City Power: Urban Governance in a Global Age*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Barron, David and Gerald E. Frug. *City Bound: How States Stifle Urban Innovation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

The other readings will be on Blackboard.

Course schedule & reading assignments

Week 1: Introduction

Thursday, January 24

Introduction to the course.

Week 2: & National-State Relations & The Historical Development of the Federal System

Tuesday, January 29: National-State Relations

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 1

- What is federalism?
- What are its key advantages and disadvantages?
- Dual Federalism vs Cooperative Federalism
- How has federalism evolved?

Thursday, January 31—Articles of Confederation, the Constitutional Convention & Ratification

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 2

- What were the parallels between the early US system and British political institutions?
- What was new?
- What were the limitations of the Articles of Confederation that the Constitutional Convention sought to remedy?
- Who opposed the Constitution and why?

Presentations: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas

Week 3: The Constitution & Positive Rights in the States

Tuesday, February 5— The Constitution

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 3

- What powers does the U.S. constitution grant to the states?
- How has this shifted over time?
- Whose interests have been served/harmed by the expansion of federal authority?

Presentations: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware

Thursday, February 7—Positive Rights in the states

Reading: Zackin, Emily. *Looking for Rights in the All the Wrong Places*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. Chapter 1 & Chapter 6.

Week 4: Congressional Preemption & the Judiciary

Tuesday, February 12—Congressional Preemption

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 4

- What is “Congressional preemption”?

- How has the incidence of preemption changed in the last few decades?
- So what?

Thursday, February 14—Federalism and the Judiciary

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 5

- What is dual federalism? And what is its history?
- How did the “Warren Court’s” transformation in constitutional interpretation affect the states? How did states respond?
- What effect did the Voting Rights Act have on the states?

Presentations: Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho

Week 5: Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations & Interstate Relations

Tuesday, February 19—Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 6

- What is the federal grants-in-aid system?
- Why has it proved controversial?
- In what sense does the federal government use fiscal policy to “coerce” the states?

Thursday, February 21—Interstate Relations

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 7

- What are the key controversies that have emerged among the states?
- What compacts have states forged?
- What is the history of interstate rendition?

Presentations: Massachusetts, Michigan, and Minnesota

Week 6: the Centralization of Power & Federal Urban Policy

Tuesday, February 26 —Power Centralization

Reading: Zimmerman, *Contemporary American Federalism*, Chapter 9

- What are the advantage and disadvantages of the American federal system?
- What is Zimmerman’s theory of US federalism?

Thursday February 28—Federal Urban Policy

Reading: Weaver, Timothy. "Cities and the Federal Government." In *CQ Press Guide to Urban Politics and Policy*, edited by C. Palus and R. Dilworth. Los Angeles: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2016, pp. 279-288.

- In what ways has federal urban policy changed over time?
- How have these shifts reflected ideological developments at the national level?

Presentations: Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois

Week 7: City Bound I

Tuesday, March 5—City Structures

Reading: Frug, Garland E. and David J. Barron. *City Bound*. Preface & Part I, pp. ix-52.

Thursday, March 7—Seven Cities (Home Rule & Revenue and Expenditures)

Reading: Frug, Garland E. and David J. Barron. *City Bound*. Part II, pp. 52-98.

Presentations—Indiana, Iowa, Kansas

Week 8: City Bound II

Tuesday, March 12—Seven Cities (Land Use & Education)

Reading: Frug, Garland E. and David J. Barron. *City Bound*. Part II, pp. 99-140.

Thursday, March 14 MID-TERM EXAM

*******SPRING BREAK*******

Week 9: City Power I

Tuesday, March 26—What is the City? What can it do?

Reading: Schragger, Richard. *City Power*. Introduction & Chapter 1, pp. 1-41.

Thursday, March 28—Decentralization and Development

Reading: Schragger, Richard. *City Power*. Chapter 2, pp. 44-77.

Presentations: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa

Week 10: City Power II

Tuesday, April 2—Redistribution in the City.

Reading: Schragger, Richard. *City Power*. Chapters 5 & 6, pp. 135-190.

Thursday, April 4—Urban Resurgence/Urban Crisis

Reading: Schragger, Richard. *City Power*. Chapters 7 & 8, pp. 191-246.

Presentations: Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana

Week 11: Pot Politics

Tuesday, April 9—Legalization in the states

Reading: Clarke, Susan E. “The Local Politics of Pot Contextualizing and Reframing the Analysis.” Working Paper, 2017.

Wang, Vivian, Cuomo to Push Legalizing Recreational Marijuana in New York by Early 2019. *New York Times*. December 17, 2018. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/17/nyregion/marijuana-legalization-cuomo.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

Presentations: Montana, Nebraska, Maine

Thursday, April 11—Backlash under Trump

Reading: Savage, Charlie and Jack Healy. “Trump Administration Takes Step That Could Threaten Marijuana Legalization Movement.” *New York Times*. January 4, 2018. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/04/us/politics/marijuana-legalization-justice-department-prosecutions.html?_r=0

Coaston, Joan. “Many conservatives think Jeff Sessions’s anti-pot memo is “a step in precisely the wrong direction.” *Vox*. January 9, 2018. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/1/9/16854824/marijuana-sessions-conservatives-libertarians>

Presentations: New Jersey, New Mexico, Maryland

Week 12: From Enterprise Zones to Opportunity Zones

Tuesday, April 16—Enterprise Zones and Empowerment Zones

Reading: Weaver, Timothy. “The Enterprise Zones: The Zombie Idea That Just Won’t Die.” *Urban Affairs Forum*. July 18, 2017. Available at: <https://urbanaffairsreview.com/2017/07/18/theyre-back-ben-carson-revives-the-enterprise-zone-the-zombie-idea-that-just-wont-die/>

Reading: Mossberger, Karen. “State-Federal Diffusion and Policy Learning: From Enterprise Zones to Empowerment Zones.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. Volume 29, Issue 3, January 1999, pp. 31–50.

Thursday, April 18—Opportunity Zones

Reading: Cohen, Rachel M. “New York Times Applauds Donald Trump For A New Attempt At An Old Corporate Boondoggle.” *The Intercept*. January 30, 2018. At: <https://theintercept.com/2018/01/30/new-york-times-tax-reform-opportunity-zones/>

Weaver, Timothy. “Tax law’s ‘opportunity zones’ won’t create opportunities for the people who need it most.” *The Conversation*. May 15, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/tax-laws-opportunity-zones-wont-create-opportunities-for-the-people-who-need-it-most-94955>

Kocieniewski, David. “Kushners’ Beachfront Strip Eligible for Trump’s Poor-Area Tax Perks.” *Bloomberg*. December 6, 2018. At: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-12-06/kushners-new-jersey-buying-spree-eligible-for-trump-tax-perks>

Presentations: Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina

Week 13: The Minimum Wage

Tuesday, April 23—Experiments and Challenges

Reading: Dube, Arindrajit. “Designing Thoughtful Minimum Wage Policy at the State and Local Levels.” Hamilton Project Report. June, 2014.

Quniton, Sophie, “States Battle Cities Over Minimum Wage,” July 13, 2015. Available at: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2015/07/13/states-battle-cities-over-minimum-wage>

Thursday, April 25—Social Movements

Reading: Tilly, Chris. “Living wage laws in the United States: The dynamics of a growing movement.” In *Economic and Political Contention in Comparative*

Perspective, edited by Maria Kousis and Charles Tilly. Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, 2006, pp. 143-157.

Presentations: North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota

Week 14: Climate Change & Mass Incarceration

Tuesday, April 30— Reducing Emissions in Cities

Reading: Hughes, Sara. “Reducing Urban Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Effective Steering Strategies for City Governments.” White Paper. *Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance*. February 2017.

Presentations: Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island

Thursday, May 2—Mass Incarceration

Reading: Campbell, Michael C. and Heather Schoenfeld. “The Transformation of America’s Penal Order: A Historicized Political Sociology of Punishment.” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 118, No. 5 (March 2013): 1375-1423.

Presentations: Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia

Week 15: Sanctuary Cities and the Trump Administration

Tuesday, May 7—Sanctuary Cities

Reading: Pagano, Michael. “Infrastructure, Taxes, and Sanctuary Cities.” *Urban Affairs Forum*. February 7, 2017.

At <https://urbanaffairsreview.com/2017/02/07/infrastructure-taxes-and-sanctuary-cities/>

Theodore, Nik. “No Sanctuary? The Consequences of Police Involvement in Immigration.” *Urban Affairs Forum*. April 14, 2017.

At <https://urbanaffairsreview.com/2017/04/14/no-sanctuary-the-unintended-consequences-of-police-involvement-in-immigration-enforcement/>

Presentations: Final Washington. West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming