

**School of Arts and Letters**

**COURSE SYLLABUS** POL 13103 American State Government

Spring 2023

# Class meets on: Monday through Friday 7:45 am – 8:30 am

Class meets at: South Gallia High School Room 143

Instructor: Dafney Davis, MEd, MS

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Office: South Gallia High School Room 143

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 2:45-3:45

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**GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of the General Education Program, students will be able to accomplish the following:

• Communication: Demonstrate effective communications skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. (Skills, literate)

• Cultural Diversity: Demonstrate a scientific knowledge of human behavior and acknowledge cultural diversity of different peoples of the world. (Liberal arts and science- based knowledge, respect for people, integrity)

• Human Values: Use an understanding of the historical and philosophical development of current cultures to demonstrate respect for human values and perspectives. (Liberal arts, literate, respect for people)

• Ethical Behavior: Demonstrate understanding of ethical reasoning by constructing arguments on issues of importance of society (Self-directed, ethically responsible, concerned with integrity, respect for people).

• Technological Literacy: Demonstrate appropriate technological literacy and skills for personal and professional use. (Knowledge and skills, literate)

• Health & Well-Being: Demonstrate an understanding of behaviors that best promote personal health and psychological well-being. (Ongoing learning experience, self-directed, committed to excellence)

• Aesthetic Awareness: Identify and appreciate artistic expressions from historical, philosophical, and cultural perspectives. (Liberal arts, aesthetically aware)

• Critical Thinking: Use appropriate critical thinking skills to solve problems. (Literate, ongoing learning experience)

• Scientific Reasoning: Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental concepts of mathematics and science, analytical ability, problem-solving capacity, and the use of the scientific method. (Science-based awareness, ongoing learning experience, literate)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study of states in the federal relationship, a comparison of political culture in various states and regions, the major state political institutions, political parties, and interest groups.

**CREDIT HOURS**: **3**

**TEXTBOOK AND OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS**:

Smith, K. and Greenblatt, A. (2020). *Governing states and localities* (7th ed.). Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Print

In addition to the required cases and documents, recent articles regarding political science concepts and current political issues will be provided to students to supplement the primary text. Links to the supplemental readings will be posted on the Google Classroom or provided to students in hard copy.

The *Governing States and Localities* student companion website:

<https://edge.sagepub.com/smithgreenblatt7e>

**Course Objectives**

On completion of this course, each student should have an in-depth understanding of and be able to discuss the following:

1. The responsibilities of state and local governments in the United States

2. The role of federalism in the United States

3. State constitutions

4. State finances and tax policies

5. Political attitudes and participation as they relate to state politics

6. Political parties and interest groups

7. Leadership at the state and local levels

8. State-level legislative processes

9. The power and role of bureaucracies

10. The state role in education

11. The state role in healthcare

12. The state role in environmental protection

Additionally, students should be able to provide analysis of these topics as they relate to sociodemographics, topographical, and cultural differences, as well as examine arguments for logic and flaws.

### **Major Class Activities**

**Current events presentations:** Students, individually, will prepare a current events presentation they will share with the class at the start of their assigned week. The presentation must include at least one story that links one or more of the essential questions for the Unit the class is currently studying. The current events presentation also must include at least one relevant visual source (photo, political cartoon, or infographic) for each story with a caption that **CLEARLY** explains its connection to the unit that story covers.

**Analytical assignments:** Students will be required to complete four analytical assignments about important topics in American state government and politics. These assignments will be due on varying dates during the year. In each assignment, the students must briefly summarize the assigned source/s in a creative, informative manner, connect the source/s to the current unit of study (how they do this will vary depending on the resources provided for each assignment and the unit of study in which it is due), and make a connection between the source/s and a current political issue. Two of the analytical assignments will require students to also examine how the assigned source/s and a required case/foundational document corroborate or contradict one another.

**Terms Quizzes:** At the start of each chapter, each student will be assigned the chapter terms and develop a study set presentation, such as a Google Slides presentation, a Quizlet presentation, or a Kahoot quiz that can be used by the entire class as a study aid. Any other methods must be pre-approved by me. At some point during each Unit, students will take a Vocabulary exam, students will take an exam over these terms. On each exam, they must score a 90% or better in order to earn credit. They can take the exam up to three times in order to earn credit. Basically, this is an all or nothing score.

**Debates:** Students, in teams of three, will compete in a debate about a current public policy or issue in American state government and politics. Each team will get a three-minute opening statement, a five-minute cross examination period, and a five-minute closing statement. Students must also have a visual which helps support their main arguments. This visual can be a chart, graph, table, political cartoon, or infographic. Students will analyze the visuals presented by other teams as part of the debate. Finally, each team is responsible for providing an annotated works cited page of the resources used to develop their arguments and questions.

**GRADING:**

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| Category | Description | Purpose | Percent of total grade |
| Homework & Classwork | This includes weekly chapter notes, notecards and in class skill building activities. | This is heavily weighted as it is the primary way in which students gather historical content knowledge and develop disciplinary practices and reasoning skills. | 5% |
| Review | These activities can include: in class simulations, collaborative projects, online simulations and a variety of other content review assignments. Typically, these are completed at the end of each time period unit. | This category is designed for students to understand the importance of continuous content review to engrain information to their long-term memory. The breadth of 10,000 years of human history requires retention of key information from the beginning to the end of the curriculum. | 10% |
| Writing | This includes weekly writing assignments used as formative and summative assessments. These assignments will assess students abilities to analyze historical evidence and develop and support a historical argument. Writing assignments will increase in length and difficulty over time. | This category is heavily weighted to reflect the importance of mastering historical argumentation and writing skills. Students ability to develop and support their historical argument is worth 60% of their overall test score. Hence writing skills are | 25% |
| Quizzes | A chapter quiz comprising multiple choice questions will be given when chapter notes are due. Although this category is worth 0% on its own, it has a valuable incentive for students. If they earn 80% on the reading quiz, they will automatically earn 100% on the corresponding chapter quiz - excluding Stimulus based questions. | The purpose of these quizzes is to determine if students have gathered the most important information from each chapter. These quizzes prepare students for the upcoming chapter test and indicate the content from each chapter that is most difficult, which will be emphasized prior to the chapter test. | 20% |
| Exams/  Tests | Exams are typically at the completion of each unit and will test students on their content knowledge, source analysis and critical thinking skills. There will be one test for each chapter and chapter tests will also include a portion of review questions from previous chapters. | This category is designed to assess students’ ability to ascertain and retain the most important content knowledge over time. Low scores in this category would suggest a need to try new study strategies. | 25% |

**EXTRA CREDIT:** NONE

**GRADING SCALE: A = 95-100%** | A- = 90-94% | B+ = 87-89% | **B = 84-86%** | B- = 80-83% | C+ = 77-79% | **C = 74-76%** | C- = 70-73% | D+ = 67-69% | **D = 64-66%** | D- = 60-63% | F = <59%

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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| SESSION/WEEK |  |  |
| #1  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Get familiar with LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (Google Classroom); Get familiar with SAGE supplementary material website;  Read Chapter 1  Quiz #1  “Introduction to State and Local Government: They Tax Dogs in West Virginia, Don’t They?” |
| #2  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 2  Quiz #2  “Federalism: The Power Plan” |
| #3  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 3  Quiz #3  “Constitutions: Operating Instructions” |
| #4  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 4  Quiz #4  “Finances: Filling the Till and Paying the Bills” |
| #5  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 5  Quiz #5  “Political Attitudes and Participation: Venting and Voting” |
| #6  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 6  Quiz #6  “Parties and Interest Groups: Elephants, Donkeys, and Cash Cows” |
| #7  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 7  Quiz #7  “Legislatures: The Art of Herding Cats” |
| #8  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Study Chapters 1-7  **Midterm** |
| #9  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapters 8 and 9  Quiz #8  “Governors and Executives: There Is No Such Thing as Absolute Power” and “Courts: Turning Law into Politics” |
| #10  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 10  Quiz #9  “Bureaucracy: What Nobody Wants but Everybody Needs” |
| #11  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 11  Government Official Interview Due; Quiz #10  “Local Government: Function Follows Form” |
| #12  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 12  Quiz #11  “Metropolitics: The Hole Problem of Government” |
| #13  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 13  Quiz #12  “Education: Reading, Writing, and Regulation” |
| #14  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapter 14  Quiz #13  “Crime and Punishment” |
| #15  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Read Chapters 15 and 16  Quiz #14  “Health and Welfare Policy: State, Heal Thyself!” and “Environment and Climate Change: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally” |
| #16  Date | preparation:  assignments:  topics: | Study Chapters 1-16  **\*FINAL EXAM\* Monday, May 1st** |

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES**

***ADA POLICY:*** *If a student wishes to be identified as having a physical, mental, or learning disability, that may or may not require reasonable accommodation(s), he/she must register with the Office of Accessibility.  These registered students should identify themselves to their instructors and provide a written statement from the Accessibility Office that indicates the appropriate accommodations.  The process of a student self-proclaiming the need for accommodation should occur as early in the semester as possible.  The Office of Accessibility phone is 245-7339 and is located in Rhodes Hall, Room 116, University of Rio Grande.*

***FERPA:*** The University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College are committed to fully respecting and protecting the rights of students under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).  These rights generally include the right to inspect, review and seek amendment to the student's education records and the right to provide written consent before personally identifiable information from education records is disclosed.  Under FERPA, students have the right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures to comply with FERPA.  Please see the Student Records Confidentiality/Rights Under FERPA section of the Student Handbook for details and more information.

**MENTAL HEALTH STATEMENT**: As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.  Contact the office of Accessibility (740-245-7439) to learn more about the confidential mental health services available to you.

Ohio Hopeline (Center for Suicide Awareness): **Text “hopeline” to 741741 for immediate crisis counselling.**

***INCOMPLETE POLICY:*** *Incompletes will only be granted for extenuating circumstances, such as illness, accident, etc. which will prevent the student from completing the course; an incomplete grade cannot be given to avoid a failing grade in the course. To apply for an incomplete, contact the Office of the Registrar. There is a $70 fee for incompletes (may be waived in certain circumstances).*

***ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:*** *Standard university**policies, as described in the Student Handbook, apply.*

***WITHDRAWAL:*** *Standard university**policies, as described in the Student Handbook, apply. Deadlines are listed on the campus website.*

***COPYRIGHT:*** *Materials used in association with this course may be copyright protected. These items are provided for educational purposes and are intended for the use by only those students officially enrolled in the course. Individuals may not copy, duplicate, download, or distribute any of these items outside this course without first considering United States copyright law (Title 17, US Code) and Rio Grande’s copyright-related policies.*