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PSCI 526.50: Issues in State and Local Government

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PSCI 526 SYLLABUS

ISSUES IN STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(Online Class)

Online Class for the University of Montana MPA Program

Fall Semester 2011

Professor: Jeffrey Greene

OVERVIEW OF THE ONLINE VERSION OF PSCI 526

This is the sixth time that **PSCI 526, Issues in State and Local Government and Local Government** has been offered online. The class is part of the **Online MPA Program** and can be counted toward either the MPA degree at the University of Montana's campus program in Missoula, or the **Online MPA Program**. For more information about the MPA Program, visit the following link [MPA Program](#). This class is essentially an online version of the **Seminar in State and Local Government**, which was offered to Helena MPA students in the past. Although the discussion cannot completely simulate a traditional seminar, online classes are becoming more popular. You do not have to attend any classes and you can complete the work at a time that is convenient for you. The entire MPA program is now available online.

Students can register for this class online at the UM website, <http://cyberbear.umt.edu>, or by calling the Registrar's Office at UM (406-243-2995). The class is open to any interested student, including students in the Missoula area. Every effort has been made to make this online class work seamlessly using a state-of-the-art computer blackboard system maintained by the University of Montana. It is recognized that an online class cannot completely replicate an interactive seminar with a group and a professor gathered in a room. This limitation should be noted at the outset.

The class consists of 13 sessions. The material that is assigned is due on **Wednesday night** of each week of the class. The due dates are designated on the syllabus. **You should begin your work on August 31; the work is due the following Wednesday, September 7.** Each session will consist of a brief summary about the topic, a variety of readings and several questions. Students will post their responses to the questions and may enter into a dialogue with other students about the subject matter. The intention is to generate an online dialogue among students similar to the dialogue that one would get in a traditional seminar. Students may post their comments and responses to the questions online at any time during week as long as their final comments are made by Wednesday of each week (actually by Thursday morning). The comments should be kept parsimonious -- that is, kept to a short, well-written paragraph. On **Thursdays or Fridays**, I will read over the dialogue and make comments. Students should always feel welcome to contact me personally via e-mail at jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu or by phone (406-243-6181) if you have any questions about the session or the course.

The theme of this class, like the traditional seminar that has been taught many times at UM and in the old Helena MPA program class, is the *resurgence of the states thesis*. This thesis was made popular by Bowman and Kearney during the mid-1980s with their book, *Resurgence of the States* (Prentice Hall, 1984). Although a bit more challenging with the online version, this class will focus on the resurgence theme and incorporate a wide variety of issues about state government. Another way of thinking about this theme is: Have state increased their capacity to govern, manage change, and innovate over the past

50 years. There will be a number of topics that deal with local government included, but the primary focus is on the states.

There are a few requirements, such as participating on the **Discussion Board**, article critiques or summaries, and a single question exam. These are explained below in the syllabus and can be sent as attachments to me by e-mail at jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu. Each student will select **five articles** and write brief (two pages or less) summary. Students should select articles for their **five summaries** from *State of States or Governing Magazine*, which is available free online. Students can select other articles from other professional journals or online journals. There are links to examples of each of these assignments further down in the syllabus. Please note there is a difference between a critique and an abstract. The course will also include a single question exam. The responses can be e-mailed at the end of the term and should not exceed 6 single-spaced pages. The question is: *Evaluate the evidence that suggests there has been resurgence in the states' ability to govern during the past 50 years. Do you agree or disagree? And, what are the prospects for the future regarding the role of the states (and local governments) in the federal system?* Again, these documents should be sent as attachments via e-mail by **November 30**.

TEXTS (These texts can be ordered from the UC Bookstore at 406-243-1234. You can e-mail the bookstore at contact@umtbookstore.com or visit their website at <http://www.umn.edu/bookstore>. The UC Bookstore will ship the books directly to your home or office). There are 3 books required for this class. In the past we used more readers but to cut down on costs, the course is now limited to the three books shown below. *You can also get these books online from other sources.*

1. State and Local Government. The Essentials, 5/e Edition, by Ann Bowman and Richard Kearney. (Houghton Mifflin) *This is the main textbook that will be used. You can use the full text (8/e) or the Essentials Edition (8/e).* The syllabus is written for the 8/e.

2. Readings and Cases in State and Local Politics, (edited by Richard Clucas; Houghton Mifflin). *This is the main reader for the class, which also contains case studies.*

3. State of the States, 4/e (edited by Carl Van Horn; CQ Press) This book contains a series of excellent articles about state politics. This book is used on the Discussion Board.

Governing Magazine, which is available for free online at www.governing.com

Governing: The Magazine of States and Localities, contains many articles and current events that may be discussed during the class. (You can view current and many past editions of **Governing** at the link shown above).

COURSE DESCRIPTION & REQUIREMENTS

State government is one of the most exciting areas in political science. This course examines the evolution and development that has taken place in the states since the founding period. It focuses on the basic institutions as well as a broad spectrum of public policy issues that affect governing in the states. The objective of the course is to provide a forum to discuss and wide range of issues involving state government. Students' proficiency with the material included in PSCI 526 will be assessed via a written exam, written article summaries, and by the quality of participation (the Discussion Board). The theme of the class is the Bowman and Kearney notion that there has been a "resurgence of the states." Specific [learning objectives](#) can be viewed online; these are for the full version of the textbook. *The Essentials* version is very similar. *Students using the full version of the textbook will need to adjust the chapter sequence, which is different. The full version contains 18 chapters.*

Grades will be based on the *quality* of the responses posted on the **Discussion Board**, a final, comprehensive exam, and writing summaries for the articles included in ***State of the States*** or any of the readings included in the class. The final exam consists of one question: *Evaluate the evidence that suggests there has been resurgence in the states' ability to govern during the past 50 years. Do you agree or disagree? And, what are the prospects for the future regarding the role of the states (and local governments) in the federal system?* This seems to be a timely question given the current circumstances of the nation dealing with severe economic problems, a new president that appears comfortable expanding the role of the federal government. Your responses can be sent via e-mail or regular mail.

Article Critique (or Summary) Guidelines

The CQ book contains a variety of articles that are typically assigned to students on the first day of a traditional class. To help facilitate the online version, students may pick any five (5) articles from any source used in the class (or from *Governing Magazine* or other outside sources), and write summaries. These should be e-mailed by the end of the semester to jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu. There are some specific questions one should consider while reading the article and developing a summary (or critique). The purpose is to enhance one's ability to write short, concise reports -- no more than two pages -- about complex material. One should attempt to summarize the article in a single page if possible. .

1. What is the major subject and theme of the article?
2. What is the major question the author addresses?
3. What techniques, tools of analysis, or methods are employed by the author to answer the question?
4. What major points does the author make?
5. What does the author conclude? What suggestions are made?
6. What is the relevance of the article to theory or practice?

[Click here](#) for a sample **Article Summary**

Grade Weights

Exam50 percent (The *Resurgence of the States* question)
Participation30 percent (Based on the quality online responses)
Article Critiques.....20 percent (Based on the **five** article critiques or summaries)

Grading System at UM

To accommodate the **Plus/Minus system** a new grading scale will be used. Grades will be assigned based on the following grading scale. This scale and system is more complex than the system used in the past but rewards **As** only to those students whose performance in the class is "exceptional."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Point Scale</u>	<u>Point Range</u>	<u>GPA</u>
A	93-100	8 points	4.00
A-	90-92	3 points	3.67
B+	87-89	3 points	3.33
B	83-86	4 points	3.00
B-	80-82	3 points	2.67
C+	77-79	3 points	2.33
C	73-76	4 points	2.00
C-	70-72	3 points	1.67
D+	67-69	3 points	1.33
D	63-66	4 points	1.00
D-	60-62	3 points	.667
F	59 or lower	N/A	0.00

Other Information

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COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS

Session 1 Introduction: New Directions for the States and the Quiet Revolution, Images of the States, Political Culture, and Current Issues in the New Century

Assigned August 31; Due September 7

Bowman and Kearney: Chapter 1

Clucas: Chapter 1, "The Changing Position of State Government: The Concept of Resurgence"
"Governance and the Changing American States," by Hedge
Case Study 1: "Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future"

Chapter 2, Understanding Differences Across the States
"The Political Subcultures of the United States," by Elazar
Case Study 2, "American Hayride," by Gold

Session 2 Federalism (and State Constitutions)

Due September 14

Bowman and Kearney: Chapters 2 and 3

Clucas: Chapter 3, "Redistributing Powers Among Governments: The Concept of Devolution"
"The Devolution of Tortoise and the Centralization hare," by Kincaid
Case Study 3, "The Role of Homeland Security," by Posner

Clucas: Chapter 4 "State Constitutions: The Concept of Distinctiveness"
"The Distinctiveness of State Constitutionalism," by Tarr
Case Study 4: "Alabama Constitution at Heart of Controversy," by Goens

Session 3 Political Participation in the States

Due September 21

Bowman and Kearney: Chapter 4

Clucas: Chapter 5: Chapter 5 "Political Participation: The Concept of Civic Engagement"
"Thinking About Social Change in America," by Putnam
Case Study 5: "Theology of Organizing: From Alinsky to the Modern IAF," by Warren

Note: The article, "Who Runs Tucson?" is no longer available. The *Tucson Citizen* stopped printing newspapers in the late spring. The website that is now called *Tucson Citizen Online* is not the same organization.

Session 4 Political Parties, Elections, and Interest Groups, Elections, and Interest Groups

Due September 28

Bowman and Kearney: Chapters 5

Clucas: Chapter 6, "Political Parties and Elections: The Concept of Candidate Centered Campaigns"
"Thinking about Politicians," by Ehrenhalt
Case Study 6: "The Body Politic Registers a Protest," by Beiler

Clucas: Chapter 7, "Interest Representation: The Concept of Group Power"
"Interest Group Power in the Fifty States: Trends Since the 1970s," by Thomas and Hrebenar
Case Study 7: "The Campaign for the Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act," by Gordon

Session 5 State Legislatures

Due October 5

Bowman and Kearney: Chapter 6

Clucas: Chapter 8, "State Legislatures: The Concept of Professionalism"

"The Evolution of the State Legislature: Institutional Change and Legislative Careers," by Thompson and Moncrief

Case Study 8, "The Sick Legislature Syndrome," by Mahtesian and "Is Professionalization a Pathogen?" by Squire

Session 6 Governors

Due October 12

Bowman and Kearney: Chapter 7

Clucas: Chapter 9 "Governors: The Concept of Gubernatorial Success"

"Understanding Gubernatorial Behavior: A Framework for Analysis," by Crew

Case Study 9, "In Search of George W." by Dionne

Session 7 The Bureaucracy

Due October 19

Bowman and Kearney: Chapter 8

Clucas, Chapter 10, "State Bureaucracy: The Concept of Privatization"

"The Urge to Privatize," by Sclar

Case Study 10: "Denver," by Richmond

Session 8 The Judiciary (and Criminal Justice Policy)

Due October 26

Bowman and Kearney: Chapter 9

Clucas: Chapter 11, "State Courts: The Concept of the New Judicial Federalism"

"The Third Stage of the New Judicial Federalism," by Williams

Case Study 11, "Common Benefits," by McDonald

Session 9 State-Local Relations, Finance, and Taxation

Due November 2

Bowman and Kearney: Chapters 11 and 12

Clucas: Chapter 14, "State Finances: The Concept of Budgeting"

"Balance of Power: The Case of the Budget," by Rosenthal

Case Study 14, "California in Crisis," by Evans, Block, and others

Session 10 Public Policy and State Issues: Education & Welfare and Health Policy

Due November 9

Bowman and Kearney: Chapters 15 and 17 (if you are using the 8/e; no readings in 5/e)
Van Horn: Chapters 8, 9, and 10

Clucas: Chapter 15, " Education: The Concept of School Reform"
"The Challenge of Change in Complex Policy Subsystems," by Stone, Henig, and others
Case Study 15, Pittsburgh's Public Schools: A Fragile Balance of Leadership and Institution," by Poretz, Stein, and Jones

Clucas: Chapter 16, " Social Welfare: The Concept of Laboratories of Democracy and Race to the Bottom"
"Making Something out of Nothing: Welfare Reform and the Race to the Bottom," by Schram and Soss
Case Study 16, "Getting Opal Caples to Work," by DeParie

Session 11 Local Government

Due November 16

This session is used to examine local governments. Because this is such a large area, the readings are limited to Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 11, **The Structure of Local Government** and Clucas, Chapter 12, **Local Government: The Concept of the Model City Charter**.

Session 12 Exam is Assigned; No work is due (November 23)

Exam is assigned / All materials are due November 30; this allows two weeks for students to complete their article summaries and exam.

Session 13 Exams and Article Summaries are Due (November 30)

Exams and Article Critiques will be returned by December 7. If you send your materials by e-mail, they will be graded and returned to the e-mail address from which they were sent. Please note that the Blackboard Grade Sheet and Message Board are NOT used in my classes.

Class Materials and Transparencies

[Federalism Time Line Transparency](#) (Adobe Acrobat format. This version is *printer friendly*)
[Learning Objectives](#) (8/e) or [Learning Objectives](#) (5/e)
[Link to the Montana State Constitution](#)

Houghton Mifflin (now owned by Cengage) provides excellent online resources for the Bowman and Kearney text, including exams, outlines, and many links to state-local web sites. [Click here to access these resources](#). Also, [Stateline.org](#) is a great website dedicated entirely to news and information about the states and their local governments.

Since state nicknames are often mentioned in class as trivia, [click here](#) to read more about the origin of the Tar Heel State (North Carolina). State mottos are also interesting. For example, The state motto for North Carolina, "*Esse Quam Videri*" is Latin for "to be rather than to seem." [Click here](#) for a humorous version of the 50 state mottos.

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