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PSC 395.01: Montana Politics - The Real Story

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MONTANA POLITICS: THE REAL STORY

Spring 2006

Instructors: Jim Shockley and Dave Wanzenried

Class time: 4:10 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Room L 11 – Gallagher Building

Course description

The course introduces students to recent, significant changes in the foundations of Montana politics and state government, how Montana politics function from a practitioner's standpoint and opportunities for reform.

Course objectives:

1. To acquire an understanding about how developments outside and within Montana in the early 1960's changed the political landscape in Montana and continue to influence public policy in 2006.
2. To introduce students to wide array of public figures, both elected and non-elected public figures who shape electoral politics and public policy in Montana and to allow for a free exchange of ideas during each class.
3. To acquire a substantive knowledge of the structure and functions of state government and how Montana's political system functions and affects public policy.

Required reading: Electronic and hardcopy reserve. Mansfield Library.

Password: Montana politics

Course requirements:

A. Submit two plans

Each plan should be approximately 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced. Please bear in mind that these are plans, not term papers. They should be concise, tightly written and to the point.

1. Campaign plan designed to defeat an incumbent Montana legislator running for re-election in 2006. Deadline: March 8, 2006.
2. Strategic plan to secure the enactment of either of two proposals: a bill establishing a four percent statewide sales tax, or a bill mandating all-day kindergarten in all public schools in Montana. Deadline April 26, 2006.

A portion of each class will be dedicated to a discussion about the components of each plan.

B. Personal journal

1. Keep a personal journal of impressions of Montana politics for the duration of the course.
2. Prior to each class, record ideas and concepts you found most interesting from the required readings. After each class record impressions about the ideas and concepts presented in class.

Grading:

1. 40 percent for each plan
2. 20 percent for the journal

Schedule:

January 25 Review course outline and course objectives
Overview of recent Montana history

February 1 Constitutional Reform

Readings:

1. Helena Independent Record. "Constitutional Convention." Newspaper insert. January 16, 1972.
2. Highlights of the Proposed Constitution. Montana Constitution, 1971-72.
3. Montana Law Review. Richard Roeder. "Background: The 1972 Montana Constitution in Historical Context." Winter 1990.
4. Montana Law Review. Harry Fritz. "The 1972 Montana Constitution in a Contemporary Context." Winter 1990.
5. Montana Law Review. Dale Harris. "Some Comments on Our Experience as a Constitutional Convention." Winter 1990.

6. Montana Law Review. Jim Goetz. "Interpretations of the Montana Constitution: Sometimes Socratic, Sometimes Erratic." Winter 1990.
7. Montana Law Review. John Dudis. "Apportionment: Past to Future." Winter 1972.
8. Montana Law Review. "The 1972 Montana Constitution: Thirty Years Later." The 2002 Honorable James R. Browning Symposium. Winter 2003.
9. Montana Law Review. Greg Petesch. "The State of Montana Constitution - Turkey Feathers on the Constitutional Eagle." Winter 2003.

Guests:

1. Jean Bowman, Member – Montana Constitutional Convention
2. State Senator Dan Harrington, Member – Montana Constitutional Convention

February 8 Party Politics: How the Montana Republican and Democratic Parties Function and Influence Montana Politics

Readings:

1. Breaking the Copper Collar: The Sale of the Anaconda Newspapers. John Thomas McNay. Thesis. 1991.
2. Atlas of Montana Elections: 1889-1976. Ellis Waldron and Paul B. Wilson. Selected readings.
3. "For the People . . ." A Common Cause/ Montana Report on the Necessity for Reform in Montana Politics." C.B Pearson. December 1990.
4. Balance of Power in Montana Legislature and Office of Governor: 1961 – 2005.
5. Montana Republican Party website
6. Montana Democratic Party website

Guests:

1. Carl Ohs, Chairman – Montana Republican Party;
2. Jim Farrell, Executive Director – Montana Democratic Party

February 15 Campaign Plan Development: How to Organize and Conduct a Successful Campaign for the Montana Legislature

Readings:

1. "Who Will Vote for You and Why: Designing Strategy and Theme." Joel Bradshaw. Campaigns and Elections American Style. 1995.
2. "Strategy and Tactics for Campaign Fundraising." David Himes. Campaigns and Elections American Style. 1995.

Guests:

February 22 Montana Legislature: Structure and Processes

Readings:

1. Apportionment and the Montana Legislative Assembly. Douglas C. Chaffey. 1964.
2. "*One Cow, One Vote – A Strenuous Session in the Montana Legislature.*" Margaret Scherf. Harpers Magazine. 1966.
3. Montana Law Review. Ellis Waldron. "The Legislative Assembly in a Modern Montana Constitution." Winter 1972.
4. <http://www.leg.state.mt.us/css/research/information/default.asp>
(Legislator Information)

Guests:

1. David Aronofsky, Chief Legal Counsel, University of Montana
2. Greg Petesch, Chief Legal Counsel – Montana Legislature

March 1 Lobbyists: How the Montana Legislature functions from a lobbyist's perspective

Readings:

Guests:

1. Eric Feaver, President – Montana Education Association;
2. Webb Brown, President – Montana Chamber of Commerce;
3. Mary Whittinghill, President – Montana Taxpayers Association;
4. Julia Page – formerly lobbyists for Northern Plains Resources Council

March 8 Significant Legislative enactments in recent legislative sessions:
De-Regulation of electricity (1997) and authorization to develop coal-bed methane (2001)

Readings:

1. "Montana in the Twenty-first Century." Harry Fritz. Montana Legacy: Essays on History, People and Place. 2002
- 2.

Guests:

1. Fred Thomas, former state senator;
2. State Senator Keith Bales; Commissioner Tom Schneider, Member – Montana Public Service Commission

Note: First paper due: Campaign plan against incumbent

March 15 To be announced

March 22 Executive Reorganization: Structure before and after Reorganization

Readings:

1. Reorganization in Executive-Administrative Branch of Montana Government. Grimes. Selected readings.
2. Executive Reorganization. Montana Legislative Council. November 1962.
3. Executive Reorganization. Montana Commission on Executive Reorganization. December 1970.
4. Montana Law Review. Richard B. Roeder. "Energy in the Executive." Winter 1972.
5. "Major Problems and the Executive Branch." We The People of Montana. James J. Lopach, editor. 1983.

Guest:

Duke Crowley, former Director – Montana Executive Reorganization Commission

March 29 Spring Break

April 5 Money: The Budget and Appropriations Processes

Readings:

Guests:

Clayton Schenck, Director, Legislative Fiscal Division;
David Ewer, Director – Office of Budget and Program Planning

April 12 Judiciary: Structure and Operation

Readings:

Judicial Selection s Practiced under the 1972 Constitution. Eileen Sheehy. 1994.

Guest:

Chief Justice Carla Gray, Montana Supreme Court

April 19 The Initiative and Referenda Processes and their places in the political process

Readings:

1. Montana Law Review. Richard J. Ellis. "Signature Gathering in the Initiative Process: How Democratic Is It? "Winter 2003.
2. Initiatives and Referendum Issues since the adoption of constitutional amendment, Article V, Section 1 [1889 Montana Constitution] permitting the referendum and initiative. Montana Legislative Council. January 2006.
3. Amendments to the 1972 Montana Constitution. Montana Legislative Council. January 2006.
4. "Post 1972 Developments_– Direct Democracy." We The People of Montana. James J. Lopach, editor. 1983.
5. Federal Court decision overturning two referenda proposing to change the signature gathering process (Constitutional Revision (C 37) and (Statutory Revision C 38) adopted by the 2001 Legislature, referred to the voter and approved by the voters in November 2002.

Guest:

Attorney General Mike McGrath

April 26

Board of Public Education: Autonomy, Powers and Function

Readings:

Montana Board of Public Education v. Montana Administrative Code Committee. March 1992.

Guest:

Eddye McClure, Legal Counsel. Montana Legislative Council

Board of Regents: Autonomy, Powers and Functions

Readings:

1. Implementing a New Governance System for Higher Education in Montana. Lawrence K. Pettit. December 31, 1978.
2. Proposed Constitutional Amendment 30 to Eliminate the Montana Board of Regents. David Aronofsky. October 1996.

Guest:

John Mercer, Chairman – State Board of Regents

Note second paper due: Plan to secure enactment of a Bill by the legislature

May 3

Reinventing the Legislature

May 10

Final Class