

Fall 9-1-2018

# PSCI 340.01: Exp Off: MT Government and Politics

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**Montana Government & Politics**  
Political Science (PSCI) 340  
University of Montana  
Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:50  
Gallagher Business Building, Room 108  
Fall 2018

Rob Saldin  
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Office: Liberal Arts 354  
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs  
11:30-12:30 & by appt

**Course Description**

This course offers an overview of Montana politics and government, with a focus on the state's political history, constitutional structure, political institutions, campaigns and elections, and contemporary policy issues. Upon successful completion of this course, students should: 1) understand the origins and nature of Montana's constitutional system; 2) appreciate key moments in Montana political history and how they have influenced the state's contemporary political culture and public policy debates; 3) and have improved their research, writing, and oral presentation skills.

**Required Text and Other Readings**

The following books are required for this course:

- Andrew Schneider and David McCumber, *An Air that Kills: How the Asbestos Poisoning of Libby, Montana Uncovered a National Scandal* (Berkley Trade, 2005).
- David Parker, *Battle for the Big Sky* (CQ Press, 2015).

Additionally, there will be three other types of readings, all of which will be posted on the course's Moodle website: 1) shorter reading listed on the syllabus; 2) a weekly selection of written material and other multi-media content, most of which will focus on this year's campaigns and elections; and 3) additional background materials in preparation for each session. Students should expect changes to this syllabus based on the availability of visiting guests. The instructor reserves the right to add, eliminate, or alter course readings at any time. In the event of changes to the syllabus, students will be notified in a timely manner and with sufficient advance notice to come to class prepared.

**Requirements and Grading**

1. *Weekly Reaction Outlines (33.3% of final grade); due weekly prior to class*

These two-page Weekly Reaction Outlines demonstrate your command of the course material and facilitate classroom discussion. Please be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

## 2. Policy Memo (33.3% of final grade); due Tuesday, December 4

Students will research and write a professional policy memo on a public policy issue related to Montana government and politics. Your policy memo is due on Tuesday, December 4 at 11:59 p.m. I will read and comment on drafts that are emailed to me on or before November 27.

## 3. Class Participation (33.3% of final grade)

Much of our class time will be spent discussing the week's material and engaging with guests in a seminar setting. As such, class participation—both quality and quantity—will be very important. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings before each class meeting and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Attendance will be taken. *Students missing 3 or more of our scheduled class meetings will not pass the course.*

Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentages:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	below 60 F
A- 90-92.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 63-66.9	
	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	D- 60-62.9	

## **Optional PSCI 400 Writing Project**

All Political Science majors are required to take PSCI 400, Advanced Writing in Political Science (1 credit), in conjunction with an upper-level PSCI course. Students may do so as part of this course. *This opportunity is strictly optional and has absolutely no influence on your performance in, or grade for, Montana Government and Politics.* Students wishing to enroll in this co-requisite option must meet with the instructor prior to starting their project to discuss its aim, scope, sources, and style. Such a meeting should occur in the first few weeks of the semester.

## **Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the instructors up to and including failing the course and a disciplinary sanction by the University. Academic dishonesty may also imperil future bids for the U.S. Senate. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available online at [http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php). I take academic honesty very seriously, and will do my utmost to prevent, uncover, and penalize any form of cheating. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty.

## **Accessibility**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). Students requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements must contact the

instructor as soon as possible and must contact DSS in order to arrange for and provide the instructor with a letter of approval for accommodations as soon as possible. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154; phone: (406) 243-2243.

### **Class Schedule**

**Week 1, Aug. 28: Introduction**

**Week 2, Sept. 4: Montana Political History**

**Week 3, Sept. 11: The 2018 Midterm Elections**

**Week 4, Sept. 18: The 1972 Montana Constitution**

**Week 5, Sept. 25: The Montana Executive**

**Week 6, Oct. 2: The Montana Legislature**

**Week 7, Oct. 9: The Environment and Natural Resources**

**Week 8, Oct. 16: Media and Politics in Montana**

**Week 9, Oct. 23: Campaigns and Election in Montana, Part I**

**Week 10, Oct. 30: Campaigns and Elections in Montana, Part II**

**Week 11, Nov. 6: Election Day!**

**Week 12, Nov. 13: Money and Politics in Montana, Part I**

**Week 13, Nov. 20: Money and Politics in Montana, Part II**

**Week 14, Nov. 27: Previewing the 2019 Legislative Session**

**Week 15, Dec. 4: Conclusion**

*The instructor reserves the right to adjust the class schedule.  
If changes are made, students will be notified promptly.*