

*Department of Political Science
University of California, Berkeley*

**Politics in the States of the USA: A Comparative Approach
Political Science (PS) 109H
Spring 2017**

Lecture Classes: Mon & Wednesdays, 5-6:30pm; Barrows Hall, Rm 20

Professor **Rodney E. Hero**
Faculty Office: Barrows 750A
Office Phone: 510-643-6371
Office Hours: Tues 9 to 9:45am
& Wedn 8:30 to 9:15 am
email: rhero@berkeley.edu

GSI: **Kristine Kay**
Discussion Sections
101 – Thursdays, 3-4pm 118 Barrows
102 – Fridays, 10-11am, 140 Barrows

For all the (understandable) attention given to the national, or ‘federal,’ government in the U.S., the 50 *states* are, arguably, equally and maybe even more fundamental to understanding America’s domestic politics and public policies. The states, and local governments, are central and significant political systems in themselves, ‘polities.’ States are major policymakers regarding such important policies as education, welfare, ‘morality’ issues, and criminal justice, among a host of others. Though there are broad similarities between and among the 50 states, there is, at the same time, tremendous variation in their social contexts, political processes and governmental institutions as well as in their public policy orientations and outcomes. Thus, they each have a somewhat unique understanding of and ‘applications,’ or ‘versions’ or ‘visions’ of democracy, ‘good government,’ and so on. Those versions/visions are manifest in various belief patterns, interests, and the ‘mediating’ and ‘governance’ institutions in the states – which are simultaneously *part of*, yet to some degree are also *different from* the broader, national political structure and system. Understanding the extent, causes, and consequences of these are important issues addressed in this class.

This course aims to provide a ‘critical’ and comprehensive examination of politics in the American states and does so by analyzing core topics from various theoretical or conceptual perspectives. The class takes a ‘comparative’ approach, i.e., we compare across (and sometimes within) the states in addressing major dimensions of state politics. (This is broadly similar to how the political science sub-field of ‘Comparative Politics’ -- where various regions or sets of or individual countries in the world are studied *compared to* each other -- though, here, for the US states.)

It is *essential* that you carefully read and think about assigned reading materials *prior to* lecture class and discussion meetings because they provide important grounding for your learning and understanding.

Grading Exercises and Policies: There will be *TWO Exams*, one **Mid-term** (Wednesday, March 8) and a **Final** (Friday, May 12, 3pm). The exams will be a combination of Essays and short-answers. A 12-15 page *Research Paper* will also be required and is due on or before **April 19** (note: papers submitted after this date are penalized). The paper will be based on your analysis of a state politics or policy issue/question of your choosing; this will be explained further (and initial guidelines are provided, at the end of this syllabus.) Regular **attendance** at both Lectures and Discussion section is required.

Course grades will be determined as follows: the *First Midterm* exam accounts for 25 percent of the course grade; the *Final Exam* accounts for 35 percent; the *Research paper* accounts for 25 percent of the course grade (and must be turned in on or before April 19; late papers may be turned in but are penalized). Your *Discussion Section* grade accounts for 15 percent of the over all grade.

Additional important information:

If you are eligible for and need academic adjustments or accommodations please be sure we (the GSI and I) are or have been contacted by the *DSP* office with the specific information in a timely fashion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: All ideas presented by you must be **your own** intellectual and/or creative work or be properly attributed to the correct author. "Proper attribution" means that you have fully identified the original source and the extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis.

Graded assignments are not collaborative efforts in this class -- work independently on all assignments and exams. Violation of UC Berkeley's academic integrity policy will result in automatically failing the course and a receiving a permanent mark on your transcript. Please refer to the UC Berkeley [policy on academic integrity](#) for further information.

Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work and has not previously been nor will it be submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. Again, any form or degree of violation any of the rules regarding academic integrity will be penalized.

In Lecture class and Discussion Section you must put away all materials not directly related to class. If you bring a lap top computer to lecture class, it is to be used for class notes and purposes only. Also, you *cannot use* Smartphones or any other devices to text or surf the internet during lecture or section and do not text message, twitter, surf or browse the internet, look at FaceBook, Instagram, YouTube or any other such forms of information or

communication during class. You will not be permitted to use laptops in Discussion Sections unless the GSI directly indicates you can do so for certain specified, and limited purposes.

Required Books

Thomas Cronin and Robert D. Loevy, *Colorado Politics and Policy: Governing a Purple State*, 2012. (Abbreviated below as **CO**)

Susan A. MacManus, Aubrey Jewett, and David J. Bonanza, *Politics in Florida*, 4th edition, 2015 (Abbreviated below as **FL**)

Robert F. Pecorella and Jeffrey Stonecash, Editors, *Governing New York State*, 6th edition, 2012 (Abbreviated below as **NY**)

Cal Jillson, **Texas** Politics: Governing the Lone Star State, 5th edition, 2016 (Abbreviated below as **TX**)

Course Outline

(Please note: the schedule outlined below is a close, but not exact, *approximation* of the specific dates on which topics we will address on what dates. We will likely vary the schedule a little, according to several considerations. You will be kept informed and updated as we go along.)

Jan 18 *Introduction and Overview*

Why are the states important? What states do in the U.S. system, and why?
How and
why this all matters? How to approach these questions?

I. The Legal Contexts of State Politics: American Federalism; Considering State Constitutions

Jan 23 & 25 *Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations*: The Formal Division or Sharing of Policy Authority in the U.S. Political System; Its Evolution over time

Readings:

TX: pp. 26-34; 34-49

FL: ch. 2
 NY: ch. 2
 CO: pp. 14-15; ch.10

Course Outline – continued

Jan 30 *State Constitutions*

Readings:

TX: pp. 34-49
 FL: ch. 2
 NY: review ch. 2
 CO: ch. 4

II. The Socioeconomic & the General Political Contexts of State Politics

Feb 1 * *'Political Economy'/Economic Factors*

Readings:

TX: pp. 10-22
 FL: pp. 1-17; 39-46
 NY: ch.1
 CO: ch. 2 and pp. 320-327

* *'Political Culture'* – Historical Legacy & Orientations; Current General Beliefs

Readings:

TX: pp. 3-10
 FL: ch. 3
 CO: ch. 1 and review ch. 2

Feb 6 * *'Social Capital'* – 'Civil Society' / Density of 'social networks'

(No readings specifically associated from the 4 books; but review the ideas of 'political culture' from previous reading; and additional materials to be assigned)

* *'Political Ideology'* – General *Political Orientations*, Beliefs Attitudes

Readings:

FL: review ch. 3

CO: review pp. 37-62

Feb 8 * *'Social Diversity' – Racial/Ethnic Dimensions (Demography as Destiny?)*

Readings:

Hero and Tolbert *American Journal of Political Science* v. 40, 3 (Aug., 1996): 851-871.

TX: review pp. 3-8

FL: PP. 17-39

NY: Review chs. 1 and 2

CO: pp. 38-40

Course Outline – continued

III. The Politics and Processes of Representation; 'Voice' and 'Interest Aggregation'

Feb13 *Participation and Elections; Political Parties in State Politics*

& 15

Readings:

TX: ch. 3

FL: ch. 4

NY: ch. 3

CO: pp. 62-69; chs. 5 and 6

Feb 22 *Interest Groups in State Politics*

& 27

Readings:

TX: ch. 4

FL: ch 5

NY: ch. 4

CO: pp. 188-191

Mar 1 *'Direct Democracy' in State (and Local) Politics*

Readings:

FL: pp. 59-68

[Additional readings may be assigned]

Mar 6 Continuations of Previous topics; Concluding Observations from
First Part of the Semester

Mar 8 **First Exam**

III. The Formal Institutions of State Government

Mar 13 *State Legislatures and Legislators***& 15**Readings:

TX: ch. 6

FL: ch. 6:

NY: pp. 105-116; and ch. 6

CO: ch. 7

Course Outline – continued

Mar 20 *The Governorship and Governors; the Bureaucracy***& 22**Readings:

TX: ch. 7

FL: ch. 7

NY: review pp. 105-116; chs. 5 and 8

CO: ch. 8

*March 27-31 - Spring Break***Apr 3** *State Courts and the Judicial System*Readings:

TX: ch. 8

FL: ch. 8

NY: ch. 7

CO: ch. 9

Apr 5 *Local Government and Politics*Readings:

TX: ch. 9

FL: ch. 10

NY: pp. 36-46; 213-214

CO: ch. 11

IV. Public Policies in the States: Looking further at What States Do, the Policy Choices they Make, and Why, with what Implications?**Apr 10** *Tax and Expenditure (Fiscal) Policies*Readings:

TX: pp. 246-258; 268-270

FL: ch. 9

NY: ch. 9
CO: pp. 327-333

Apr 12 *Education Policies*

Readings:

TX: pp. 259-266
FL: pp. 360-380
NY: ch.10
CO: pp. 333-336

Course Outline – continued

Apr 17 *Welfare and Health Policies*

Readings:

TX: pp. 266-267
FL: pp. 388-402
NY: chs. 12 and 11
CO: pp. 348-353

Apr 19 *'Social Regulatory' and Related Policies*

Readings:

TX: pp.267-268
CO: pp. 337-338
[Additional reading may be assigned]

Required Research Papers must be turned in on (or before) April 19, 2017; (Late Papers are penalized; please do not ask for extensions)

Apr 24 *Other Public Policies*

Readings:

TX: pp. 266-267; 268-269
FL: ch. 12
CO: pp. 336-337; 339-348
[Additional readings may be assigned]

Apr 26 *Conclusions, and Closing Observations*

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 12, 2017, 3-5pm

Guidelines for Papers

In general, the purposes of the paper are for you to apply and to extend your knowledge of State Politics broadly, to assess the connection and relevance of that knowledge regarding particular cases or circumstances or issues, and/or to better understand a particular state, set of states, or policy issue(s). Papers must emphasize *analysis* and *explanation*, not mere description – i.e., the core question orienting your paper should be ‘WHY.’ The paper should be well organized and well written. It will hopefully be an interesting and useful analytical and critical thinking and writing exercise for you. Be certain to begin looking materials early on, and be certain to find books that are substantively and chronologically appropriate to your topics.

The major body of the paper should be 12-15 pages, double-space typed, 12-point font, 1 inch margins; longer papers are acceptable. You should also provide a bibliography page and footnoting as necessary and appropriate to your particular paper. The final papers are due on or before April 19, 2017; late papers will be penalized 10 percent off for each day late.

In general, your paper will involve identifying a topic of particular interest or importance to you for which you will specify (a) a well-defined substantive question (or set of questions) of particular interest to you and (b) develop a research approach or analytical strategy to examine those issues/questions. Developing a research strategy entails delineating possible ‘theories’ or explanations for the issue(s) you identify, and finding systematic evidence to bring to bear and examine. You might obtain documents on various policies or governmental agencies, including data from various websites, interview state legislators and/or state executive branch officials to learn more about the agencies/policies and explain/discuss in the paper how the policies or agencies function, the nature and impact of their political environment, etc. The paper will also entail your (c) ‘application’ of the theories and evidence to the issue, and your ‘critical’ assessment, and (d) a discussion of what your analysis ‘tells us’ about state politics and policy.

To facilitate and encourage you to get off on the right track, I will have you submit an outline or information regarding (a) your ideas and questions you will examine in the paper, preliminary thoughts on what theories you will consider, and the sources you will use *due on a date to be specified*. You should be as specific and precise as possible in that outline. You may

submit a draft of the paper if you wish/choose to do so (i.e., this is optional) for assessment and feedback; however, the draft must be submitted no later than a week before the final due date. The *Final version of the paper is due on or before April 19, 2017.*

Some topics you might think about examining:

US Supreme Court cases regarding federalism
 Various initiatives (at the national level) with direct and/or indirect implications for federalism
 Analysis of demographic changes in the states and their implications (across the 50 states or some subset thereof)
 Contemporary Uses and Implications of Direct Democracy
 Felon disenfranchisement and impacts on voting
 Implementation of ACA/Obamacare
 Distinct State Policy Approaches to policies, e.g., Health, etc.
 Minimum wage legislation in States
 ‘Right to work’ legislation
 Workers’ Compensation laws and practices
 ‘Sanctuary’ States, and Cities
 Professional Licensing – regulatory policies
 Medical practices – licensing, regulation of doctors, dentists, hospitals, etc., etc
 Transportation – highway building, maintenance
 Gun Control – Variations thereof
 Criminal Justice issues (prisons, incarceration)
 Death Penalty Issues
 Insurance Regulation
 Campaign Finance laws
 Various specific issues and aspects of health-related policies (e.g., SCHIP; Medicaid)
 Welfare Policy in the states (changes over time)
 Immigrants/Immigration policy
 Consumer rights legislation
 How children do in/across states See: www.kidscount.org
 Environmental legislation/Natural resources
 Energy conservation/development
 Higher Education structures, policies and outcomes

Homeland security (distribution of grants, etc.); States' policies & activities, etc.
Governors' (particular) policy emphases, approaches, etc.
State Legislative reforms
State Courts and Elections

And many others