

NorthWest Arkansas Community  
State and Local Government

PLSC 2203 STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Organization and functions of state and local governments in the United States, including intergovernmental relations, administrations, adjudication, and the organization and function of political parties on the state and local levels.

Prerequisite

None

Credit hours/Contact hours/Load hours:

3/3/3

Target Audience & Transfer:

Designed for students seeking an Associate of Arts degree and for students transferring to other colleges. PLSC 2203 will transfer to the University of Arkansas as PLSC 2203. It is also a related elective in some AAS degree programs.

General Course Outcomes

Upon completing this course students should:

1. be able to describe the major institutions of state and local governments
2. evaluate the activities of political parties, interest groups, and the election process
3. describe Arkansas government and current happenings in the state
4. be a more informed citizen, better able to relate knowledge of government to issues concerning us all
5. have further developed his/her critical thinking skills

Required Text

Straayer, John A. et al., State and Local Politics, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition,, St. Martin's Press, 1998, and Government in Arkansas, League of Women Voters of Arkansas, 1993

Topical/Unit Outline

1. A State and Local World
  - A. What State and Local Governments Do
  - B. The Politics of State and Local Government
  - C. Common Features and Differences in States
  
1. Federalism
  - A. Background
  - B. Organizational Forms of Government

- C. Intergovernmental Relations- State-to-State
  - D. Federal Government's Relationship to the States
  - E. Fiscal Federalism
1. State Constitutions
    - A. Multiple Levels of Law
    - B. The Contents of State Constitutions
    - C. Criticism of State Constitutions
    - D. The Amendment Process
    - E. Arkansas' Constitution
  1. The State Legislature
    - A. Institutional Design
    - B. Legislative Functions
    - C. The Legislative Process
    - D. Legislative Organization
    - E. Legislative Committees
    - F. Representation
    - G. The Demographics of State Legislators
    - H. Tenure and Turnover
    - I. Arkansas' Legislature
  1. The State Executive
    - A. the Modern State Governor
    - B. Roles of the Governor
    - C. Sources of Gubernatorial Powers
    - D. Limits on Executive Power
    - E. Executive Leadership
    - F. Other State Executive Officials
    - G. Arkansas' Executive Branch
  1. State Judicial System
    - A. The Structure of State Judicial Systems
    - B. Judicial Reform
    - C. Selecting Judges
    - D. Contemporary Problems in the Courts
    - E. Arkansas' Judicial System
  1. Political Parties
    - A. Functions of Political Parties
    - B. Political Party Organization
    - C. Third Parties
    - D. Arkansas' Party System
  1. Special Interest Groups
    - A. Participants in Special Interest Groups

- B. Techniques of Interest Groups
  - C. What Makes an Interest Group Effective
1. Elections
    - A. Election Laws
    - B. Electoral Participation
    - C. Modern Campaigns
    - D. Direct Democracy
    - E. Voting Rights Act
    - F. Elections in Arkansas
  
  1. The American Metropolis
    - A. Population Shifts in the United States
    - B. Consequences of the Population Shifts
    - C. Problems of Fragmentation and Suburbanization
    - D. Benefits of Suburbanization
    - E. Proposals for Reform
  
  1. Local Governments
    - A. Characteristics of City Government
    - B. The Organization of City Government
    - C. Political Influence and City Government
    - D. Counties, Schools, and Special Districts
    - E. Local Government in Arkansas
  
  1. Community Power and Politics
    - A. Power in the Local Community
    - B. Who Government in the Community, Pluralism and Elitism
    - C. The role of the Federal and State Government in the Community
  
  1. State and Local Fiscal Policy
    - A. More Services, No More Taxes
    - B. Trends in Fiscal Policy
    - C. The Politics of Money
    - D. Problems in Budget Making

#### Required Methods of Instruction

Individual teachers may design the course in any number of ways, keeping the course objectives in mind. They may include lecture, audio-visual materials, guest speakers, or any other things that teachers may believe will enhance the class.

#### Required Forms of Assessment

Individual instructors have broad latitude in assessing students. However, each instructor will include some form of essay question on the exam(s).