

Clemson University
Department of Political Science
232 Brackett Hall

Dr. Bruce Ransom

Fall 2009

Time: TTH, 12:30—1:45 pm

Classroom: 213 Brackett Hall

Office: 231C Brackett Hall

Office Hours: TTH, 10:30 am—12:15 am & 2:00 pm—3:15 pm

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POSC 302: STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Course Description: This course provides students with an in-depth introduction to the institutions, processes, politics, and public policies of state and local governments in the United States. The focus of the course is on the basic and most important aspects of the workings of sub-national units of government. Since the degree of exposure to the study of state and local governments will likely vary widely among class members, course readings are designed to give each student a fundamental understanding of the setting, principal institutions, processes, and policies which shape state and local governments in a federal setting.

At the outset, the course examines political culture, the federal setting for state and local governments, including the development of American government and state constitutions, and the evolution of the federal system. Next, the course reviews the political processes and operations of the institutions of state and local governments. The final segment of the course examines several issues, problems, and public policies occupying the attention of state and local government policy makers such as public finance, education, economic development, criminal justice, social welfare, health care, and the environment.

Texts: The following books have been ordered through the Clemson University Bookstore:

Ann O'M. Bowman and Richard C. Kearney, **State and Local Government**, 7th Edition.
Kevin B. Smith, Editor, **State and Local Government 2009-2010**.

Handouts and articles as assigned.

Requirements: Course requirements consist of three (3) elements. They are:

- 1. There will be three exams, a quiz covering readings from August 20 through September 17; a mid-term exam covering readings and lectures from August 20 through October 22, and a final exam covering all readings and lectures.** The quiz accounts for 10% of the final grade; the mid-term 20%; and the final exam 30%. **The quiz is scheduled for September 22; the mid-term exam October 27; and the final exam will be administered on Monday, December 7, from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm in Brackett 213.**
- 2. Each student will be expected to complete one paper** (8-10 typewritten double-spaced pages). **The paper accounts for 15% of the final grade.** The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop and sharpen your critical thinking and writing skills. Think about the statement below, interpret it, and critically analyze it by formulating an argument and counter-argument. That is, first you should write a coherent, substantive, and cogent initial reaction to the statement. After completing your initial reaction to the statement, you must also write a coherent, substantive, and cogent counter-argument. Your paper must include topical headings. You may use references, including assigned course readings, in writing your paper. All references should be cited properly. **The paper, due on October 15, should be an interpretation and critical analysis of the following statement:**

Interpret and critically analyze the following observation by John Dinan and Shama Gamkhar in which they assess the current economic downturn and the consequence for American federalism and intergovernmental relations once the recession ends by writing an argument and counter-argument:

...[T] he main changes in federalism this past year [2008-2009] were a result of the economic recession and the 2008 election. The former development had the predictable effect of empowering the federal government, with its greater resources and capabilities than state governments, to mount a series of aggressive responses to ameliorate economic conditions. The latter development brought a change in party control of the presidency and led to presidential directives and congressional statutes that put federal power in the service of a different set of policy goals, encouraged state discretion in a different set of areas, and provided more financial assistance to states than in recent years.

Both of these developments had clear and immediate implications for federalism. However, in each case the long-term consequences remain to be determined and will depend to a great degree on choices and decisions yet to be made by federal, state, and local officials and the general public.

The long-term consequences for federalism of the recession depend in part on the severity and length of the economic downturn, but also on the degree to which the resulting federal intervention is sustained or rather

recedes in the recession's aftermath. As long as unemployment remains high, economic growth slow, and the banking system and housing market in disarray, then substantial federal relief and increased regulation of various financial sectors will be sustained. This is fully in keeping with patterns from previous economic downturns. The more important question, to which historical precedents provide mixed answers, concerns what happens once the recession ends. On the one hand, there will be significant pressures to sustain federal involvement at the same levels as during the economic downturn. On the other hand, the heightened federal intervention in the banking and other financial sectors, along with the substantial boost in federal aid to states, might well be treated as a temporary state of affairs that will recede along with the economic downturn.

State and local governmental behavior will have a lot to do with determining the answer to this question: will state and local officials at the end of the recession choose to lobby for the increased [federal] funding levels to be treated as a baseline, or will they opt to view them instead as emergency stabilization grants? And how will federal policy-makers respond to state lobbying on these matters? Federal officials will face similar questions in terms of whether to view continued intervention in the financial industry as necessary to prevent future reoccurrences of the current problems or whether to view the current intervention merely as an emergency step.

(John Dinan and Shama Gamkhar. 2009. "The State of American Federalism 2008-2009: The Presidential Election, the Economic Downturn, and the Consequences for Federalism". *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. 39. Summer: 399)

Critically interpret the argument outlined in the above statement and discuss whatever evidence you can marshal to support the assessment advanced above by John Dinan and Shama Gamkhar, plus a second argument with evidence in support of an alternative or counter interpretation and assessment. Write a fully developed argument and counter-argument.

As you interpret the passage, develop your initial argument and your counter-argument by following the guidelines below:

- Clearly define the issues addressed in the statement;
- Clearly state your position on the issues;
- Defend your position with supporting evidence;
- Concisely conclude your initial reaction;
- Establish (including a good transition) and define your counter-position (**a topical heading should mark the beginning of your counter-argument**);

- Clearly state your counter-position;
- Defend your counter-argument with supporting evidence;
- Concisely conclude your counter-argument;
- Concisely conclude your entire argument (a coherent and cogent conclusion combining your initial argument and counter-argument).

All references for the term paper must be properly cited and the paper should include a bibliography. You must follow a standard guide such as Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Joseph Gibaldi's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*.

No late papers will be accepted.

3. Each student will work in a team with several other students in preparing and delivering an oral presentation. Groups (4 or 5 students per group) will present reports to the class on one of the topics listed below or others that are of particular interest to students and germane to the course. (If you select a topic that is not listed below, it must receive the instructor's approval.) Each team should prepare a 15-20 minute presentation. **Each oral presentation is worth 15% of the final grade.** The group as a whole will be graded for the project. The presentations will be scheduled during the last several days of the semester. You may select your topic from the list below.

- a. Public education, accountability, and No Child Left Behind
- b. Resolutions passed by cities, towns, and counties, and states critical of the USA Patriot Act
- c. The Great Recession and state and local government coping mechanisms and strategies
- d. State and local responses to evolution and intelligent design in public school
- e. State government reaction to the federal Real ID Act/PASS ID bill
- f. Public research universities as unique tools for state economic development
- g. Crime and prison growth
- h. School vouchers and charter schools
- i. Same sex marriages
- j. Public ethics and recent scandals among state and local officials
- k. State governments and illegal immigrants
- l. Local governments, especially municipalities, as sanctuaries for immigrants
- m. DNA testing and the innocence of some prisoners
- n. Cell phone use, texting, and distracted driving
- o. Homeland security: the perspective from the states

On the day of the presentation, each team (5 or 6 students) should submit a brief written summary of their report along with a topical outline, a list of references used in preparing the project, and a copy of your PowerPoint slides. Each group should elect a group leader and all members of the group should be responsible for specific tasks associated with preparing and completing the project. It is not

necessary for each member of the group to be an in-class presenter, but the short paper on the presentation should list the contributions of each group member.

3. The lecture topics and readings (which are to be completed prior to each class meeting) are attached. **Class participation** consists of raising good questions, making quality comments, and especially making contributions by engaging in meaningful and germane discussions and debates. Individual students and teams of students may be required to lead class discussions from time-to-time.

5. Grading: The grading will be apportioned as follows:

Quiz	10%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Paper	15%
Oral Presentation	15%
Final Exam	30%
Class Participation	10%

6. Academic Integrity: “As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson’s vision of this institution as a ‘high seminary of learning.’ Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.”

“When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. At the same time, the faculty member may, but is not required to, inform each involved student privately of the nature of the alleged charge.”

SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS:

I. INTRODUCTION

August 20:

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

August 25:

**THE STUDY OF STATE &
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 1

II. THE CONSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

August 27:

STATE CONSTITUTIONS

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 3

III. STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE FEDERAL SETTING

September 1-3:

**FEDERALISM &
INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS**

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 2
Smith, Section I

IV. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

September 8-10:

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION,
PUBLIC OPINION &
ELECTIONS**

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 4
Smith, Section II

September 15-17:

**POLITICAL PARTIES,
INTEREST GROUPS,
CAMPAIGNS, AND THE MEDIA**

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 5
Smith, Section III

September 22:

QUIZ

V. LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND POLICY MAKERS

September 24-29:

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT
STRUCTURES & PROCESSES**

Bowman & Kearney, Chaps 10-11
Smith, Section VIII

October 1:

STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 12

VI. STATE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND POLICY MAKERS

October 6-8:

STATE LEGISLATURES

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 6
Smith, Section IV

October 13:

Fall Break

October 15-20:

GOVERNORS

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 7
Smith, Section V

October 15:

Paper Due

October 22:

ADMINISTRATORS

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 8
Smith, Section VII

October 27:

Mid-Term Exam

October 29:

STATE COURTS

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 9
Smith, Section VI

VII. PROBLEMS, ISSUES, AND PUBLIC POLICIES

November 3-5:

STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 13
Smith, Section IX
William Fulton, *The Dying Auto
Mall*, pp. 206-207, In Smith
Ellen Perlman, *See-Thru
Government*, pp. 208-210, In Smith

Group Presentations

November 10:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 14
Mikel Chavers, *Stimulating Growth*,
pp. 197-200, In Smith

Group Presentations

November 12-17:

EDUCATION POLICY

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 15

Group Presentations

November 19:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 16

Group Presentations

November 24:

SOCIAL WELFARE & HEALTH CARE POLICY

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 17
Rachel Brand, *Medicaid: Under the
Weather*, pp. 201-205, In Smith

Group Presentations

November 26:

Thanksgiving Holiday

December 1:

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Bowman & Kearney, Chap. 18

Group Presentations

December 3:

**COURSE SUMMARY &
REVIEW FOR FINAL**

Group Presentations

**FINAL EXAMINATION, MONDAY, December 7, 2009, 3:00 PM – 5:30 PM,
BRACKETT 213**