Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: POSC 215

Course Title: State and Local Government

Number of Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: To survey American governments on the sub-national level and increase awareness of the impact those governments have over citizens' lives. Offered odd Spring semester.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): None.


Any standard text for state and local governments.

Course Objectives:
• To understand how each facet of state and local government affects the lives of individuals.
• To understand the basic structures and processes of state and local governments.
• To understand the role of subnational governments in the American system.
• To develop personal beliefs regarding the proper role of American subnational governments.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:
• Explain the power and responsibilities of subnational governments in the federal structure.
• Identify major features of state constitutions and explain the historical development of those documents.
• Distinguish between various forms of local government for counties and municipalities.
• Explain the major structures and processes of state government including the legislature, executive, judiciary, and bureaucracy.
• Understand examples of policies addressed by state and local governments and the difficulties of implementing those policies.
• Understand the role of interest groups and political parties in American subnational governments.

Topical Outline (major)

NOTE: A significant, intensive writing component is required
areas of coverage): for this course. This requirement may be satisfied by a single type-written paper of ten to twelve pages in length (or longer), properly cited, or by multiple paper assignments of equivalent length.

- Role of state and local governments
- Diversity in the state and local communities
  - Daniel Elazar's cultural patterns
  - Demographic Diversity
  - Historical migration patterns
- State constitutions
- Federalism
  - State and local roles in the federal structure
  - Historical patterns of the federal relationships
  - Advantages and disadvantages of federalism
- Local governments
  - Types of local government; (municipal, county, special districts)
  - Organizational structure and powers of local governments
- Political parties in the state and local governments
  - Party organization
  - Party machines
  - Regulation of parties
- Other ways citizens participate in state and local government
  - Elections
  - Interest groups
  - Attending meetings
  - Other ways
- State Governors
  - Powers and responsibilities
- State Bureaucracies
  - Growth and power
  - Functions
  - Civil employment
- State Legislatures
  - Structures
  - Variations
  - Politics within state legislatures
  - The lawmaking process
- Law and State Judiciaries
  - Types of law
  - Civil and criminal procedure
  - Structure of state courts
  - Choosing judges

Material from this course may be tested on the Major Field Test (MFT) administered during the Culminating Experience course for the degree.

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 35
Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by:    David Roebuck
Name
Signature

Date:    April 14, 2005

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

Office of Academic Affairs
12/04