This is an OSU Extended Campus version of the course. For more information, go to the OSU Extended campus website: [http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/](http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/)

**PURPOSE:**

This course will introduce students to the institutional structures and processes in state and local government in the United States. The role of political parties, institutions, elections, and interest groups also will be highlighted. However, while we will cover the realm of state and local governance from a national perspective, special emphasis will be placed on understanding state politics and policies in Oregon.

"Every state has its own distinct political character, but at times, some states such as Oregon seem particularly unusual. The word that may best describe politics in the Beaver State, for example, is schizophrenic. The state is driven by two different visions of government and politics. On the one hand, many state residents desire an active government that rationally seeks to solve societal problems. On the other hand, other residents want a smaller government, one that keeps taxes low, produces few regulations, and protects traditional social values. Sometimes Oregonians are proud of their state's innovative and pragmatic government policies; other times voters want to tear down those policies. The divide between these two visions of state government and politics can be seen throughout the state's political landscape, from small local debates over development issues to high profile battles over state-wide ballot initiatives" (Clucas and Henkels)

"To understand Oregon, it is essential to understand these two different visions because they play such a central role in the state's politics today. We start this introduction to Oregon politics by exploring the historical roots, philosophies, and importance of both perspectives, one that is rooted in the state's "progressive" heritage and the other in "conservative populism." From there, we then discuss the character of the state's political geography and its constitution, for these two factors also have an important hand in structuring the state's government and politics" (Clucas and Henkels).

The overall goal of this course is to inform students of state and local governmental structures, political cultures, and public policies from a comparative perspective. Another objective is to have students interact with state and local government through a social capital assignment in order to encourage civic responsibility and participation.
Many of the materials required for the course are located at this web site. There are also several web sites with links to many government data resources, which will be useful. It will be necessary to use the Blackboard Portal for this course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- To develop an understanding of state and local government policy processes, including the various governmental and non-governmental actors involved in those processes.
- To gain knowledge of the various factors that affect state and local politics including population change, economic development, changing attitudes and beliefs, political culture, and globalization.
- To understand how Oregon's system of governance compares to other states, including Oregon’s legacy of innovative approaches to policy problems.
- To apply various policy-making models to policy decision-making in state and local governments.
- To synthesize various socioeconomic and political factors that influence state and local policy processes, and then apply this synthesis to a specific state and local policy issue.
- To evaluate the differing institutional structures of state and local governments in the United States from the criteria of citizen influence and democracy.

BOOKS/READINGS/WEBSITES:

- Clucas, Henkels and Sreel, eds., Oregon Politics and Government.
- Oregon Blue Book. Available on the web at: http://www.bluebook.state.or.us/
- OSU Sustainability Tabloid - http://oregonfuture.oregonstate.edu/

COURSE EVALUATION:

1. Four written assignments (called "thinkpieces" because they have you read and then respond to a variety of questions to stimulate thought) will be required in the class. [400 points possible]
2. Five on-line discussions will also be required during the quarter. [50 points possible]

COURSE POLICY

1. Late assignments will only be accepted from students who have legitimate excuses.
2. Extra credit will not be allowed in this course.
3. All OSU academic regulations will be followed in this course. Academic regulations are available at: http://catalog.oregonstate.edu/ChapterDetail.aspx?key=75 This includes the university policy concerning incompletes: "When a requirement of a course has not been
completed for reasons acceptable to the instructor and the rest of the academic work is passing, a report of I may be made and additional time granted.

4. You are expected to do all required reading and participate in all course requirements.

5. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in this course. Engaging in such behaviors will result in a failing course grade. You are to do ALL of your own work. Plagiarism is defined as representing (and using) another person's ideas, writings, and work as one's own.

ESSAY/EXAM EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used for evaluating written assignments and exams:
[1=Poor; 2=Average; 3=Good; 4=Excellent]

- COMMITMENT-did you cover all relevant materials/questions?
- AMBITION-did you take each issue to task?
- ENGAGEMENT-did you make connections between issues?
- CLARITY-was the paper readable and well organized?
- READINGS/COURSE MATERIALS-did you use appropriate reading and other course materials in your work? [note: cite everything appropriately]
- COMPARISON-in general, how did your work compare to the rest of the class?
- DIRECTIONS-a "no brainer" here. Did you follow directions?

FINAL GRADE DISTRIBUTION

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DUE DATES

Exam/Assignment: Date:
Thinkpiece 1
Thinkpiece 2
Thinkpiece 3
Thinkpiece 4
On-Line Discussions

SCHEDULE:

The class is organized into four sections, which have you compare Oregon state and local governance with the rest of the United States. The first section focuses on topics such as federalism, constitutions, and interest groups/parties/elections. The second section of the class will cover state government institutions. The third section of the class will cover local government institutions and politics. The fourth and final section of the class will be dedicated to public policies. At the conclusion of each section, you will be asked to write a “thinkpiece” on the topics covered.

Topics & Readings:

SECTION I: Introduction

Topic 1: Introduction
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 1; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapters 1 & 2

Topic 2: Federalism
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 2; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 3

Topic 3: Constitutionalism in the States
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 3

Topic 4: Interest Groups, Parties & Elections
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapters 4 & 5; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 4 & 6
Thinkpiece #1 due

SECTION II: State Government Institutions

Topic 5: State Legislatures
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 6; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 8

Topic 6: Governors
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 7; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 9

Topic 7: Bureaucracy
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 8; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 10

Topic 8: Judiciary
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapters 9; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 11
Thinkpiece #2 due

SECTION III: Local Governments

Topic 9: Local Government Structures & Functions
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 10; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 12
Topic 10: Local Leadership and Governance  
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapter 11

Topic 11: Budgeting in the State & Local Context  
Readings: Bowman and Kearney, Chapters 12; Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 13

Thinkpiece #2 due

SECTION IV: Public Policies

Topic 13: Education Policy  
Readings: Oregon Politics and Government, Chapter 17

Topic 14: Health Policy  

Topic 15: Environmental Policy  
Thinkpiece #4 due

Note: "Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should make an appointment with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of the term. In order to arrange alternative testing the student should make the request at least one week in advance of the test. Students seeking accommodations should be registered with the Office of Services for Students with disabilities."