

Montgomery College – Rockville Campus
Department of History & Political Science
POLI242: State & Local Government

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Course Description:

Powers, organization, and functions of state and local governments; case studies. Emphasis on the governments of the state of Maryland and of Montgomery County.

Credits, Hours, Prerequisites:

- A. Three (3) Semester Hours Credit.
- B. Three (3) Class Hours Per Week; Zero (0) Laboratory Hours Per Week.
- C. Prerequisite: EN 101/EN 101A

Student Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe and explain state and local governments' structure, functions, problems, and their impact on residents in the USA.
2. Recognize and analyze the unique nature of politics and government in Maryland and Montgomery County.
3. Apply skills and concepts to work with decision makers (elected and appointed state and local government).
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how to lobby state and local official effectively to bring about change.
5. 5. Describe and explain the challenges facing Maryland and Montgomery County in the current year and beyond and relate those factors to his or her daily life.

Student Materials Required:

Textbooks:

Magelby, DM. (2012). *State & Local Politics: Government by the People*. (15th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Reserve readings from assorted regional & national newspapers.

Evaluation:

A student's final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

- 70% - **Two Examinations** (35% each) based upon textbook, reserve readings, class lectures, & class discussions. Both exams may consist of any & all of the following formats – multiple choice, short identification, & essays. The final exam is not cumulative.
- 30% - There will be three **Miscellaneous Assignments** which will count collectively as 30% of your overall final grade. Each of these assignments will include a written component & potentially some multiple choice questions, but will also involve critical thinking, the text, & outside sources. While there may be some alteration to this schedule, please expect these assignments to include some extra credit possibilities as well.

Americans With Disabilities Act: Any student who may need an accommodation due to a disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hour. In order to receive accommodations, a letter from Disability Support Services(R-CB122; G-SA175; or TP-ST120) will be needed. Any student who may need assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation must identify to the Disability Support Services Office; guidelines for emergency evacuations are at:
www.montgomerycollege.edu/dss/evacprocedures.htm.

A student's **final grade** in this course will be based upon the following scale:

90-99:	A or superior work
80-89:	B or very strong work
70-79:	C or average work
60-69:	D or below average work
59 or below:	F or failing work

Student Behavior Standards: This section should refer students to the Student Code of Conduct, which explains the specific behaviors that violate the standards of College behavior. You can find these standards at the following link: http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/pnp/#Chapter_4.

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is essential to building fundamental understanding, especially in light of the scope of the subject matter. Therefore, I expect you to attend class regularly and to realize that failure to do so will definitely affect your grade. You are allowed one unexcused absences in the whole semester. Excessive absence may result in your involuntary withdrawal from the course. Excessive absences (more than three) and/or failure to present will lower this grade. In addition, you are expected to be in the classroom ready to work at the appointed hour. It is your responsibility to be on time, ready and attentive. Please **do not come late to class**: this interrupts work already in progress and is very rude to your classmates.

Veteran's Services

If you are a veteran or on active or reserve status and you are interested in information regarding opportunities, programs and/or services, please visit the Combat2College website at www.montgomerycollege.edu/combat2college.

Best Practices

1. Buy the book!
2. Take thorough notes during lectures – you will need them to succeed on exams.
3. Continually review your notes from previous lectures to increase your participation & comprehension. **Always BE SPECIFIC & use all the materials I provide on MyMC.**
4. **NO EXCUSES!** The syllabus explains the late assignments & make-up exam policies – I do not need to know all the specifics. I am a very approachable instructor, but you will receive the grade you earn.
5. Make-up & late assignments will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. You will have two weeks to make-up an exam, but taking the full two weeks usually results in a lower grade because of lower retention by you. Late assignments will be penalized a letter grade per day.
6. At the end of the semester, I am typically ready for a break too. Do not be late with assignments in April/May.
7. Neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated in any form. The penalty for having committed either one of these violations is a **failing grade** for the course. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
8. Beepers, cell phones, & other disruptive devices must be silenced before you enter the classroom. Accidents happen (to me as well), but please do not make it a regular occurrence.
9. Discussions will become heated sometimes depending on the issues. Please treat the instructor & each other with respect at all times.

10. Student email using the montgomerycollege.edu server is an official means of communication for the College. It is expected that you check your student email frequently, as you are responsible for information and announcements that will be sent to you from the College.
11. I am not a mind reader, so please contact me via email, telephone, or in person if you find yourself struggling with assignments, course content, or exams. It is advisable to contact me prior to exams.
12. I maintain an open door policy & I take this very seriously. If there is any sort of issue, please contact me. I cannot attempt to address it if I do not know it exists. I also cannot successfully address an issue if I hear it from a third party – meaning from someone other than you.
13. If you have a DSS accommodation, please let me know if there is a problem with the accommodation before you take the exam. I will ALWAYS make the necessary changes to provide you with the appropriate accommodations if you tell me before taking an exam. It is your responsibility to notify the testing center & me if an accommodation has not been met. If you do not do this, you have taken the exam without the accommodation by conscious choice.
14. Enjoy yourself. This is a challenging course that will open your eyes if you prepare & participate. Good Luck!

Schedule, Readings, & Assignments

Chapter 1: American Federalism

Reading Assignments

Pages 6-28 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

Text-analyzer could prevent texting while driving

Fast food: Protecting the poor from Big Macs

A lethal right to self-defense

Security: Is encryption a national security threat?

Supreme Court to hear car chase case

When all Muslims are suspect

Gun enthusiasts taunt N.Y. mayor with 'Bloomberg Gun Giveaway'

Disaster Relief: can't find it in the Constitution

Only in America – prisons

Chapter 2 : State & Local Politics

Reading Assignments

Pages 32-48 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

Free money for all

Court says Red Sox fan can't sue for Foul ball injury

California OK's same-sex conjugal visits

Only in America – guns

Local patrol, not porn police

Talking deodorizers

Noted: training
City manager's sex change costs him job

Chapter 3 – State Constitutions

Reading Assignments

Pages 52-65 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

Justices: Cops don't have to use different questioning for kids
Worker's comp denied for kidnapped woman
Metro cannot ban sex offender, even after his latest arrest
Spying on students?
Penguin book back in schools
Pay to spray?
Justices bless legislative prayer

Chapter 4: Parties & Elections in the States

Reading Assignments

Pages 68-90 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

All-mail Colo. Election has strategists sweating
No challenger, no election
Felon Voting Rights
College Park measure on noncitizens voting failed
Misc guns
Rigging Elections
Constitutional conventions

Chapter 5: State Legislatures

Reading Assignments

Pages 94-113 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

Arkansas Executions
Unwed father registry
Protection for Maryland cyclists

Exam #1 (Chapters 1-5)

Chapter 6: State Governors

Reading Assignments

Pages 116-135 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

Kansas governor expected to sign antiabortion bill
Arlington boots its web star mayor

Chapter 7: Judges & Justice in the States

Reading Assignments

Pages 138-153 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

Discriminatory housing practices are alive & well in Maryland
State judge is accused of assault at Wal-Mart
Seniors can get lawn-care help from juvenile offenders returning home
Suit says dog was more than property
Judge supports Metro's decision to ban religious-themed Christmas ads

Chapter 8: Local Governments & Metropolitcs

Reading Assignments

Pages 156-178 in the Magelby Text

Course Reserves

Ocean City acts to keep wpmen from going topless at beach
N.Y. set to be first state to cover tuition at public 4-year colleges
Rename J.E.B. Stuart High School
Being anti-death penalty may cost prosecutor
Holiday event allows jailed parents to connect with their kids
Sanctuary City

Chapter 9: Making State & Local Policy

Reading Assignments

Pages 182-203 in the Magelby text

Course Reserves

Some U.S. schools rethink meal-debt policies shaming kids
State begins to take steps prisons
So who owns that new 'forbidden' island off the N.C. coast?
New laws expand litigation options over drug prices, childhood sex abuse
Defeat of Maryland rape bill reverberates

Chapter 10: Staffing & Financing State & Local Government

Reading Assignments

Pages 206-225 in the *Magelby* text

Course Reserves

Does the Montgomery County Council need to change?

Proceed with care

State legalizing pot without federal input

Final Exam