

**PLSC 202:
State and Local Government
Fall 2017**

(T/R, 9:30-10:45, Pray-Harrold 421; CRN 17223)

Instructor

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Office Hours

T/R, 12:30-1:30 pm
Thursday, 4:45-5:30 pm
and appointments (Wednesdays preferred)

Focus and Organization

This course examines state and local politics in the United States. There is some emphasis on Michigan, but the course is comparative in nature, so we will attempt both to understand differences among these governments and to make comparisons to the national government. The course has four parts: (1) how to compare states and localities – and why it matters, with emphasis on federalism and state constitutions; (2) participation, especially elections, political parties, and interest groups; (3) political institutions, including legislatures, executives, and legal systems; and (4) public policies. You probably will do better if you have had PLSC 112/113 or comparable course work.

This course satisfies Area IV of EMU's General Education requirements (Knowledge of the Disciplines: Social Science). Students are expected to accomplish the following in these classes:

1. Acquire an understanding of social science methods and of how they are used to engage in the systematic study of society and culture.
2. Understand and compare formal and informal social and political structures, organizations, and institutions.
3. Explore and understand power relationships and the impact of social change on different groups and on society in general.
4. Develop an appreciation of different interpretations of contemporary issues, institutions, or structures.
5. Use social science methods and content to interpret and analyze data and reports in the media and to make informed decisions regarding local, national, and international issues.
6. Use basic social scientific research techniques to examine and present information in a clear and concise manner.
7. Understand the relationships between qualitative and quantitative research.

A single course cannot address all of these goals thoroughly. Our reading and assignments will focus more on #1, #2, #5, and #7.

Reading

- Donovan, Todd, Christopher Z. Mooney, and Daniel A. Smith. 2015. *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform*, 4th edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage ["Donovan et al." below]. Be sure to get the correct book: ISBN is 978-1-285-44140-5. The book has a [companion web site](#) with useful study materials.
- Additional reading in CANVAS (noted "[C]" below), via URLs in the syllabus, or available from the Halle Library [noted "[L]" below].
- You are also responsible for handouts, presentations, and videos used in class.

Using a textbook with a 2015 copyright saves you money. It also means that several assignments will involve updating the text (see below), which helps you develop familiarity with source materials.

Assignments and Grading

Grading Policies. All grading is on a 0-100 scale: A = 94, A- = 90, B+ = 87, B = 84, B- = 80, C+ = 77, C = 74, C- = 70, D+ = 67, D = 64, D- = 60, E < 60. Describing something accurately or repeating facts is "C" work. Higher grades are awarded for careful analysis. "B" requires you to examine alternative explanations for something (e.g., voting patterns, different ways of organizing city government). "A" work also means critically analyzing assumptions and implications, as well as suggesting alternative ways of thinking about a question.

Late work will be penalized 10 points (one letter grade) per 24-hour period or fraction thereof. Poorly written work, including improper citations and formats, may also be penalized up to one letter grade.

Your course grade is a weighted average based on the following:

tests (2 @ 15%)	30%
final exam	25%
direct democracy report	15%
updates/homework (4 @ 5%)	20%
participation	5%
best test or report	5%

You must have a verifiable medical reason for late or missed work, including exams. Make-up tests will be scheduled at my discretion. Please note important EMU [deadlines](#), which include the last day for a 100% refund (9/15) and last day to withdraw from individual classes with a "W" grade (11/14).

Tests & Final Exam. The format for tests is a combination of multiple choice, fill-in, and essay. You cannot do well without well-argued essays. The essay part of the first two tests is 50 percent of the grade. Study guides tests are posted to CANVAS. They include 4-5 possible essays, from which I will pick three that will be on the test; you will answer one. The final exam will include two essays (60 percent of the grade), one on material since Test #2 and one that will cover the entire course.

Written Work. Rather than a research paper and periodic quizzes, you will complete a group report on a Michigan ballot measure and four short homework assignments.

- **Direct Democracy Report.** This project will familiarize you with several data sources, gain substantive knowledge, and refine your presentation and writing skills. Plus – unlike a big paper – a more limited report cannot devastate your final grade.

The group report is a project with each team covering one of the Michigan ballot measures in November 2012. Guidelines for the reports are posted in CANVAS. Each report should be 5-8 double-spaced pages, plus tables, figures, and references. Each report covers three elements: (1) getting the measure on the ballot (legal requirements, sponsorship of the measure, wording, the petition process, reaction to the effort), (2) the referendum campaign (mainly strategy and financing), and (3) analysis of the outcome, including variation in the vote among groups and areas. The reports are due November 15 by 6:00 p.m. and will be presented and discussed in

class on November 16 and 21. A revised version based on class feedback can be submitted by December 1 at 5:00 pm.

- **Updates & Homework.** You will complete four brief assignments (5% each). Two of these complement the textbook by providing national updates or more detail on Michigan. These are 2-3 double-spaced pages, plus tables, figures, and references. You will post your findings to CANVAS and cover them in a class presentation not to exceed 10 minutes. The topics and schedule are in a spread sheet posted to CANVAS.

The other two assignments require you to analyze academic journal articles, which are similar to published research that you will have to master if you go on to graduate school or could be expected to assess in many careers. The assignments can be completed using a Word document posted to CANVAS. They cover articles assigned for November 9 and December 5 and are due at the start of class on the respective day.

Participation. I treat our daily class as if it were a staff meeting in any workplace. This means that you need to be present and engaged. Discussions should be civil; disagreements should be based on evidence and logic, not personal. My job is to organize material, highlight and extend (but not replace) your reading, and get you to think. Daily classes will be a combination of lecture, discussion, student presentations, occasional group work, and media. Getting you to think often means that I will argue positions that are not my own.

Treating the classroom as a workplace is why both discussion and attendance are evaluated. Except when authorized, electronics (e.g., cell phones, laptops) cannot be used during class. The first violation lowers your participation grade to 60; the second violation reduces it to zero. Note taking is easier because I post outlines ahead of classes as Word documents. If you print the notes, bring them to class, and expand them, then your subsequent retyping becomes your first careful review.

- **Attendance.** You start with a grade of 100 and lose 5 points per absence not covered by documented illness or similar emergencies, EMU policies such as the one covering religious holidays, or obligations such as jury duty.
- **Discussion.** You are expected to come to class having read and thought about the reading assigned for a given day. You will be evaluated based on the quality of your analysis and arguments, not how much you talk. You may be called on at any time, especially to discuss assigned reading. On days in which you are particularly effective, I will add 2-5 points to your participation score. Conversely, on days when you demonstrate that you have not completed assigned reading when called upon, I will deduct 2-3 points from your score. Thus, perfect attendance and significant contributions to discussion could yield a grade of over 100, which can be a boost to your course average.

Academic Integrity. You are expected to do your own work. If you cheat on a test or pass off others' work on assignments as your own (plagiarism), the penalty could range from zero on the assignment to failure in the course. I may also refer you to the [Office of Student Conduct, Community Standards, and Wellness](#), which can take action that results in additional penalties.

Support Services. EMU offers a range of services to help you improve your academic performance.

- [Disability Resource Center](#) (Student Center 246). Students with disabilities must register with the DRC so we can arrange accommodations to promote your participation and success in the course. The center also provides referrals and other services.
- [University Writing Center](#) (Halle Library 115) offers workshops and one-on-one consulting related to reading, writing, research, and analysis. A satellite center is in Pray-Harrold 211.
- [Holman Success Center](#) (Halle Library G04) offers workshops, tutoring, and other services.
- [Office for International Students & Scholars](#) (Student Center 240). Students with F and J visas see this office to report and gain permission for certain changes in their status. The office also provides advising, help with documents, and other services.

Class Schedule and Assignments

(Subject to change. Reading MUST be done before the class when it is covered.)

Part 1: Comparing States & Localities

September 7	Introduction and Overview
September 12	Studying States and Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donovan et al.: chap. 1. • Stein, Mark. 2008. <i>How the States Got Their Shapes</i>. New York: Harper: pp. 141-144, 222 (Figure 136) [C].
September 14, 19	Federalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donovan et al.: chap. 2. • Badger, Emily. 2017. “Blue Cities Want to Make Their Own Rules. Red States Won’t Let Them.” <i>New York Times</i> (July 6).

Part 2: Political Participation

September 21	Overview of Political Participation
September 21, 26	Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donovan et al.: chap. 3. • Clark, John A. 2017. “Elections and Political Participation in Michigan.” In <i>Michigan Government, Politics, and Policy</i>, edited by John S. Klemanski and David A. Dulio, 221-245. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [C]
September 28	Direct Democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donovan et al.: chap. 4. • Klemanski, John S., and David A. Dulio. 2017. “Ballot Proposals in Michigan.” In <i>Michigan Government, Politics, and Policy</i>, edited by John S. Klemanski and David A. Dulio, 246-266. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [C]
October 3	Direct democracy work session

October 5, 10 Interest Groups & Political Parties
 • Donovan et al.: chaps. 5 & 6.

October 12 Test #1

Part 3: Political Institutions

October 17, 19 Legislatures
 • Donovan et al.: chap. 7.
 • Lorentz, Kevin G. II, and Timothy Bledsoe. 2017. "Michigan's Legislature." In *Michigan Government, Politics, and Policy*, edited by John S. Klemanski and David A. Dulio, 148-169. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [C]
 • Nichols, Russell. 2011. "Termed Out." *Governing* 24 (January): 20-25 [C].

October 24 Executives
 • Donovan et al.: chap. 8.

October 26, 31 Legal Systems
 • Donovan et al.: chap. 9.

November 2 Local Government Structure
 • Donovan et al.: chap. 11.

November 7 Test #2

Part 4: Governing and Policy Making

November 9 **Homework #1 (Glick & Hays) due at the start of class**

Policy Making in the States
 • Glick, Henry R., and Scott P. Hays. 1991. "Innovation and Reinvention in State Policymaking: Theory and the Evolution of Living Will Laws." *Journal of Politics* 53 (August): 835-850. [\[L\]](#)

November 9, 14 Government Finances
 • Donovan et al.: chap. 10.
 • Bean, Mitch. 2017. "Budget and Fiscal Policy in Michigan." In *Michigan Government, Politics, and Policy*, edited by John S. Klemanski and David A. Dulio, 293-315. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [C]

November 16, 21 **Direct Democracy reports**

November 28 Local Policy Making
 • Donovan et al.: chap. 12.

- November 30 Policy Failure
- Rozycki, Paul. 2017. "Flint's Water Crisis: A Case Study in Historical Context, Decline, Responses to Challenges, and State-Local Government Relations." In *Michigan Government, Politics, and Policy*, edited by John S. Klemanski and David A. Dulio, 343-363. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [C]
- December 5 **Homework #2 (Fleischmann & Moyer) due at the start of class**
- Morality Politics
- Donovan et al.: chap 13.
 - Fleischmann, Arnold, and Laura Moyer. 2009. "Competing Social Movements and Local Political Culture: Voting on Ballot Propositions to Ban Same-Sex Marriage in the U.S. States." *Social Science Quarterly* 90 (March): 134-149. [\[L\]](#)
- December 7, 12 Social Welfare Policies
- Donovan et al.: chap. 14.
 - Quinn, Mattie. 2017. ["Governors Offer Their Plan to Fix Obamacare. Will Congress Listen?"](#) *Governing* (August 31).
- December 14 **Final Examination (9:00-10:30 am)**

(next page for web sites)

Important Web Sites

Given the nature of your assignments, I would suggest creating a bookmark folder in your web browser for PLSC 202 and then including the links below.

U.S. Census Bureau	http://www.census.gov/
newspapers in the 50 states	http://www.50states.com/news/#.UDd6cKCQnkc
<i>The Book of the States</i>	http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/category/content-type/bos-2016
National Inst. on Money in State Politics	http://www.followthemoney.org/
Initiative and Referendum Institute	http://www.iandrinstitute.org/index.cfm
Ballotpedia Elections	https://ballotpedia.org/Elections
<i>Governing</i> magazine (daily news feed)	http://www.governing.com/
CityLab (daily news feed)	https://www.citylab.com/
National Governors Association	https://www.nga.org/cms/home
National Conf. of State Legislatures	http://www.ncsl.org/
U.S. Conference of Mayors	http://www.usmayors.org/
National League of Cities	http://www.nlc.org/
Intl. City/County Management Assn.	https://icma.org/
Pew Research Center (survey results)	http://www.people-press.org/
Gallup Poll	http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx
<i>The Bridge</i> (Center for Michigan)	http://www.bridgemi.com/
<i>Detroit Free Press</i>	http://www.freep.com/
MLive (statewide media network)	http://www.mlive.com/