The College of Charleston
Fall 2019

POLS 311.01 - Policymaking in State Legislatures

Tuesdays- Thursdays 12:15 -1:30 P.M.

Maybank Hall 207

Instructor: Marguerite Archie-Hudson, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Mondays 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. and by appointment
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Course description and objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the methods and processes by which American state legislatures achieve public policy objectives. Attention will be paid to the structure and organization of our 50 state legislatures, decision-making among competing public policy objectives, the development of institutional and individual legislative agendas, responsiveness to the electoral and interest groups environment and the process of moving legislation from proposals to law. The Legislatures of California and South Carolina will serve as primary case studies of two very different examples of legislative structure, organization and operations.

At the end of the semester students should be able to: (a) understand and explain the complex web of constitutional mandates, political influences, public demands and policy agendas that drive the process by which state legislatures achieve public policy objectives; (b) provide competent analyses of the technical, and legal processes involved in legislative policymaking; (c) understand the impact of legislative behavior on the organization and performance of public institutions and (d) understand the opportunities for citizen engagement in influencing legislative behavior.

Course requirements

A. Regular class attendance is expected of all students. Attendance will be recorded via a daily sign-in sheet.
B. Expectations for class participation include reading the assigned materials prior to class, contributing to class discussions and turning in assignments on time. Late assignments without prior authorization will incur a grade penalty of ½ a letter grade for each day the assignment is late.
C. Students are encouraged to utilize office hours and/or schedule appointments to discuss assignments, readings and other relevant concerns. Students may also communicate by e-mail or by telephone.

D. Students who are receiving services through the Center for Disability Services, are scheduled to travel with an athletic team, will participate in a student government-related or other official school-related activity during the semester must present a letter of verification signed by the appropriate college official.

E. Students who plan personal (i.e., non-emergency) off-campus trips prior to a scheduled exam (ex. Midterm or Final) will not receive excused absences nor the opportunity to make up the exam.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on the following: a four-part legislative research paper, a Midterm Examination and a Final Examination as follows:

- a. Research Paper, Part One 15%
- b. Research Paper, Part Two 15%
- c. Research Paper, Part Three 15%
- d. Research Paper, Part Four 15%
- e. Midterm Examination 20%
- f. Final Examination 20%

**Required Readings**


California State Assembly – Legislative Procedure Manual, revised February 2019 (Available in 114 Wentworth, Room 204)

California’s Legislature- Spring 2016 Edition (Available in 114 Wentworth, Room 204)

**Additional Recommended Readings/Legislative Resources:**

The National Conference of State Legislatures ([www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org))

“Legisbrief” – Newsletter of the National Conference of State Legislatures ([www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org))

State Legislatures—Official publication of the National Conference of State Legislatures ([www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org))

The Thicket at State Legislatures. A bipartisan blog by and for legislative junkies. [www.ncsl.typepad.com/the thicket](http://www.ncsl.typepad.com/the thicket)

Fall 2019 Class Schedule

August 2011

Tu 20    Introductions and Class Overview
Th 22    Introductions and Class Overview
Tu 27    Federalism and the Evolution of State Legislatures (Handout)
Th 29    Profile: American State Legislature

September

Tu 3     Profile: American State Legislature
Th 5     Profile: Modern American State Legislator
Tu 10    Legislative organization- statutory requirements
         Paper One Due
Th 12    Legislative organization – statutory requirements
Tu 17    Legislative Leadership
Th 19    Setting the Legislative Agenda
Tu 24    Setting the Legislative Agenda
Th 26    Setting the Legislative Agenda- Lobbyist John Brisini

October 2019

Tu 1     The Legislative Process – The Essential Rules and Procedures
Th 3     The Legislative Process – The Essential Rules and Procedures
Tu 8     Midterm Examination
Th 10    Legislative Committees –organization and policy jurisdictions
Tu 15    Fall Break – No class
Th 17    Committee Rules and Procedures
         Paper Two Due
Tu 22    Committee Hearings– Rules and Procedures
The Research assignment provides the opportunity to explore how state legislatures develop policy on a specific issue of major concern to state government, the general public and groups with special investments in the outcomes of a particular issue. It provides an opportunity to provide an assessment of whether the organization of state legislatures has a differential effect on the issues and influences that direct their legislative priorities. Based on the organization of legislatures in the 50 states your research will examine legislative behavior in 10 states (20% of all legislatures) based on their organizational classifications as (a) “Green Legislatures: California and New York; (b) “Green Lite” Legislatures: Florida and Ohio; (c) “Gray Legislatures: Texas and South Carolina; (d) “Gold Lite” Legislatures: Mississippi and New Hampshire and (e) “Gold” Legislatures: North Dakota and Montana.
You will select one of the following topics for your research.

1. **Public Education and the State’s workforce needs.** The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers have both raised concerns in recent years that states public schools fail to provide adequate workforce to meet the states needs. **The Policy question:** should the primary control of the structure and content of public school curricula rest with state legislatures, the chief state school officials or individual school boards?

2. **Federal immigration laws and public school enrollment.** The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plyler v Doe* is the current legal authority on the enrollment of minor children in U.S. public schools. **The Policy question:** In view of the current national debate about the legal status of undocumented minors, should state legislatures require proof of parents’ legal immigration status in order for their children to enroll in public schools?

3. **States and the Death Penalty** – Many legal scholars argue that the death penalty is disproportionately applied against minorities and is not an effective deterrent to the crimes for which it is imposed. **The policy question?** What is the stated policy goal of state legislatures in supporting or opposing the death penalty??

You will be provided with a specific template for each section of this assignment.