Instructional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to introduce students to the methods and processes by which state legislatures achieve public policy objectives. It examines the constitutional mandates, legislative organization, political influences and competing public priorities that impact the outcomes of state laws and regulations. It also examines the relationships between states and the federal government in achieving these objectives under the concept of federalism.

This semester provides an extraordinary opportunity to examine how state legislatures make public policy during an extraordinary international health emergency. In 2019 the world experienced COVID-19, the worst pandemic to occur in a century- affecting over 20 million persons worldwide, 25% of whom are United States citizens. As this pandemic continues to grow and severely impact many of our major public institutions, policymakers at the federal, state and county levels find themselves challenged to engage in policymaking that is effective, affordable, enforceable, equitable and sustainable.

This COVID-19 pandemic provides an extraordinary opportunity to study how modern state legislatures make policy during a once in a lifetime national emergency. It will serve as a case study to examine how legislatures respond to issues that have national, state and local impacts.

At the end of the semester student should be able to demonstrate a firm understanding of the process of legislative policymaking, including the key policy actors and activities, the major influences in setting the legislative agenda and the impact of political organization on legislative outcomes.

Attendance Policy

This is an on-line class. Attendance will be tracked through the appropriate web-based technology. Students who miss class due to personal illness, COVID-19 related illnesses, a requirement that they isolate or quarantine, the need to care for a family member who is ill due to COVID-19, other significant medical or family emergencies, etc. are responsible for contacting the instructor directly. Students who fail to meet the stated deadline dates for any written mandatory assignments without a confirmed
acceptable reason may incur a grade deduction. The dates for receipt of assignments and/or exams are listed in this syllabus in the appropriate sections.

**Grading Policy**

*Grades for the semester will be based on the following assignments:*

- **Paper #1**  20%
- **Paper #2**  20%
- **Paper #3**  20%
- **Paper #4**  20%
- **Final Examination**  20%

**Grade values will be assigned as follows:**

1. A= 93-100 ; A-= 90-92
2. B+= 88-89  B= 83-87  B-=80-82
3. C+= 78-79  C= 73-77  C-= 70-72
5. F=59 and below

**Required and optional Readings**

There is not a required textbook for this course. You are required to utilize the following websites and on-line resources for your work during the semester:

1. The South Carolina State Legislature on-line and The Executive Office of the Governor of South Carolina
2. The Florida State Legislature and The Executive Office of the Governor of the State of Florida
3. The Illinois State Legislature and the Executive Office of the Governor of the State of Illinois
4. The California State Legislature and the Office of the Governor of the State of California
5. The Michigan State Legislature and the Office of the Governor of the State of Michigan
6. The Legislature of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Governor’s Office of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
7. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
8. Ballotpedia
9. The Center For The Study of Women and Politics, Rutgers University
10. The National Governors Associations
11. The National Association of State School Officers
12. The U.S. Office of Education
13. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
14. Other reports and readings as assigned during the semester
Required assignments to assess student learning outcomes

Research Assignment

This semester provides an extraordinary opportunity to study how state legislatures make policy during a once in a lifetime national emergency – the COVID-19 epidemic. There is no historical precedent to provide a legislative roadmap for how legislatures should set priorities, interact with the executive branch or local government, determine funding priorities for state institutions or state-funded programs, negotiate with the federal branch or inspire confidence in the constituents they are elected to serve during a pandemic. Our inquiry this semester will examine how state legislatures make policies in response to the following areas of public and/or institutional functions that are severely impacted by the pandemic: (1) The operations of the state’s economic activities, primarily businesses, during the pandemic; (2) the public behaviors that are deemed necessary to protect the public's health and (3) the operations of the states’ public schools. The following questions with form the focus of your inquiry into these legislative issues:

(a) Do state legislatures make COVID-19 related policies based on their demographic populations or their electoral politics?

(b) Is there consensus between the state legislatures and their governors on major policy priorities during COVID-19?

(c) Is there consensus between the state legislatures and the federal government- the Executive Branch and/or their congressional delegations- in setting major policy priorities during COVID-19?

(d) Based on their legislative behaviors in response to COVID-19, which of the following policy areas appear to take priority for each state in our study: (a) Health Care; (b) the state’s Economy; (c) Public Education?

The following state legislatures will be studied during this semester. They represent distinctive organizational characteristics as follows:

1. States with “Trifecta “status – One political party holds both the Governors’ Office and a majority of seats in both the State Senate and the State House of Representatives/Assembly. -
   a. California - Democratic control
   b. New York – Democratic control -
   c. Florida – Republican control
   d. South Carolina – Republican control

2. States with “divided control” – The Governor represents one political party and the majority control in both legislative chambers are held by the opposing political party.
   a. Michigan- Democratic Governor; Republican Legislature
   b. Massachusetts- Republican Governor- Democratic Legislature

You will explore the above questions in 4 papers as follows:

Paper # 1 will provide the following information:
A. The Legislative mandate(s), if any, established in law or official regulation issued by each of the above states on the following public behaviors designed to protect public health: crowd size, facial covering and social distancing.

B. The Executive Orders, if any, issued by the Governor of each state, that establish the public behaviors designed to protect public health.

C. State whether the mandates established in A and B are the same, compatible or in conflict.

Paper # 2 will provide the following information:

A. The Legislative mandate(s), if any, established in law or official regulation issued by each of the above states that define the “essential business operations” of the state’s economy required to remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic and those that are defined as “non-essential business operations” and are therefore required to close their operations in order to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

B. The Executive Orders, if any, issued by the Governor of each state, that define the essential or non-essential business operations required to remain open or close during the pandemic.

C. State whether the mandates established in A and B are the same, compatible or in conflict.

Paper # 3 will provide the following information:

A. The Legislative mandate(s), if any, established in law or official regulation issued by each of the above states that specify the conditions under which public schools must (1) open for the Fall 2020 semester or (2) remain closed.

B. The Executive Orders, if any, issued by the Governor of each state, that states the conditions under which public schools are required to open or remain closed for the Fall 2020 semester.

C. State whether the mandates established in A and B are the same, compatible or in conflict.

Paper # 4 will provide an analysis and summary of the information provided in the first three papers. In this paper you will make a determination for each state about whether the policy consensus between the legislatures and the executive branch are consistent with regard to (1) Health care; (2) the state’s economy and (3) public education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A. Prepare a chart that compares the policy consensus (or conflicts) between the legislatures and executive branch in each of the policy areas listed above.

B. Make an assessment, based on the level of agreement or disagreement, of the extent to which the political control of each state appears to be a factor in the level of conflict or consensus in the decisions that are made in each of the above policy areas.

C. Make a determination, based on your research, on which state demonstrated the best consensus between legislative and executive policy in each of the policy areas.

D. Make a determination, based on your research, on which state demonstrated the least consensus between the legislative and executive policy in each of the policy area.

Note: The deadline (due date) for the receipt of each paper is stated in this syllabus. Late papers will be subjected to very severe grade deductions. Papers that are more five days late without a confirmed and acceptable excuse will not be accepted.

Maximum page numbers for these assignments are not defined as the content of official communications such as Executive Orders, official memoranda, etc. cannot be determined in advance.
Students are expected to use judgement in determining whether information may be more effectively presented in charts, bullet form, as attachments. It is noted here that writing vague, rambling essays is not recommended.

All assignments will be submitted via the OAKS drop box.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** This college abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 and the American with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP, (843) 953-1431 or contact me so that such accommodations may be arranged.

**Honor Code and Academic Integrity**

“Lying, cheating, attempted cheating and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines that the student’s actions are related more to misunderstanding and confusion will be handled by the instructor. The instructor designs an intervention or assigns a grade reduction to prevent the student from repeating the error. The response is recorded on a form and signed by both the instructor and the student. It is forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive an XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at: [http://student affairs. cofc.edu /honor-system/student handbook/in-depth.](http://student affairs. cofc.edu /honor-system/student handbook/in-depth.)

**OAKS**

OAKS, including Gradebook, will be used for this course throughout the semester to provide the syllabus and class materials and grades for each assignment, which will be regularly posted.

**Recording of Classes (Via Zoom)**

Class sessions will be recorded via both voice and video recording. By attending and remaining in this class, the student consents to being recorded. Recorded class sessions are for instructional use only and may not be shared with anyone who is not enrolled in the class.

**Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction**
If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone and internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

**Center for Student Learning**

The Center for Student Learning’s (CSL) academic support services provide assistance in study strategies, speaking and writing skills and course content. Services include tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments and workshops. Students of all abilities have become successful using these programs throughout their academic careers and the services are available at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at: [http://csl.cofc.edu](http://csl.cofc.edu) or call (843) 953-5635.

**Class schedule**

**August 2020**
- Tuesday 25  Introductions and Semester Overview
- Thursday 27  Introductions and Semester Overview

**September 2020**
- Tuesday 1  Federalism and state legislatures
- Thursday 3  Federalism and state legislatures
- Tuesday 8  Defining State Legislatures – major functions/responsibilities
- Thursday 10  Defining State Legislatures – major roles/responsibilities
- Tuesday 15  Defining State Legislatures – major roles and responsibilities
- Thursday 17  Profile of the modern American state legislatures
- Tuesday 22  Profile of the modern American state legislature  
  **Paper # 1 Due**

- Thursday 24  The COVID-19 Pandemic- Overview
- Tuesday 29  The COVID-19 Pandemic- Overview

**October 2020**
- Thursday 1  Setting Covid 19 Legislative priorities – the states’ economy
- Tuesday 6  Setting COVID 19 Legislative priorities - the states’ economy
- Thursday 13  Setting COVID-19 Legislative priorities – state health issues  
  **Paper # 2 Due**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 15</td>
<td>COVID-19 Legislative priorities – state health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 20</td>
<td>COVID-19 Legislative priorities – state health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Midterm Grades posted at Noon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 22</td>
<td>Public Education and COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 27</td>
<td>Public Education and COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 29</td>
<td>Public Education and COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 3</td>
<td>Election Day – No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 5</td>
<td>Discussion: National Election impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 10</td>
<td>National Election impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 12</td>
<td>The post-election State Legislatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Paper #3 Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 17</td>
<td>The post-election State Legislatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 19</td>
<td>Elections and Reapportionment - 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 24</td>
<td>Elections and Reapportionment- 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 26</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 1</td>
<td>Post-election analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Paper #4 Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 3</td>
<td>Last Day of Class- Final Examination Issued by instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 10</td>
<td>Final Examination due to instruction by 5 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 16</td>
<td>Final grades posted by Instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>