State and Local Politics
PSI 323 -3 credits
Doane College - Summer Term
May 2015

Description: An analysis of political processes and behavior in state, metropolitan, and local governments. Required for Public Admin majors. Fulfills one Doane Plan Contemporary Issues requirement or one Doane Plan Liberal Learning requirement for everyone except Public Administration majors.

Location/Time: College Park, Tuesdays, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Instructor: Cindy K. Johnson, Adjunct Professor
Cell: 308-391-9210
E-mail: cjahkc@yahoo.com

Textbook Materials:

Required:

Foundational Area of Knowledge and Course Objectives:

The student, after completing the course instruction should have a heightened awareness of the following subject materials, representing the course goals and objectives:

(1) The structure of political institutions within Nebraska state and local subdivisions.
(2) The legislative process concerning city ordinances and state statutes.
(3) The executive, legislative, and judicial office functions within state government.
(4) The political process as it relates to campaigns and policy decisions in Nebraska.
(5) Economic and financial issues pertaining to state and local government.
Description of Learning Strategies:

The following strategies will be utilized during the course to accomplish each of the course objectives outlined in the Foundational Area of Knowledge Section:

(1) Lecture
(2) Discussion
(3) Exercises and Simulations involving students
(4) Guest Speakers
(5) Readings
(6) Assignments to students
Assessment of Student Performance and Grading:

Students will be able to obtain a total of 300 points from assignments, discussions and examinations conducted during the course. The number of points that a student will be able to earn, is as follows:

- Final Exam 100
- Midterm 100
- Government Project 100

Summary of Examinations and Assignments:

Final Examination: A final exam may consist of essays, multiple choice and short answer questions that will cover the entire content of the course.

Midterm Examination: This exam will consist of essays multiple choice and short answer questions that will cover the first half of the course. Students may use their notes and reading materials, but are restricted from completing the exam with the help of another person.

State and Local Government Project: Each student will complete a project on either a local political subdivision or a specific piece of legislation before the Nebraska Legislature. This project will involve attending a public meeting outside of or during the class meeting times.

Course Policies:

Attendance: Student attendance at all class meetings is expected. If a student will be unable to attend a class meeting, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor and perform any necessary makeup or additional assignments given to the student by the instructor. Students should obtain class notes from a fellow classmate, and the absent student is responsible for all material covered on the day of the absence. Two or more unexcused absences may result in a failing grade.

Grading Scale: The grading scale is based on a nine point, A, B, C, D, F scale, as follows:

- A+ 100 - 96
- A  95 - 90
- B+ 90 - 94
- B  89 - 84
- C+ 83 - 77
- C  76 - 70
- D+ 74 - 69
- D  68 - 66
Late Assignments:

Assignments that are turned in late during the duration of the course are downgraded by one letter grade. For each additional week the assignment is late, an additional letter grade is reduced off the original score given. All assignments must be completed and handed in by the last class to receive any credit.

Academic Integrity:

The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent your own work. Any use of others’ ideas and words without proper citation of sources is plagiarism and will result in penalties to be determined by the instructor and/or the dean of undergraduate studies.
Format of Writings:

It is suggested that all writing assignments to be completed outside of class should be typed, double spaced, with one-inch margins, and using a font no larger than 12 pt. in Times New Roman, Arial or Courier. If you have any questions regarding this requirement please contact your instructor.

PSI 323 - Course Schedule and Readings:

Week 1

Chapter 1: Introduction to State and Local Politics

Chapter 2: Federalism: State Politics within a Federal System

Week 2

Chapter 3: Participation, Elections, and Representation

Chapter 4: State and Local Direct Democracy

Week 3

Chapter 5: Political Parties

Chapter 6: Interest Groups

Week 4

Midterm

Chapter 7: State Legislatures

Week 5

Chapter 8: Governors and the State Bureaucracy

Chapter 9: State Courts and the Criminal Justice System
Week 6
State and Local Government Project Due

Week 7
Chapter 10: Fiscal Policy
Chapter 11: The Structure of Local Governments

Week 8
Final Exam