

2016

240 State and Local Politics

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Xavier University – Summer 2016
POLI 240 - State and Local Politics
Dr. Mack Mariani

DESCRIPTION

This course will provide students with an introduction to major political institutions and processes in state and local government in the state of Ohio. Students will learn about these institutions through firsthand interaction with political actors and firsthand observation of political institutions and processes. The course will focus in particular on the legislative and budgetary process, executive administration, judicial decision-making, the role of political parties and interest groups.

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the structure and purpose of the major institutions which characterize Ohio state and local politics, including federalism, the powers of the legislative and executive branches in the state of Ohio, the legislative process, the role of interest groups and the media, campaigns and elections, redistricting and the budget process.
- Explain, analyze and critique major political theories in state and local politics, including federalism theory, elite theory, pluralism, dual sovereignty, median voter theory, conditional party government theory, party cartel theory, and theories of polarization.

CONTACT INFORMATION

You can contact Mack Mariani at any time of the day or night by cell phone at 513-508-6849 or by e-mail at marianim@xavier.edu. Office hours are by appointment on the day of our class meetings or via phone or Skype.

BOOKS AND RESOURCES

The following books are required:

- Ohio Legislative Service Commission, *Guidebook for Ohio Legislators* (online)
- John R. Baker (ed.), *The Lanahan Readings in State and Local Government*, 2nd Edition, Lanahan Publishers.

The following book is recommended:

- Mariani and Reeher, *The Insiders' Guide to Political Internships*, Westview Press (2003). Helpful information here on how to succeed in an internship. I'll go over many of these points in our class discussions.

GRADING

Your final grade will be based on your overall performance in course assignments and your successful completion of all internship requirements. Students will be required to produce four research papers (guidelines are outlined below). Each paper is worth 25% of your course grade. Students are also expected to uphold high standards during the performance of their internship. Poor performance in the internship – including unethical and unprofessional behavior – may result in a lowering of the overall grade that you receive in this course.

Writing Assignments (pick any 4 of the 6)

The grades for the course will be based on the following writing assignments. Please complete four of the six writing assignments. Although the assignments can be completed in any order, they should be handed in on the following dates:

Assignment 1: July 8

Assignment 2: July 15

Assignment 3: July 22

Assignment 4: July 29

NOTE: students participating in the state politics internship program should try to complete their research on these papers *before* the end of the internship, as you will have easier access to legislative resources while you are working in the Capitol than afterward. Each paper should be approximately 5-6 pages in length and include a separate works cited page. Note that high-quality papers will incorporate findings and arguments from other, outside scholarly sources.

Legislative Process Paper

First, read Chapter 6 in the Guidebook for Ohio Legislators (Tools for Reading a Bill). Next, select a bill that was signed into law during this session of the legislature. Research the legislative history of the law. Describe the law and the purposes for which the bill was intended. What are the arguments for and against the bill? Describe the steps the bill took through the legislature, any changes or alterations that were made to the bill over the course of the process. Analyze the votes taken on this bill in committee and in the House and Senate. Based on your analysis, what was the source of the bill's support? Was it based on party, region, industry or some other factor? If you were in the legislature, would you have voted in support of the bill?

Term Limits Paper

First, read Baker, Chapter 23: Colorado's Term Limits: Consequences, Yes. But Were They Intended? Second, research the debate on term limits that took place in the state of Ohio. What was the process through which the term limits bill was enacted? What were the arguments at the time the term limits bill was adopted? What were the consequences of term limits in Ohio? Did it turn out as expected?

State Legislative Professionalism Paper

First, read Baker, Chapter 22: Measuring State Legislative Professionalism. In your paper, describe Squire's measure of state legislative professionalism and how that measure is operationalized. Using the criteria utilized in Squire's measure, assess the level of professionalism in the state of Ohio. Incorporate your own observations and research to back up Squire's conclusions with regard to Ohio. In what areas is Ohio more professional than other legislatures? In what areas does Ohio fall short?

Electoral Systems and Voter Turnout Paper

First, read Baker, Chapter 10: Electoral Systems and Voter Turnout. Research Ohio's electoral system and voter turnout rates. What impact do electoral systems have on voter turnout rates? What is Ohio's electoral system and how do the features of that system impact voter turnout? Where does Ohio stand relative to other states? What changes, if any, could be implemented to improve voter turnout?

Gambling Revenues

First, read Baker, Chapter 32: Rolling the Dice. Next, research the recent history of gambling (gaming), lottery and casino legislation in the state of Ohio. What impact have gaming revenues had on the state budget? What other positive and/or negative impacts has the lottery, casinos and other legalized

gambling activities had on the state of Ohio. Given your research, do you believe that the benefits of gambling outweigh the costs?

Judicial Selection

First, read Baker, Chapter 28: Judicial Selection and State Court Performance. Next, research the judicial selection procedures in the state of Ohio. Given the arguments put forward in the chapter (and any other outside readings that you incorporate into your analysis), explain the likely impact of Ohio’s judicial selection procedures on the quality of the court’s performance. Based on your research, how does Ohio stack up relative to other states with regard to the process through which judges are selected? What changes would you recommend to the selection process?

Grade Scheme

>95	A	<82 to 79	C+
<95 to 92	A-	<79 to 75	C
<92 to 89	B+	<75 to 72	C-
<89 to 85	B	<72 to 65	D
<85 to 82	B-	<65	F

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Time	Location	Topic
Monday, May 9	12:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Governmental Policy Group Conference Room	Course Introduction Tour of Capitol w/ Matt at 12:30 pm
Monday, May 16	3:00 pm – 6:00 pm	TBA	The Legislative Process
Monday, May 23	9:00 am – 12:30 pm	Governmental Policy Group Conference Room	The Budget Process
Monday, May 30 Friday, June 3	9:00 am – 12:30 pm	Governmental Policy Group Conference Room Meet at Einstein’s Bagels, Time TBA	The Executive Branch Field Trip TBA
Monday, June 6	9:00 am – 12:30 pm	Governmental Policy Group Conference Room	Interest Groups and the Media
Tuesday, June 14	8:45 am – 12:00 pm	Ohio Supreme Court	The Judicial Branch

TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE*

* Other readings will be added as the semester progresses.

Week 1: Preparatory Assignments (Monday, May 9, 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 2: [The Legislative Branch](#)
- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 4: [Organizing the Assembly](#)

Week 2: The Legislative Process (Monday May 16, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm)

- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 5: [Enacting Legislation](#)
- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 6: [Tools for Understanding a Bill](#)
- The Columbus Dispatch, "[Lawmaking 101](#) (Links to an external site.)"
- Jim Siegel, "[State's 3.5% cap on budget growth could become a factor](#) (Links to an external site.)" Columbus Dispatch, April 4, 2015.

Week 3: The Budget Process (Monday, May 23, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm)

- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 8: [The Ohio Budget Process](#)
- Baker, Chapter 22: Measuring State Legislative Professionalism
- Baker, Chapter 31: Budget Balancing Tactics

Week 4: The Executive Branch (Monday May 30, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm)

- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 7: [Legislative Oversight](#)
- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 11: [The Executive Branch](#)
- Baker, Chapter 19: Chief Executive Success in the Legislative Arena
- Office of Health Transformation
 - Browse the office's [Current Initiatives](#) (Links to an external site.).
 - Review the office's [Efforts to Modernize Medicaid](#). (Links to an external site.)

Recommended Readings:

- [Ohio will Expand Medicaid after months long battle between Governor and Legislature](#) (Links to an external site.). Washington Post. October 21, 2013.
- [Record Budget plan passes House](#) (Links to an external site.), Cleveland.com April 22, 2015.
- [Kasich to critics of Medicaid Expansion: Do you think it bothers me? It doesn't.](#) (Links to an external site.) Atlanta Journal Constitution, May 26, 2015.
- [Four Signs John Kasich will run for president.](#) (Links to an external site.) Cincinnati Enquirer. May 13, 2015.

Week 5: Interest Groups and the Media (Monday, June 6, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm)

- Baker, Chapter 17: Interest Groups and Journalists in the States
- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 10: [Legislators and the Media](#)
- Baker, Chapter 8: Civic Culture and Government Performance in the American States
- The Ohio Channel: [Press Conference](#): Watch one of the press conferences archived here to get a sense of how a press conference unfolds. Consider how the event is staged in order to frame the issue and get desired media coverage.

Recommended Readings:

Laura Bischoff - Dayton Daily News

- [DDN Reporter Honored as Living Legend](#)
- [Dayton Daily News Ohio Politics Blog](#)
- [Charter Schools Padded Attended Records](#)

Andy Chow - NPR Reporter

- [Andy Chow's Twitter Feed](#)
- [Andy Chow's reporting on the Ohio Education System](#)

Chrissie Thompson - Cincinnati Enquirer

- [Recent stories by Chrissie Thompson](#)
- [Chrissie Thompson's Twitter Feed](#)

Week 6: The Judicial Branch (Tuesday, June 14, 8:45 am – 12:00 pm)

Special Tuesday class. We will attend the Oral Arguments in the Ohio Supreme Court, meet there at 8:45 am. No backpacks!

- Ohio Guidebook for Legislators, Chapter 12: [The Judicial Branch](#)
- Baker, Chapter 4: State Constitutional Interpretation
- Baker, Chapter 5: State Bills of Rights: Dead or Alive?
- Read the preview of one of the Supreme Court cases that you plan on attending. You can find the previews for the cases [here](#) (the court will load them as we get closer).