COURSE OUTLINE

POL 102  State and Local Government  3
Course Number  Course Title  Credits

Hours: 3 lecture  Co- or Pre-requisite N/A

Spring 2009
Implementation
sem/year

Catalog description:
An analysis of the structure and processes of state and local units of government as well as the political activities of interest groups, parties, and candidates. Current political events and trends in modern politics examined. Students gain a better awareness of the nature, strengths, and weaknesses of government.

Is course New, Revised, or Modified? Revised

Required texts/other materials:
See Division List

Revision date: 1/30/2013
Course coordinator: Guy DeRosa; Derosag@mccc.edu; ext. 3855

Information resources:
Library electronic databases
Guest speakers
Current films
Newspapers

Other learning resources:
Study Guides
Tutoring available at Learning Center
Course Competencies/Goals:

The student will be able to:

- Understand and analyze the nature and effect of social and economic forces upon state constitutions and local government charters
- Specify and describe the various methods of political participation in the American political system including the influence of interest groups
- Explain the structure, process and interrelationship of the three branches of state governments
- List and summarize the structure and powers of the units of local government and the roles played by their office holders
- Describe and analyze the implementation of services provided by state and local governments and the concomitant role of the Federal government

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.
Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.
Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.
Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.
Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.
Goal C. Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.
Goal D. Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.
Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.
Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

Units of study in detail.

Unit I  Bases of State and Local Government (Constitutions and Charters)

Learning Objectives

The student will be able to...

- Understand the importance of Constitutionally limited government (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,G)
- Compare state constitutions across the nation (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,G)
- Describe the cultural influences and diversity among states and their effects upon political behavior (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,G)
Unit II  Intergovernmental Relations

**Learning Objectives**

The student will be able to...

- Analyze the relationship of national government and states (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Explain and give examples of the advantages and disadvantages of American federalism (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Examine the relationship of state and local governments to one another (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)

Unit III  State and Local Politics and Political Behavior

**Learning Objectives**

The student will be able to...

- Analyze voting trends in state and local governmental units (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Explain the role of public opinion and the media in state and local government (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Describe and evaluate the role and tactics of interest groups (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Describe and evaluate the role and tactics of political parties (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)

Unit IV  Structure and Functioning of State and Local Government

**Learning Objectives**

The student will be able to...

- Describe the legislative process in New Jersey and selected other states (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Discuss the strength and structure of the executive branch of various states (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Analyze the structure and behavior of state judicial systems (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)
- Describe the major forms of community governmental systems in NJ and selected other states (Gen Ed Goals 1,5,6,7,8,9; Core Skills A,B,C,D,F,G)

**Evaluation of student learning:**

There will be three hour-long examinations. The examinations will consist of essay and objective-type questions. Students will also be graded on class participation and a research paper. The proportional weight given to the component parts of each student's grade is as follows:

- Three Examinations to be announced: 60%
- Research paper: 25%
- Class participation: 15%

Term Project- Students will research the structure, formal and informal, of their communities as well as the issues and problems facing their community. Policies to deal with these will be included.
**Academic Integrity Statement:**

Mercer County Community College is committed to academic integrity – the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception.

Students should never:

- Knowingly represent the work of others as their own
- Knowingly represent previously completed academic work as current
- Fabricate data to support academic work
- Use or obtain unauthorized assistance in the execution of any academic work
- Give fraudulent assistance to other students
- Unethically use technological means to gain academic advantages

Violators of the above actions will be penalized. For a single violation the faculty member will determine the course of action. This may include, assigning a lower grade on the assignment, lowering the course grade, failing the student, or another penalty that is appropriate to the violation. The student will be reported to the Academic Integrity Committee, who may impose other penalties for a second (or later) violation. The student has right to a hearing and also to appeal any decisions. These rights are outlined in the student handbook.
Course Competencies/Goals:

The student will be able to:
1. read primary and secondary historical sources critically, with an understanding of their validity, perspective bias, audience, and context.
2. analyze and interpret primary sources and use them as evidence to support historical arguments.
3. identify and describe the significance of major figures, ideas, and events of western civilization.
4. describe and analyze the context of major movements, trends, and developments of western civilization.

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals

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Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.
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Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.
Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

Units of study in detail.

Unit IV: The Renaissance

The student will be able to
• Discuss the characteristics that distinguish the Renaissance from the Middle Ages. (Course Competencies 2 & 4; Gen Ed Goal 7)
• Identify the ways in which the political and social climate of the Italian city-states helped create Renaissance culture. (Course Competencies 3 & 4; Gen Ed Goal 7)
• Describe “humanism” and show its effect on philosophy, education, attitudes toward politics, and the writing of history. (Course Competencies 3 & 4; Gen Ed Goals 6 & 7)
• Evaluate the impact of classical models on Renaissance art, and what was “new” about Renaissance art. (Course Competencies 2, 3 & 4; Gen Ed Goals 6 & 7)
• Compare and contrast the development of Renaissance culture, especially humanism, in Italy and in the rest of Europe. (Course Competencies 3 & 4; Gen Ed Goals 6 & 7)
• Discuss how the monarchies of Western Europe gathered the strength to become more assertive and effective (“New Monarchies”; “Renaissance states”). (Course Competencies 3 & 4; Gen Ed Goal 7)
• Assess a selection of literary, historical and artistic primary sources from the Renaissance, including, but not limited to, Machiavelli’s The Prince. (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3 & 4; Gen Ed Goals 6 & 7; Core Skill B.)