



**POLITICAL SCIENCE 200: STATE & LOCAL POLITICS
SUMMER 2020 ONLINE**

DR. LAURA VAN ASSENDELFT
Carpenter Academic Hall 314

(OFFICE) 540-887-7350
LVANASSE@MARYBALDWIN.EDU

This course fulfills the Common Curriculum Requirements for College Learning Outcome One (COL1) for Social Sciences (S).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers a comparative analysis of the political institutions, processes, and public policies of the fifty states and their more than 87,000 local governments – with special emphasis on Virginia government and politics. As these are the units of government that have the greatest impact on our daily lives, it is essential to understand how they function and how to participate in them. How do these "laboratories of democracy" make policy and what happens when they conflict with federal government rules and regulations? Which level of government should control issues like climate change, immigration, or healthcare? This class explores the changing nature of federalism as a framework for understanding both conflicts and cooperation in the current political climate.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Ann O'M. Bowman, 2017. State and Local Government, 10th Edition. Cengage Learning [ISBN 130538847X available in print, eBook, or for rent]

Peaslee, Lilokanio and Nicholas J. Swartz. 2014. Virginia Government: Institutions and Policy. CQ Press [ISBN 1452205892].

Current Events in Virginia State and Local News. vaneews@vpap.org

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will acquire knowledge and develop critical thinking, research, and writing skills through analysis of:

1. processes and institutions of state and local government
2. political leadership and participation at the state and local levels
3. the policymaking process and the public policies that affect states and localities
4. Virginia state and local politics

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EVALUATION:

Assessment	Percentage of Final Grade	Late Policy
Quizzes	15%	Complete quiz before next module
Local Policy Analysis	15%	Due no later than last day of class
State Public Policy Analysis	20%	One letter grade penalty each class day late
Midterm Exam	25%	Rescheduled exams at discretion of professor
Final Exam	25%	Final Exams must be completed no later than 8/14

Canvas: This course is part of a pilot study to test a new online learning management system, Canvas (instead of Blackboard). Please be in the habit of checking Canvas announcements and your MBU email consistently. Please be patient as we learn how to use all the resources and features of this new system.

Smart Board Notes: Class notes for each module will be posted on Canvas. I am updating these notes module by module as the course progresses and posting them as soon as they are ready.

Quizzes: Each Module (11 total) will include an online quiz that covers the readings and smartboard notes for each Module. These quizzes are posted on Canvas and assess comprehension of core concepts. They are open book/notes and should be completed at the end of each module, before moving on to the next module.

Local Policy Analysis: This 5 page report may be turned in at any time this semester when you complete the assignment. The last day to turn this in is the last day of class, Friday 8/14.

Step 1. Students are required to attend and/or review at least three local governmental, or political meetings/events this semester in order to witness local policymaking in action. How does this work for an online student? If you are able to attend a meeting in person, take advantage of this. If your work schedule or proximity to government office prohibits this option, then try to watch the recorded livestream of the meeting online if available, and/or review the minutes and/or agendas posted online. You can also follow up with any government official with questions (i.e., I was unable to attend the recent City Council Meeting, however, I was wondering if you could explain...)

This requirement can include, but is not limited to:

- City Council meetings / County Board of Supervisors
- City Council work sessions
- School Board meetings (city or county)
- local Democratic or Republican Party meetings
- local policy forums, lectures, special events

Step 2. Students will submit a 5 page report including: 1) 1-2 pages of observation of the meetings/events attended (This is an assessment of the players, process, and context --what appear to be the informal norms of behavior? How deliberative is the process? How transparent is the process? Is the public engaged? Or, if you are only reviewing minutes/agendas online – what is included on the list? Is enough background information provided online for the public to understand the issues?), and 2) 3-4 pages policy analysis (description of the local policy issue, background information relevant to the locality, comparisons to other localities or states on this issue, comparison of policy solutions and their pros/cons, analysis of policy decision – or why it has or has not been decided.) This report requires researching background information on the local policy issue beyond just observations at the government meeting or event. Students are encouraged to ask local officials questions and/or follow up with an email for more information about the local policy issue they are writing on.

* If you are local to Staunton, I will be attending most, if not all of the Staunton City Council meetings, so join me! Students are highly encouraged to attend additional meetings throughout the semester and to attend in groups. You will be recognized by the Mayor and the more you attend, the more familiar you will become with process and issues.

VA State Public Policy Analysis: Each student will pick a state policy topic in early January to track during throughout the Spring Semester. Students will look for their issue in the Governor’s 2020 State of the Commonwealth Address and track the progress of bills introduced in the 2020 General Assembly legislative session. Students will write a research paper (8-10 pages) that includes an analysis of how states generally define the policy area, how the issue is being debated in VA, and what specific legislation was introduced in the 2020 session—tracking the success or failure of the policy solutions and explaining/analyzing the outcome. Students should start their research by reading the relevant policy chapter in the Peaslee book and the Bowman textbook (assigned under Module 11) but include additional resources.

Exams: The midterm and final exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Exams are closed book with a time limit. Exam reviews will be posted on Canvas.

Course Schedule: Please stay in touch with me if you fall behind temporarily or need extra assistance on any topic. Communication is key!

Honor Code: The policy of Mary Baldwin University concerning cheating and plagiarism will be strictly followed in this course.

Course Schedule

Week	Starts	Agenda/Topic	Assignment
1	5/26	Introduction to State & Local Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laboratories of Democracy VA Governor Ralph Northam's Agenda 2020 State of the Commonwealth Address Analysis Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skim Bowman Chapter 1, "State and Local Governments: New Directions" Peaslee Chapter 1, "An Introduction to Government and Policymaking in the Commonwealth" Intro Quiz
2	6/1	Module 1: State Legislatures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen v. Professional v. Hybrid Legislatures VA 2020 General Assembly Legislative Session Year of the Woman in VA legislative elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowman Chapter 6, "State Legislatures: The People's Representatives" Peaslee Chapter 5, "The Virginia General Assembly: Lawmaking in the Nation's First Legislature" Module 1 Quiz
3	6/8	Module 2: Governors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divided v. Unified Government Control Executive-Legislative Balance of Power VA's 2020 Trifecta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowman Chapter 7, "Governors: Power, Politics, and Executive Leadership" Peaslee Chapter 6, "Steering the Ship of the State: Executive Power in Virginia" Module 2 Quiz
4	6/15	Module 3: State Judiciary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appointments vs. elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowman Chapter 9, "The Judiciary: Independence v. Accountability" Peaslee Chapter 7, "Law and Order in Virginia: The State Court System" Module 3 Quiz
5	6/22	Module 4: Federalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA, Climate Change, and the Trump Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowman Chapter 2, "Federalism and the States: Sorting Out Roles and Responsibilities" Module 4 Quiz
		Module 5: State Constitutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA and the ERA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowman Chapter 3, "State Constitutions: The Fundamental Rules of State Government" Peaslee Chapter 2, "A Framework for Governing: Exploring the Virginia State Constitution" Module 5 Quiz
6	6/29	Module 6: Citizen Participation & Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative, Referendum, and Recall VA and Women's Suffrage Felon Voting in VA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowman Chapter 4, "Citizen Participation and Elections: Engaging the Public in Government" Peaslee Chapter 3, "From Blue to Red and Back Again: Voting and Political Participation in Virginia" Module 6 Quiz
		Module 7: Political Parties & Interest Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Byrd Legacy in VA Changing VA Demographics in the Urban Crescent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowman Chapter 5, "Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaigns: Influencing Public Policy" Peaslee Chapter 4, "Organized Interests: Political Parties and Group Politics in the State Capital"

			o Module 7 Quiz
POLS 200 Midterm Exam			
7	7/6	Module 8: Budgeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA's budget process & priorities • Staunton Vision for 2030 & Three Year Priorities • Staunton's State of the City Addresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bowman Chapter 8, "Public Administration: Budgeting and Service Delivery" o Peaslee Chapter 9, "Paying the Bill: Budgeting and Finance in Virginia" o Module 8 Quiz
8	7/13	Module 9: Local Government – Model City Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staunton's City Manager Form of Government • Strong v. Weak Mayors • Councils v. Commissions • Representation vs. Efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bowman Chapter 10, "Local Government: Types and Functions" o Bowman Chapter 11, "Local Leadership and Governance: Continuity and Change" o Peaslee Chapter 10, "Municipalities and Metropolitanism: Local and Regional Governance in Virginia" o Module 9 Quiz
9	7/20	Module 10: State & Local Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia's Dillon's Rule • Home Rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bowman Chapter 12, "State-Local Relations: Fifty Different Systems" o Peaslee Chapter 8, "Administering Government: Bureaucratic Power and Politics in VA" o Module 10 Quiz
10-12	7/27	Module 11: Policymaking in the States – Model National Council of State Legislatures Policy Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxing and Spending • Economic Development • Education Policy • Criminal Justice • Social Welfare & Healthcare Policy • Environmental Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o VA Policy Research Papers Due 8/3 o Peaslee Chapter 11, "Inside the Laboratory: Public Policymaking in Virginia" o Bowman Chapter 13, "Taxing and Spending: Where the Money Comes from and Where it Goes" o Bowman Chapter 14, "Economic Development: Competing for Growth" o Bowman Chapter 15, "Education Policy: Reading, Writing, and Reform" o Bowman Chapter 16, "Criminal Justice: Cops and Corrections" o Bowman Chapter 17, "Social Welfare and Health Care Policy: Addressing Poverty and Sickness" o Bowman Chapter 18, "Environmental Policy: Regulation and Innovation" o Module 11 Quiz
POLS 200 Final Exam			