

University of Montana
Public Administration 526: Issues in State and Local Government
Online
Three (3) Credit Hours
Fall 2018 (August 27 – December 14)

Instructor: Christina Barsky

Classroom: Online

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E-mail is the most reliable way to reach me. In general, I reply to messages within 48 hours (or two **business days**) of receipt. Please include **PUAD 526** in the subject line of your message.

Telephone: 406/426.1726

Call or text, Monday-Friday between 8am and 5pm.

Office Hours: Virtually, by appointment

I am happy to meet via telephone, Zoom, or Skype

Course Description

This course is designed to offer students an overview of how decisions are made at the sub-national level (that is, state and local) in the United States. In doing so, students will develop an understanding of both the theory and practice of government administration outside the federal bureaucracy. As a result of the unique American democratic experiment (that is Federalism), policies, problems, and solutions are frequently addressed throughout the nation's 50 state governments and more than 89,000 local governments, well beyond the halls of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. This course will utilize both academic and practitioner approaches to examine state and local governments in the United States.

Expectations for Student Learning for this Course & the University of Montana's MPA Program

1. Understand how public policy is made at the state and local level
2. Explore the dependencies and interdependencies of varying government entities
3. Apply knowledge to explain current developments facing state and local governments
4. Demonstrate graduate-level writing, critical thinking, research, analytical, and public speaking skills

Course Readings

Books required for the course:

- Smith, K. B. & Greenblat, A. (2018). *Governing states and localities*, 6th Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moodle required readings (noted with an asterisk in the course schedule)
- Watch and listen to weekly video presentations, periodic guest presentations, and other digital content

For students interested in lowering their costs, I encourage you to consider using the [University's inter-library loan \(ILL\) program](#). You can request books via the Mansfield Library inter-library loan for the semester and renew as necessary throughout the semester. Contact the [Mansfield Library](#) for assistance.

Important Course Information

This course is fifteen (15) weeks and online, meaning that we do not meet in person. Students will need to access the course Moodle site daily and familiarize themselves with the course materials that are organized by week. Understanding the Moodle course site is essential for successfully completing this class. Participate in [Moodle 101 for students](#) if you are unfamiliar with the platform. If you have questions, please ask the professor. The nature of this class is highly interactive. I value your participation as we talk about

state and local government. This course is also designed to be reflective – each of us has experience and insight into research from our own work and lives that is of value to our discussions.

Guest Speakers

This class contains two guest speakers on the following dates: Sept. 25 from 5-6:15pm; Oct. 24 from 12-1:15pm, Montana time. These are also listed on our course schedule below. We will meet with our guest speakers virtually, using Zoom via our Moodle page. I ask that you please mark your calendar for these dates/times. I know that each of you has a busy life and commitments beyond this course; however, it is advantageous for both your learning and professional development to attend these speakers' presentations. More information will be forthcoming. To deepen your interaction with our guest speakers, you will be asked to submit 1-2 questions (via Moodle) before the presentation. Please contact your instructor ASAP if you have known conflicts and for an alternative assignment.

Course Expectations

Classroom Preparation and Participation:

This course is designed to provide graduate students the foundations for understanding how sub-national governments approach policies, problems, and solutions. This can only be accomplished by engaging the material inside and outside of class. During the weeks that we have discussion forms, this means that participation is required. Everyone – students and the instructor – can and should learn from one another. Learning is a process that is enhanced by dialogue. Additionally, engaging the material requires that students have rigorously read the assignments so that they are prepared to thoughtfully and productively contribute to the class. Moreover, dedication to the coursework allows for a more holistic engagement with our topic, and it is anticipated that students and the instructor will find and share linkages between the course material and current, timely examples (e.g., podcasts, popular media, news stories) from their daily lives.

Using Moodle:

Since this is an online course, each student is required to visit our Moodle site at least once per day. [Click here](#) for Moodle access.

Writing Center:

The University of Montana Writing and Public Speaking Center offers students in all disciplines, *including graduate students*, free support as they write or prepare presentations for any course. The writing center is a great resource to review written assignments and readily available to best meet the needs for online and in-person students. Use [this link](#) to set up an appointment in advance for staff to review your work before assignments are due.

Weekly Lectures:

Each week, I have put together a brief video lecture that provides an overview of the materials for the week and/or highlights of a specific skill, idea, or practice. These lectures are organized by week and are embedded in our Moodle site. These lectures **are not** a replacement for the weekly readings. *If lectures are not already posted, they will be published no later than Monday of each week.*

MPA Portfolio:

Students enrolled as MPA students are required to complete a [portfolio](#) in their final semester of the program. The portfolio asks students to provide three (3) examples of research and one (1) example of working with a colleague/teammate from throughout their coursework. Additionally, students should include the grade received for these assignments. Since this course is online, be sure to take a screenshot using your computer's snipping tool if you plan to utilize any work in your portfolio. In addition, if you have yet to work with a partner in an MPA course, this class presents an excellent option to do so. If you have questions, contact the professor.

Course Grading:

As your professor, I strive to return your assignments quickly, with actionable and useful feedback. This being said, please allow for up to seven (7) full **business days** after the due date to receive a grade. All grades will be recorded via Moodle's gradebook. Students can locate the gradebook by clicking on the "tools" icon at the top of the screen. Students are invited to submit drafts of assignments via email to the professor before turning in any assignments this semester – ideally, students should utilize the UM Writing Center before doing so. Drafts must be sent at least 72 hours in advance of the due date. Since this is a graduate level course, I will only review one draft per assignment.

Help with Technology:

Please make sure that your Internet browser settings meet the requirements to be Moodle compatible. Call UM Online by phone, 406/243.4999 or email umonline-help@umontana.edu if technological problems arise. There is no on-call assistance during nights or weekends. For a total Moodle system failure, students will be sent an email by the University of Montana. Your professor cannot provide IT support, so please contact the appropriate University staff if an issue arises.

Guidelines for all Written Work:

- Students are expected to practice graduate-level writing and will be evaluated on content, organization, writing/grammar, and following assignment instructions
- Students are required to utilize proper and appropriate citations (APA is preferred, but any style guide is acceptable since public administration is multi-disciplinary)
- All assignments must be turned in electronically on Moodle in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx files)

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Students are evaluated according to their performance in the following areas:

Expert Panels and Discussions (10 points each x 6 weeks = 60 points possible)

Rather than a typical online discussion, this course will utilize expert panel simulations to dive into substantive topics related to the course material. Please note, Week 1 and Week 2 will be introductory discussions for students to familiarize themselves with the course, classmates, and foundations of the study of state and local government. While each of these weeks are worth just 1 point each **they are required**.

This course will have **five** total expert panel weeks.

Students are expected to follow the weekly reading schedule (below). Readings, lectures, and supplementary material should be used for discussions. In order to ensure a productive learning experience, it is essential that students keep up with, and complete, the assigned readings and exercises according to the weekly schedule. While online learning provides flexibility, students are expected to fulfill the same kinds of deadlines and responsibilities of synchronous classes.

Please read carefully:

Please follow the course schedule below. For **five (5)** weeks during the semester, students are required to engage in classroom expert panels about a given topic for the week from Tuesday through Saturday (the discussion forums close at 5pm Mountain Time on Saturdays). The discussions are organized via **expert panelist** and **concerned citizen**.

The professor will provide (via Google Docs) students the opportunity to sign up for an expert panel topic and role of their interest during Week 2. It is the EPs responsibility to engage in the discussion as if they were their panelist. The idea is to roleplay.

Expert Panelist (EP): For **five (5)** weeks of the semester, we will have assigned student EPs. Each student will serve as an EP once. As an EP, you will “add a new topic” and pose your question to the class based upon the panel topic and your role for the week by 11pm on Monday. It is the student’s responsibility to post on time and failure to post your question by 11pm on Monday will result in zero points and forfeiture of your obligation to serve as a discussion leader for the semester. *Please plan accordingly.*

Keep in mind, each week we have a number of discussion EPs. You need to correspond via email (available in the Google Doc) before posting your question with other leaders so there is no overlap. As the EP, you **only** manage and engage in your own topic/thread for the week. *You are not required or expected to engage in other discussion threads.* You keep the conversation going on your thread by asking additional questions.

Concerned Citizen (CC): If you are not an EP, then your role is that of a CC. As a CC, you are responsible for engaging with EP threads for the week between Tuesday and Saturday. On any given week there will be five (5) EPs and CCs must respond to at least three EP questions. The discussions must be ongoing (all of your posts **cannot** occur on one day, nor can you simply respond on Saturday night). The goal is for you, as a respondent, to post at 5-6 times, at a minimum, across the week. As your professor, I am looking for **quality** in your posts – that is engagement with the material and your classmates – as opposed to quantity of posts.

Week 1 Discussion: *Required*, worth 1 point. The purpose of the first week discussion is for students to become familiar (if they are not already) with the Moodle discussion format. As well, Week 1 provides an opportunity for students to introduce themselves and learn more about the course. Be sure you read the syllabus completely *before* the start of class on August 27.

Week 2 Discussion: *Required*, worth 1 point. This week, the professor will serve as the discussion leader.

Week 15 Discussion: *Required*, worth 10 points. This week, the final week of class, we will conclude the semester by holding a professor-led discussion.

Evaluative Criteria for Expert Panels

Expert Panelist:

A Range: Posts one short (1-2 sentence) question by 11pm Monday night and actively engages with classmates about the topic. Student effectively considers the position of the role they are playing and utilizes adequate supporting evidence. EPs have reached out to one another to ensure questions on the panel are diverse. Engages with CCs on their thread in a professional and respectful manner throughout the week. Position brief is comprehensive and submitted by 11pm Monday night.

B – C Range: Posts one question by 11pm Monday night and periodically engages with CCs in discussion. Student effectively considers the position of the role they are playing. Position brief is comprehensive and submitted by 11pm Monday night.

D – Below: Posts one question by 11pm Monday night and does not engage with CCs on their thread. Position brief is late and/or inadequately covers issue. It is not evident that the student has considered the position of the role they are playing.

Concerned Citizen:

A Range: Actively engages in at least four EP threads Tuesday through Saturday. Responses are clear, use correct grammar and spelling, and provide evidence to support any claims made. Participation is thoughtful and sticks to issues at hand.

B – C Range: Actively responds to at least three EP threads and is somewhat engaged throughout the week. Responses may have a few grammatical or spelling errors and may lack adequate support for claims made. Some clarification may be necessary; however, in general the student attempts to articulate relevant points concisely. Posts occur later in the week and student is not very active in discussions overall.

D - Below: Periodically responds to EP threads. Posts are unclear and do not follow grammar, spelling, and citation rules. Posts are made late in the week, which does not provide enough time for discussion with classmates. Responses suggest the student does not understand the topic and lack evidence to support claims made.

Expert Panel Position Brief (30 points possible) (Due Monday at 11pm Week of EP):

The week that a student serves as an EP, they are responsible for turning in a no-more-than 2-page (single-spaced) position brief Monday by 11pm. The purpose of this assignment is to assist in preparedness as your role as an EP. It links to your specific topic for the week.

Your position brief should be a high-level analysis of information that helps your audience understand, and make decisions, about government policy. As such, using evidence, being concise, and effectively organizing information are essential.

When writing your position brief, it is important to keep a few things in mind:

- Audience: consider your audience an educated, but not expert, individual.
- Tone and Terminology: avoid the acronym jungle. If you find yourself using jargon, think about ways to simplify or use more direct language. Remember your reader is not a specialist.
- Purpose: position briefs are unique because they communicate the practical implications of decisions made on a specific issue. Your brief should synthesize information and relate evidence to current topics in political debate. Position briefs emphasize a specific path for action.

Your position brief should include:

- Title: something that quickly communicates the contents in a memorable way
- Executive Summary: an overview of the problem and the proposed action
- Context or Scope: communicate the importance of the problem and *why* the proposed action is necessary
- Recommendations: detailed explanation of the concrete steps to be taken
- Your brief should include information about your role (e.g., if you are representing an organization, how the position fits the organizational mission; if you are representing an agency, an explanation of why that agency has an interest in the decision)
- Your brief must include consulted or recommended sources (reliable, appropriate sources that have been used to guide your background, discussion, and recommendations)
 - In-text citations are necessary

As well, your brief can include appendices (further support).

A short (3 page) overview of policy/position briefs by Young and Quinn is [available here](#).

State and Local Issues Project (“S&L” in Course Schedule) (110 points)

The purpose of these assignments is to engage in a semester-long project applying the skills you are learning in this class. You have the opportunity to work with a partner (sign up during Week 3) or independently on these assignments. Should you choose to work with a partner, you will work with the same person to complete both Assignment I and Assignment II.

Throughout this term we will be discussing how decisions are made at the sub-national level. As concerns over the security of the 2016 general election have emerged, it has become clear that states and localities may lack the necessary foresight or infrastructure to meet the demands of governing in the 21st century. Moreover, changing demographics suggest new challenges for government administration at all levels.

For this project, you will identify, explore, and offer solutions to a contemporary issue undertaken by or facing governments at the state, local, or tribal level. I encourage you to spend some time reflecting on the issues that are important to you and reading publications in the field (linked on Moodle) to inform your thinking.

Assignment I: Local Analysis (45 points) (Due Oct. 14, 5pm)

Students are required to attend one city council meeting, county commissioners meeting, or local committee public meeting (e.g., waterboard, livestock) by October 1st. You need only attend one meeting of a local government body in your community. Check your city and/or county website for when public meetings take place. Please pick up or photograph a copy of the meeting agenda to turn in digitally with your paper.

After attending a local government meeting, write a 4-5-page (double-spaced) report that:

- Identifies the location, pertinent details, and type of local government (i.e., city, county) and the type of management (i.e., strong mayor, council-manager)
- Discusses what topics, issues, and/or problems were discussed
 - In your analysis, consider if any of these issues were contentious or controversial, why they were controversial, how contentious issues were debated or presented, and if there were points not raised that could have or should have been
- Considers how different members of the committee responded and acted
 - Explore why these individuals may have acted in the way they did
- Includes appropriate in-text citations and reference page
 - Use our readings as well as other scholarly and reputable sources (i.e., *Governing*) to support your assertions

Should you choose to work with a partner: you can either 1) attend a local meeting together, or 2) attend two separate meetings and compare/contrast your findings.

Assignment II: State Analysis (65 points) (Draft Due Nov. 11, 5pm; Final Due Dec. 9, 5pm)

In this assignment you will explore innovation at the state- or tribal-level. For this assignment, you are to choose a state or tribe (or a state- or tribal-level actor; e.g., the State of Nevada and/or the Nevada Attorney General; the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation and/or the Director of the Tribal Environmental Division). Next, you must identify a topic that you find interesting and explore what and how your state/tribe/actor is addressing the topic in an innovative way. Consider also how this innovation might be shared across states or nations and if this innovation could be helpful in addressing any of the problems you saw at the local meeting you attended.

After choosing your state/tribe/actor and innovation, write a 5-7-page (double-spaced) analysis that:

- Identifies the location, pertinent details, type of government/actor you are investigating
- Offers explanation of the role and responsibilities of the actor and/or information about the constituents the state/tribe/actor serves
- Explores how the state/tribe/actor is innovative in approaching a problem or issue
 - Consider the political, economic, and societal context
 - Why is the approach you are investigating “innovative”?
 - Are there reasons for the innovation?

- Considers how the innovation you are investigating might be used to address issues that emerged in the local meeting you attended, and/or issues in other areas of the state/tribe, by other actors, or in other regions
- Offers insight into how the innovation is working
 - What are its intended benefits?
 - Are there consequences?
 - How will the innovation be evaluated?
- Includes appropriate in-text citations and reference page (not counted in page total above)

Total Points for the Course:

Expert Panels & Discussion	60 points
Position Brief	30 points
State & Local Issues Project	110 points
Total	200 points possible (if no adjustments to syllabus)

Grading Scale:

The University of Montana uses a plus/minus grading system and a credit/no credit system (the CR/NCR replaces the pass/fail system used in the past). *General education courses must be taken using the traditional letter grade to count toward one's general education requirements.* To accommodate the plus/minus system, the grading scale shown below will be used:

Grade	Point Scale	Point range	GPA
A	93-100	8	4.00
A-	90-92	3 points	3.67
B+	97-89	3 points	3.33
B	83-86	4 points	3.00
B-	80-82	3 points	2.67
C+	77-79	3 points	2.33
C	73-76	4 points	2.00
C-	70-72	3 points	1.67
D+	67-69	3 points	1.33
D	63-66	4 points	1.00
D-	60-62	3 points	0.67
F	59 or lower	N/A	0

Course Schedule

You must stay up with the course readings and assignments in order to maximize your online classroom experience. Although this is a general outline of readings, the schedule is subject to change as the semester proceeds. Students will be notified of any changes or modifications to the course schedule.

The readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on Moodle, required, and organized by week. I encourage you to download readings at the beginning of the semester.

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments
<u>Week 1</u> (Aug. 27 – Sept. 2)	Course Overview Introductions The Concept of Political Culture	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 1; Elazar* <u>Due:</u> - Participate in introduction discussion
<u>Week 2</u> (Sept. 3 – Sept. 9) <i>Labor Day Sept. 3</i>	Federalism	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 2; Kettl* <u>Due:</u> - Discussion - Sign up for Expert Panel Discussion Topics/Roles
<u>Week 3</u> (Sept. 10 – Sept. 16)	The Ground Rules: Constitutions	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 3; Montana Constitution* <u>Due:</u> - Sign up for S&L Topic (& partner, if applicable)
<u>Week 4</u> (Sept. 17 – Sept. 23)	Who Decides? Political Participation	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 5 <u>Due:</u> - Expert Panel I - EP posts by 9/17, 11pm - CC engage throughout
<u>Week 5</u> (Sept. 24 – Sept. 30) Sept. 25, 5-6:15pm	Death of the Median Voter: Parties and Interest Groups Special Guest Speaker Caitlin Copple Masingill	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 6; Greenblatt* <u>Due:</u> - Questions for Caitlin Copple Masingill, Sept. 23, 5pm
<u>Week 6</u> (Oct. 1 – Oct. 7)	Serving or Steering? Legislatures	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 7; Beitsch*; Weiss* <u>Due:</u> - Expert Panel II - EP posts by 10/1, 11pm - CC engage throughout - Identify your state legislators - Attend local meeting by Oct. 1
<u>Week 7</u> (Oct. 8 – Oct. 14)	State Celebrities: Governors and Executives	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 8; Wogan* <u>Due:</u> - Assignment I S&L Due Oct. 14, 5pm
<u>Week 8</u> (Oct. 15 – Oct. 21)	Politicizing Justice: Courts	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 9; Beitsch*; Clark* <u>Due:</u> - Expert Panel III - EP posts by 10/15, 11pm - CC post throughout - Mid-semester feedback for Prof. Barsky (link in Moodle)
<u>Week 9</u> (Oct. 22 – Oct. 28)	New Laboratories of Democracy? The Local Level	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 11; Patton* <u>Due:</u>

Oct. 24, 12-1:15pm	Special Guest Speaker Jennifer Reichelt	- Questions for Jennifer Reichelt, Oct. 22, 5pm
<u>Week 10</u> (Oct. 29 – Nov. 4)	Venmo Me Later: Budgeting and Finance	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 4; Farmer*; Chieppo* <u>Due:</u> - Expert Panel IV - EP posts by 10/29, 11pm - CC engage throughout
<u>Week 11</u> (Nov. 5 – Nov. 11) <i>Election Day Nov. 6 (VOTE!)</i>	That Dirty 11-Letter Word: Bureaucracy	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 10; Quinton* <u>Due:</u> - Draft of Assignment II S&L Due Nov. 11, 5pm
<u>Week 12</u> (Nov. 12 – Nov. 18)	Metropolitics: The Missing Level of Government	<u>Read:</u> S&G Chpt. 12; Khanna* <u>Due:</u> - Search for and post a unique regional map
<u>Week 13</u> (Nov. 19 – Nov. 25) <i>Thanksgiving Nov. 21-23</i>	<i>Break</i>	
<u>Week 14</u> (Nov. 26 – Dec. 2)	Government-to-Government: Indigenous Communities	<u>Read:</u> Lopach, Brown, Hunter, & Clow*; Phelps* <u>Due:</u> - Expert Panel V - EP posts by 11/26, 11pm - CC engage throughout
<u>Week 15</u> (Dec. 3 – Dec. 9)	The Future of State and Local Government	<u>Read:</u> ICMA*; Governing* <u>Due:</u> - Discussion - Professor leads - Students engage throughout - Final Assignment II S&L Due Dec. 9, 5pm

Classroom Policies

Extra Credit: Not available for this course.

Make-up Exams: There is no exam for this course.

Classroom Etiquette: A central tenet of the MPA program is professionalism and the ability to work well with others. It is the expectation that students will maintain a high level of professionalism in their conduct with me (their professor) as well as with their fellow students. This means being respectful during class discussions and in all communications. Should a student fail to act in an appropriate manner, with their peers or the professor, they will be removed from course discussions.

E-Mail Etiquette: E-mail is an effective tool and a good way for you to reach out to me with questions, but it does not replace office hours. If you have involved questions about course materials or your performance, please set up a time to meet with me in person or via virtual office hours.

Incompletes or Withdrawals (“W”) from the Course: Please see the University’s add/drop [policies](#).

Late Assignments: Students are expected to submit all work on the date specified on the course calendar (and within Moodle). Any exceptions must be approved by the professor 72 hours before the date in question. Students must complete all assignments to receive a grade for the course.

A special note: I believe that respect is a mutually earned and offered. I understand that unexpected circumstances can arise in all of our lives that present challenges to accomplishing our tasks. Whatever the case, please reach out to me sooner rather than later should you face hurdles in this course (whatever their genesis) so we can create a plan, together, for your success. My policy is to accept one, no-questions-asked, request for an extension (with no consequence).

University Attendance Policy: Students who are registered for this course but do not attend the first two class meetings (or participate in the first two weeks of online discussions) may be required by the professor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit students on the course waitlist to add classes. Students not allowed to remain in the course must complete a drop form or drop the course via CyberBear to avoid receiving a failing grade. Students who know they will be absent should contact the professor in advance.

Wikipedia: The “Truth by Consensus” is not reliable (and sometimes not valid). Wikipedia should not be cited in any assignment. Rather, you should become comfortable citing scholarly research and peer-reviewed sources as a graduate student at the University of Montana.

Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism): Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. More information can be found in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). All work submitted must be your own. Duplicated work (e.g., work completed for another class) will be considered self-plagiarism. Acts of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid plagiarizing, cite each reference or source (direct quotes, paraphrases, *and* ideas) you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When using the direct quotes, use quotation marks and appropriate citation (e.g., APA) that include the page number and work’s title.

Moodle: This course is supported by Moodle. Please refer to the site regularly for additional readings, supplemental material, announcements, grades, assignment submissions, or updates to the schedule. When submitting assignments on Moodle, students should attach Microsoft Word .doc or .docx files.

Sensitive Course Materials: Advanced degree programs seek to expand and challenge student assumptions, worldviews, and conceptions. Therefore, we engage with a wide range of material that do not necessarily affirm personal or broadly accepted understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the professor.

Disability Assistance: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities and instructors. For more information, visit [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact DSS in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406/243.2243. As your professor, I will work with DSS to provide an appropriate modification.