POL 115 State and Local Government

Course Master Syllabus

Course Information

Catalog Description: This is an introductory course in the theory and practice of state and local government. Special emphasis is placed on the administration of selected New Jersey government agencies, with an overview of contemporary political problems and skills necessary for entering the administrative and paralegal areas of government.

Prerequisite(s): None

Corequisite(s): None

Credits: 3

Hours: 3

Required Text(s):

Supplemental Materials:

Instructor Information

Instructor's Name:

Contact Information:

Office Hours:

Program Goals

- Describe the structure, functions, and processes of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, courts, and corrections.
- Analyze legal principles, constitutional rights, and ethical considerations in criminal justice practices.
- Apply knowledge of criminal law, due process, and legal procedures in the investigation and prosecution of crimes.
- Evaluate criminological theories and their application to crime prevention, policing strategies, and rehabilitation efforts.

- Examine correctional policies, rehabilitation programs, and alternatives to incarceration, considering their impact on individuals and society.
- Assess modern policing strategies, investigative techniques, and community-based approaches to maintaining public safety.
- Utilize research methods and data analysis techniques to examine crime trends, policy effectiveness, and criminal behavior.
- Analyze contemporary issues in criminal justice and propose evidence-based policy recommendations.

Class Core Competencies

The following core competencies are embedded in this curriculum:

- Communicate effectively in both speech and writing
- Use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens
- Understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance
- Understand ethical issues and situations
- Address an information need by locating, evaluating, and effectively using information.

Class Learning Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes	Suggested Means of Assessment
Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of State and local governments, including the role of elected officials in various levels of government, with a special emphasis on New Jersey government	Quizzes, exams, and/or papers
Analyze the impact of unelected individuals/groups (including the media, political party leadership, special interest groups, unions, public employees and grass root organizers) in the formation of local and state decision-making	Quizzes, exams, and/or papers

Student Learning Outcomes	Suggested Means of Assessment
Demonstrate the ability to analyze the NJ State Constitution, state and local laws and regulations and be able to articulate how they impact New Jersey citizens	Class discussions, discussion board posts, short essays, opinion, and/or research papers
Acquire the foundations necessary for the development of informed opinion and participation in the political process	Class discussions, discussion board posts, short essays, opinion, and/or research papers
Demonstrate the ability to effectively analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources	Research paper

Grading System

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	90 to 100 percent
B Plus (B+)	87 to 89.9 percent
B	80 to 86.9 percent
C Plus (C+)	77 to 79.9 percent
C	70 to 76.9 percent
D	60 to 69.9 percent
F	Below 60 percent

College Information

Disability Services
Disability Services Webpage

Statement and Policy on Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Conduct
Academic Conduct Policy (Policy 304) [PDF]

Students are required to perform all the work specified by the instructor and are responsible for the content and integrity of all academic work submitted. A violation of academic integrity will occur if a student: (1) knowingly represents work of others as one's own, (2) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in any academic work, (3) gives fraudulent assistance to another student, or (4) furnishes false information or other misuse of college documents.

Unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is prohibited unless the instructor explicitly permits it in the syllabus or assignments. If tools such as ChatGPT are permitted by an instructor to be used for an assignment, they should be used with caution and with proper citation. In all such cases, you may only use the specific tools identified as acceptable and you must adhere to the College's standards for attribution, validation, and transparency.

In cases of suspected violation of academic integrity, the incident is to be reported to the Office of Academics. A student found guilty of violating the rule of academic integrity by the Vice President of Academics will be considered to have failed in personal obligation to the College; such failure will be subject to disciplinary action by the College. Unless otherwise notified, the instructor will allow students who are pending disciplinary action to attend class.

Tutoring and Testing at the Instructional Support Center (ISC)

- Instructional Support Center (ISC) Webpage

WCCC Library Services

- WCCC Library Website

Citation Styles and Formatting

Work submitted for any Warren County Community College course must conform to the required formatting and citation style that are specified by the instructor. The Library and Instructional Support Center can assist students with formatting and citations for assignments and papers.

WCCC Attendance Expectations

The College expects students to attend and participate in all classes. This involves sharing discussions and lectures in class, as well as interacting with other students. Grades are based on the quality of work students complete in meeting the requirements for a particular course, as stated in the course syllabus and catalog description. Attendance, among other factors, may be an additional criterion for assigning grades. Students should realize that they are responsible for all class meetings and that work missed because of absences may affect their grades. Attendance in online classes is determined by the completion of assignments/ tests. Students who have not completed any assignments or tests will be considered non-attending and receive an NF grade in online classes.

Class Attendance Expectations

Topical Outline

- Introductory issues relating to state and local governments
- American Federalism
- State constitutions
- Political parties and elections
- State legislatures
- State governors
- Judges and justices
- Local governments and policymaking

Grading Methods

Assignment	Points/Percentage

Class Itinerary

Week / Unit	Topic	Readings/Assignments

Week / Unit	Topic	Readings/Assignments