



MERCER
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
POL-102	State and Local Government	3.0
Hours: Lecture/Lab/Other 3/0/0	Co- or Pre-requisite ---	Implementation Semester & Year FA 2022

Catalog description:

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.

General Education Category: | **Course coordinator: Ken Howarth, 6095703809
howarthk@mccc.edu**

Goal 5: Social Science

Required texts & Other materials:

New Jersey Politics and Government: The Suburbs come of Age by Barbara Salmore and Stephen Salmore, 4th edition, Rutgers University Press, 2013

State and Local Government - Sustainability in the 21st Century, by Christopher A. Simon, Brent S. Steel, and Nicholas P. Lovrich, Oxford, 2010, ISBN: 9780199752003

Handouts & Websites as directed; for updated editions/similar text-check bookstore

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Understand and analyze the nature and effect of social and economic forces upon state constitutions and local government charters (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
2. Specify and describe the various methods of political participation in the American political system including the influence of interest groups (ILGs 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
3. Explain the structure, process and interrelationship of the three branches of state governments (ILGs 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
4. List and summarize the structure and powers of the units of local government and the roles played by their office holders (ILGs 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
5. Describe and analyze the implementation of services provided by state and local governments and the concomitant role of the Federal government (ILGs 1,

5, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

Each goal or outcome relates to “political science literacy” with respect to content knowledge and to the “discipline-specific methodologies” of the study of politics with respect to relevant content material. Other learning goals may be specified in particular sections by the instructor with the course coordinator’s approval in addition to but not as a replacement for the above listed goals.

Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):

Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Institutional Learning 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.

Institutional Learning 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.

Institutional Learning Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

Institutional Learning Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective: Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples

Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

Institutional Learning Goal 10. 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.

Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking: Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

Program Learning Outcomes for Liberal Arts (PLO)

1. Concept Knowledge Understand the vocabulary, methods, and major concepts present in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences
2. Communication Articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing
3. Critical Thinking Perform a series of thinking tasks including speculation, analysis, and synthesis (i.e., abstract reasoning)
4. Research Methods Utilize research materials and methodologies

Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:

The general plan for this course is broadly in two parts; the first unit serves as a primer of religious studies; while subsequent units address various contemporary issues and focus on subject particulars and applications of more general religious influences.

Units in Summary

Unit 1 – Bases of State and Local Government (Constitutions and Charters)

Unit 2 – Intergovernmental Relations

Unit 3 – State and Local Politics and Political Behavior

Unit 4 – Structure and Functioning of State and Local Government

Detailed Units:

Unit I Bases of State and Local Government (Constitutions and Charters) (SLO #1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Learning Objectives The student will be able to...

1. Understand the importance of Constitutionally limited government
2. Compare state constitutions across the nation
3. Describe the cultural influences and diversity among states and their effects upon political behavior

Unit II Intergovernmental Relations (SLO #1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Learning Objectives The student will be able to...

1. Analyze the relationship of national government and states
2. Explain and give examples of the advantages and disadvantages of American federalism (
3. Examine the relationship of state and local governments to one another

Unit III State and Local Politics and Political Behavior (SLO #1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Learning Objectives The student will be able to...

1. Analyze voting trends in state and local governmental units
2. Explain the role of public opinion and the media in state and local government
3. Describe and evaluate the role and tactics of interest groups
4. Describe and evaluate the role and tactics of political parties

Unit IV Structure and Functioning of State and Local Government (SLO #1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Learning Objectives The student will be able to...

1. Describe the legislative process in New Jersey and selected other
2. Discuss the strength and structure of the executive branch of various states
3. Analyze the structure and behavior of state judicial systems
4. Describe the major forms of community governmental systems in NJ and selected other states

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 gives 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.