

San José State University
Department of Political Science
POLS/URBP 103: Local Government and Politics Spring 2019
4 Units

Professor: Ken Yeager

Office Location: Clark Hall 406J

Telephone: (408) 924-5587

Email: kenneth.yeager@sjsu.edu (preferred contact)

Office Hours: Tuesday 5pm and by appt.

Class Days/Time: Tuesday 6 pm to 8:45 pm

Classroom: Hugh Gillis Hall 116

CANVAS Website: <http://sjsu.instructure.com>



Course Description

Offers a theoretical and practical study of local politics and government. The structure, role, and functions of city and county governments are examined. Students gain knowledge of the resources and skills required for effective citizenship in their communities.

Look at the area around campus. Look at downtown San Jose. Look at the street where you live. Who lives there? Why are things the way they are? How can they be

improved? Is there a person or group responsible for the problems or for the solutions? Over the semester, we will try to answer these and other questions related to urban politics.

The emphasis of the class will be on how local government works, who the players are, and whose interests are being represented. The purpose of the class is to have students gain a better appreciation of the complexities of political issues at the local level and to understand that someone's gain is often someone's loss. The outcome of political decisions directly affects people's quality of life in urban communities. It is only by understanding our urban environment that we will be able to begin to change it.

We are fortunate to live in one of the most vibrant, diverse, and innovative large cities in America. Examining local politics in San José and the surrounding Bay Area region improves our knowledge about our own communities. They serve as a laboratory to apply theories of politics and policymaking to the decisions governments make more generally. Overall, this course seeks to build students' capacity to understand and think critically about how America's cities, counties, school districts, etc. operate in a complex yet fascinating political environment.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. **CLO1:** Learn and apply social science theories of government and politics to explain the behavior, decisions, and outcomes of real-life local governments
2. **CLO2:** Acquire knowledge and practical skills necessary to be an active participant in local government and political affairs
3. **CLO3:** Learn to think critically about the role and function of local governments in the broader American federalist system
4. **CLO4:** Develop a deeper understanding of the politics, issues, institutions, and governing processes of San Jose and/or other Bay Area cities and counties.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

1. **PLO1. Breadth:** Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
2. **PLO2. Application and Disciplinary Methods:** Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political text. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
3. **PLO4. Communication Skills:** Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in

the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

4. **PLO5. Citizenship:** Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

Mapping POLS/URBP 103 Course Learning Outcomes to Political Science PLOs	Program Learning Outcomes	Assessment
CLO1: Learn and apply social science theories of government and politics to explain the behavior, decisions, and outcomes of real life local governments.	PLO1, 3	Quizzes, exams, term paper
CLO2: Acquire knowledge and practical skills necessary to be an active participant in local government and political affairs.	PLO2, 4, 5	Quizzes, exams, local government in action student observation, city politics simulation
CLO3: Learn to think critically about the role and function of local governments in the broader American federalist system.	PLO2, 3	Quizzes, exams, term paper, city politics simulation
CLO4: Develop a deeper understanding of the politics, issues, institutions, and governing processes of San Jose and/or other Bay Area cities and counties.	PLO5	Quizzes, exams, local government in action student observation, city politics simulation

Local Politics: Governing at the Grassroots. Terry Christensen and Tom Hogen-Esch. 2006. 2nd Ed. ME Sharpe.

Other Readings

San Jose Mercury News

San Francisco Chronicle

San Jose Metro

San Jose Spotlight

- Emily Badger, “Blue Cities Want to Make Their Own Rules. Red States Won’t Let Them.” *New York Times* (2017) (posted on Canvas)
- Jonathan Chait, “Why the Worst Governments in America are Local Governments” *New York Magazine*” (posted on Canvas)
- Terry Christensen, *Movers and Shakers: History of San Jose post--1970* (posted on Canvas)
- Zoltan Hajnal, “The Context of Local Policymaking: Who or what Governs?” *Oxford Handbook of State and Local Government* (posted on Canvas)
- Zoltan Hajnal, “Where Turnout Matters: The Consequences of Uneven Turnout in City Politics” *Journal of Politics* (posted on Canvas)
- Jessica Trounstein, “All Politics is Local: The Reemergence of the Study of City Politics” *Perspectives on Politics* (2009) (posted on Canvas)
- “What will become of Public Sector Unions Now” (posted on Canvas)

Ken Yeager, “Battle Against HIV/AIDS: A Look Back at the First Decades of the Santa Clara County Experience (2018) (posted on Canvas)

Ken Yeager, “The Long Struggle for LGBTQ Equality in Santa Clara County,” (2018) (posted on Canvas)

Ken Yeager, “Campaign Checklist for Gay and Lesbian Candidates (1999) (posted on Canvas)

Library Liaison

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help learning using the library for research.

His name and contact info is:

Paul Kauppila
Librarian (Political Science Liaison)
(408) 808-2042

Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

At SJSU, students are expected to spend two hours outside of class for every one hour of class time. Because this is a **four-unit class**, you can expect to spend a minimum of eight hours per week in addition to time spent in class and on scheduled tutorials or activities. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. In this class, one of the four units is an engagement unit, which consists of online quizzes and community based assignments. You are expected to spend 45 hours this semester (both to prepare for and to complete the work) to successfully complete this unit. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Course Readings: All assigned readings are required. It is expected students complete the assigned readings before attending class each week. Students may find it necessary to reading all or portions of the assigned readings more than once to comprehend complex material. Students who feel they need additional help with effective reading comprehension strategies should consult with the professor during office hours.
2. Exams: Two in-class exams—a midterm and final—are required. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true false, and essay questions covering the assigned readings and lecture/discussion material
3. Quizzes: A total of **four** quizzes will be required. They will be in-class quizzes. Quiz questions will consist of multiple choice, true false, matching, and fill in the blank questions. Please refer to the course schedule for appropriate dates.
4. Local Government in Action: Student Observation. Several experiential learning projects are tied to this course. Students will be required to attend and observe **two different** components of local government in action. You can choose among the following options: attend and observe a San Jose (or other Bay Area) City Council meeting; a Board of Supervisors meeting; visit the Santa Clara County Criminal Court (witness part of a criminal trial, an arraignment, or sentencing hearing); attend a San Jose City Council Committee or Planning Commission hearing; attend another government agency meeting like Valley Transportation Agency (community meetings being held on Hotel Line 22 through Feb. 19th). Students will be required to write a 4

page (total) reflection paper describing what you observed and experienced. A separate memo describing the details of the assignment will be distributed.

5. Term Paper. The term paper (9-10 pages) assignment asks students to research and analyze a local policy or public problem. Issues might include the local housing crisis (i.e. rising costs of housing), homelessness, crime and policing, livable or minimum wage policies, traffic congestion, and urban redevelopment. Of course, there are many other possibilities. I will distribute a separate memo with more details about this assignment at the beginning of the fourth week of class. Grading on the assignment will be based on the clarity and strength of your thesis statement, the quality of your research (you will be required to incorporate a mix of academic books and peer reviewed journal articles as well as online news articles), and the overall strength of your analysis.

6. City Politics Simulation: During the last five class periods students will participate in an in-class city politics simulation. Students will be assigned to play a specific role (i.e. mayor, city council member, city manager, fire chief, chamber of commerce leader, religious leader, non-profit organizer, etc.) and will simulate tackling real life issues and problems in the fictitious city Circleville that students will work outside of class time to adequately prepare for the simulation. I will be handing out a separate memo that provides more details about the simulation project later in the semester.

7. Newspaper Article: Students will be told when they will be giving a brief oral report on a news story dealing with a city, county, or local agency. Students will summarize the story (not read), then give a commentary using what we've discussed in class. Students must turn in a 2-3 paragraph paper on the day of the presentation.

8. Role Model Paper: This is a 2-3 page paper on a person like the one you will play in the city politics simulation. Once you've picked a role, you must find a real-life parallel and research that person through public records, the Internet, newspapers, and interviews. Your brief paper should describe the person and his/her political activities and put them in the larger context provided by the text and the readings. Some questions you might ask include their education, how they became interested in their field, previous jobs, who hired them at city or county, whom they report to, job responsibilities, family obligations, and what their interactions are with the mayor/council, the City Manager, department heads, interest groups, and residents. Just to reiterate, you must actually talk to this person (just looking up information on the Internet is not sufficient). It is OK (although not preferred) if you carry on an email conversation with them. This situation should only be used for council members and some top administrators if you can't get time on the phone with them.

Final Examination

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which

can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment. Our final examination is scheduled for May 21. The exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer/essay questions covering the in-class material and assigned readings.

Grading Information:

Students’ grades will be calculated using the following assignments (with corresponding points and percentages)

Assignment	Points	Percentage of total
Online Quizzes (4 @ 10 points each)	40	10.0%
Midterm Exam	80	20.0%
Final Exam	80	20.0%
Local Government Observation Paper	40	10.0%
News Article	20	5%
Role Model Paper	20	5%
Local Politics Term Paper	80	20.0%
City Politics Simulation	40	10.0%
Total	400	100.0%

Final Course Letter Grades will be assigned using the following scale:

A plus = 99-100%	A = 93- 98%	A- minus = 90-92%	B plus = 87-89%
B = 83-86%	B minus = 80-82%	C plus = 77-79%	C = 73-76%
C minus = 70-72%	D plus = 67-69%	D = 63-66%	D minus = 60-62%
F = 59% of below			

Classroom Protocol and Policies

Proper Use of Technology

In the classroom environment, texting, social networking, web searching—or any of the myriad things we all can do with our phones—hurts our ability to listen and communicate as effectively as possible. If you absolutely must use your phone, please leave the classroom. Students who violate this policy more than once will be asked to leave.

Email Communication

The easiest way to contact me is via email. Please be aware though that I will not

(unless in unusual circumstances) respond to email after normal working hours (Monday through Friday 8am-5pm). During busy times of the semester I receive a high volume of emails so please give me at least 24 hours to respond (not counting weekends for reasons just described) before sending me a follow up.

Late papers or Assignments Policy

Make-up exams are only given in cases of excused absences in accordance with the university's policy on excused absences. Circumstances that may lead to an excused student absence are subpoenas, jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, illness of a dependent, and bereavement for immediate family. If you are a member of a SJSU varsity intercollegiate athletic team, please provide me with your team schedule during the first week of the class. **Papers that are turned in late will be penalized a full letter grade for every 24 hours past the original due date.** For example, a paper submitted 10 minutes past the deadline will be penalized 1 full letter grade. This same penalty will apply to a paper turned in up to 24 hours past the original deadline. For every 24 hours after that, a paper will be penalized an additional letter grade and so on until the start value is an 'F.' Please be aware of this policy and be sure to get your writing assignments turned in on time.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> I want to particularly draw your attention to the university's academic integrity policy which can be found here <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>. Please note, all exams, quizzes, and class writing assignments for this class must be your own original work and must follow the rules outlined in the university academic integrity policy.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material."

More information on this policy can be found here: [University Policy S12-7](#),

Additional Class Notes

This is a course that covers a lot of material in a short period of time. I encourage

every student in class to participate by asking questions and actively participating in group and class discussions. Although attendance in the class is not mandatory it is obviously difficult to participate if you do not attend class. You each have a lot to bring to the class and the course becomes much more rewarding if you frequently participate.

Finally, I am more than happy to help answer any questions you have about the course at any time during the semester. If my office hours do not work with your schedule please don't hesitate to make an appointment with me outside of normal office hours. The best way to contact me to set up an appointment is via email. Of course, you can talk with me right before or right after class as well. This should be a fun and rewarding semester. Work hard and good luck!

POLS/UBRP 103: Local Government and Politics Schedule*

**Schedule is subject to change with fair notice and will be announced via email and/or in--class announcement.*

Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines

Jan. 29

Course Introduction and Overview
Introduction of students in the class
What are the some of the important issues we face?
What to do about Hotel Line 22?
Looking at city and county agendas
Students will be assigned a local policymaker to research

Readings

Local Politics chapter 1

Jessica Trounstein, "All Politics is Local: The Reemergence of the Study of City Politics" *Perspectives on Politics* (2009) (on Canvas)

Feb. 5

Who are these people? Students to give brief reports
The Context of City Politics (Geography, Urban Density, and Socioeconomic class)
The Context of City Politics (Institutional Fragmentation)
Cities and County Governments in the American Federalist System

Readings

Local Politics chapter 2, chapter 3 (pp 42-64), chapter 4

Zoltan Hajnal, "The Context of Local Policymaking: Who or what Governs?" *Oxford Handbook of State and Local Government* (on Canvas)

Feb. 12

Political Machines and Patronage Politics

Readings

Local Politics chapter 5

Jessica Trounstine, “Political Monopolies in American Cities,” chapter 1 (on Canvas)

Quiz #1

Feb. 19

Political Reform, and the City Manager Form of Government

Readings

Local Politics chapter 6

Terry Christensen, *Movers and Shakers: History of San Jose post--1970* (posted on Canvas)

Feb. 26

Formal Power in City Government: City Councils and Mayors

Readings

Local Politics chapter 7

Find your San Jose representative!

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1187>

Quiz #2

March 5

Formal Power in City government: The Bureaucracy

Readings

Local Politics chapter 8

“What will become of Public Sector Unions Now” (on Canvas)

Midterm

March 12

Understanding Local Elections

Readings

Local Politics chapter 9

Zoltan Hajnal, “Where Turnout Matters: The Consequences of Uneven Turnout in City Politics” *Journal of Politics* (on Canvas)

Ken Yeager, “Campaign Checklist for Gay and Lesbian Candidates” (on Canvas)

March 19

Community Power Structure

Budget Politics

Readings: Local Politics, chapters 11, 12

Quiz #3

March 26

Interest Groups

Citizen Participation

Readings

Local Politics chapter 10

Local Government Observation Paper Due

April 2

Spring Break. No class

April 9

Minority Groups and City Politics

Readings

Ken Yeager, "The Long Struggle for LGBT Equality in Santa Clara County," (2018) (on Canvas)

Quiz #4

April 16

Regional Government

Readings

Local Politics, Chapter 14

Role Model Paper Due

April 23

Begin City Politics Simulation

No Assigned Readings: Prep for in-class city politics simulation

April 30

City Politics Simulation

No Assigned Readings: Prep for in-class city politics simulation

May 7

No Assigned Readings: Prep for in-class city politics simulation

Term Papers Due

May 21
Final Exam 17:15 – 19:30