

San José State University
Department of Political Science
Local Government and Politics
POLS 103-1 (27980) URBP 103-1 (29416)
Spring 2020, 4 Units

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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. **PLO3. 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.

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,	Quizzes, exams, local government in action, student observation, city politics simulation

4. **PLO4. 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.

CLO3: Learn to think critically about the role and function of local governments in the broader American federalist system.	PLO2, 3	Quizzes, 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.	PLO4	Quizzes, local government in action, student observation, city politics simulation

Textbooks

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

Other Readings

San Jose Mercury News (Mercurynews.com)
 San Francisco Chronicle (SFGate.com)
 San Jose Metro (SanJoseInside.com)
 San Jose Spotlight (SanJoseSpotlight.com)
 San Jose Community NETWORK (SanJoseCommunity.com)
 Silicon Valley Business Journal (Bizjournals.com)

- Terry Christensen, *San Jose Becomes the Capital of Silicon Valley* (Canvas)
- Terry Christensen, *Movers and Shakers: Flashback: A Short Political History of San Jose* (Canvas)
- Zoltan Hajnal, “The Context of Local Policymaking: Who or what Governs?” *Oxford Handbook of State and Local Government* (Canvas)
- Zoltan Hajnal, “Where Turnout Matters: The Consequences of Uneven Turnout in City Politics” *Journal of Politics* (Canvas)

- Jessica Trounstone, “All Politics is Local: The Reemergence of the Study of City Politics” *Perspectives on Politics* (2009) (Canvas)
- Emily Badger and Quoc Trung Bui, “Cities Start to Question an American Ideal: A House With a Yard on Every Lot,” *New York Times* (June 20, 2019) (Canvas)
- Matthew Niksa, “Downtown San Jose Gets an Uplift,” *Silicon Valley Business Journal*,” (January 17, 2020) (Canvas)
- San Jose Anti-Displacement Policy Network Team, “Ending Displacement In San Jose,” (January 2020) (Canvas)
- Office of the Assessor, Santa Clara County, “Annual Report 2019-2020,” (Canvas)
- Monica Davey and Adeel Hassan, “When Cities Try to Limit Guns, State Laws Bar the Way,” *New York Times*, (August 17, 2019) (Canvas)
- Ken Yeager, “Battle Against HIV/AIDS: A Look Back at the First Decades of the Santa Clara County Experience” (2018) (Canvas)
- Ken Yeager, “The Long Struggle for LGBTQ Equality in Santa Clara County,” (2018) (Canvas)
- Ken Yeager, “Campaign Checklist for Gay and Lesbian Candidates (1999) (Canvas)
- Ken Yeager, “The Making of a Candidate,” (1999) (Canvas)
- Ken Yeager, List of County Accomplishments (2018) (Canvas)
- Ken Yeager, “The Day I Was Told I Didn’t Belong,” (2019) (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
Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu

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 that students will 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. Short biography on elected official or department head. On the first day of class as we go around the room and introduce ourselves. I will assign each student a local leader for them to do a brief google or website search. This one-page printed report will be counted as either completed or not completed. At various times throughout the semester I will call on students to tell us about their person as it relates to a city issue or a particular agency. This is separate from the person assigned for Circleville.
5. Newspaper Article: Students (generally in alphabetical order) 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 one-page paper on the day of the presentation.
6. Local Government in Action: Student Observation. Several experiential learning projects are tied to this course. Students will be required to attend and observe 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; attend a San Jose City Council Committee or Planning Commission hearing; attend another government agency meeting like Valley Transportation Agency. You must attend TWO meetings. They can be of the same

agency or different ones. If you attend different ones, be sure to make comparisons between them.

Students will be required to write a 4-page double-spaced reflection paper describing what you observed and experienced. You can get information about the San Jose Council meetings at sanjoseca.gov or the Board of Supervisors at sccgov.org. Other governmental bodies will have a website containing information on when they meet and copies of their agendas.

We are fortunate that the San Jose City Council meets right across the street, every Tuesday, starting at 1:30. They often go late into the afternoon or into the evening. The Board of Supervisors also meets on Tuesdays (every other Tuesday, though) starting at 9:30 and often go late into the afternoon as well. I strongly encourage you to attend these meetings sooner rather than later. When students wait until the last minute, often their schedules prevent them from attending meetings. Also, attending meetings might give you a good idea on a topic for your paper and you can use some of the discussion as one of your references.

Your essay should NOT be a factual summary of the meetings. Rather you should attempt to assess, evaluate and analyze what you observed. If you attend a city council or Board of Supervisors meeting, make a special effort to assess the roles played by council members, administrators (manager, staff, bureaucracy) and citizens (audience, speakers, groups—who's there, how many, for what purpose, etc.?) and the relationships between all of these and the council as well as relationships among the council members themselves. Who seems to dominate if anyone, and why? Be sure to include what major policy issues were discussed, such as economic development, transportation, environmental issues, etc. Lastly, what surprised you, if anything, about the experience. What did you learn that we haven't discussed in class?

Be sure to use at least 4 references from the Local Politics book, but certainly it is alright to include other references as well. Use endnotes or footnotes to cite your sources. Please do not use a binder for your paper. Please staple.

7. Term Paper. The term paper (10 pages, not including abstract or references) asks students to research and analyze a local policy or public problem. Issues might include crime and policing, livable or minimum wage policies, floodwater management, bicycle safety, scooter regulations, gentrification, jail overcrowding, fire protection, transgender health issues, sex trafficking, domestic violence, stopping the spread of HIV, and urban redevelopment. Given all that cities and counties do, there certainly will be a topic that interests you greatly. Counties, in particular, work on social and health issues, which creates many opportunities. I have found it best for students not to write about homelessness because it is way too broad and complex for a 10-page paper.) When possible, go narrow. For example, environmental protection is too broad but saving Coyote Valley is manageable; immigration is too broad but consequences of San Jose being a sanctuary city is doable.

When researching and writing your paper, keep in mind three central points: 1) what is the precise issue or thesis of your paper; 2) whose problem is it to solve and why; and 3) what other levels of government or agencies can help solve it. The main point of this is to realize there is a web of policymakers involved in local issues. Throughout the semester we will study who all the players are and the role that each of them play.

You will need to include 10 citation sources, with at least three from the readings and/or lecture, three from peer reviewed articles, and **three from local and state reports**. The last is emphasized because if there are not city/county staff memos or articles on the subject it is not an issue being addressed at the local level. At best, the issue should have come before the city or county and you can include the debate that occurred at the meeting. Again, this is way you should attend a council or government meeting early on in the semester.

Grading on the assignment will be based on the clarity and strength of your thesis statement, the quality of your research, and the overall strength of your analysis. It worth 25% of your grade. For students who may want to write a paper they can use as a writing sample for employment, they can turn in an optional outline of their paper on April xx, and I will review it. On May xx, they can turn in a 2-page outline of the paper with more detailed information.

8. City Politics Simulation: During the last three 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, city attorney, chamber of commerce leader, home builder, etc. A full list of players is included in canvas. Students will tackle real life issues and problems in the fictitious city of Circleville. I will be handing out memos before and during Circleville that detail the issues confronting the town.

Your participation in Circleville amounts to 7.5% of your grade. I realize that some students are more shy than others, but it is expected that all students actively engage in the simulation. If you are apprehensive about speaking in front of class please let me know, and we can discuss how best to approach the assignment.

9. 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, possible 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. Try your best to speak with the person (full number of points if you do). It is OK

(although not preferred) if you carry on an email conversation with them. If it proves impossible to talk with them, just be sure you do added research about 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 17. 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%
Midterm Exam	80	20%
Final Exam	80	20%
Local Government Observation Paper	40	10%
News Article	10	2.5%
Role Model Paper	10	2.5%
Brief paper on who’s who in local gov’t	10	2.5%
Local Politics Term Paper	100	25%
City Politics Simulation	30	7.5%
Total	400	100.0%

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

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>97 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>93 to 96%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 93%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>86 to 89%</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>77 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 76%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

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. Papers cannot be emailed. They will need to be turned in to the Political Science Dept where they will be time stamped.

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.

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.*

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan.23	Course introduction; viewing city and county agendas; students will be assigned a local policymaker to research
2	Jan.28 Jan.30	Why study local government? “Downtown San Jose Gets an Uplift,” Silicon Valley Business Journal,” (Canvas) “Ending Displacement In San Jose,” San Jose Anti-Displacement Policy Network Cities and County Governments in the American Federalist System Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 1, 4 Jessica Trounstine, “All Politics is Local: The Reemergence of the Study of City Politics” <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> (Canvas) <i>New York Times</i> , When Cities Try to Limit Guns, State Laws Bar the Way (Canvas)

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
3	Feb.4	Political Machines and Patronage Politics Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 5 Quiz #1
	Feb.6	Jessica Trounstine, “Political Monopolies in American Cities,” chapter 1 (Canvas) Terry Christensen, <i>Movers and Shakers: Flashback: A Short Political History of San Jose</i> (Canvas)
4	Feb. 11	Political Reform, and the City Manager Form of Government Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 6
	Feb.13	Terry Christensen, <i>San Jose Becomes the Capital of Silicon Valley</i> (Canvas)
5	Feb.18	Formal Power in City Government: City Councils and Mayors Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 7 Find your San Jose representative! http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1187
	Feb.20	Quiz #2
6	Feb.25	Formal Power in City government: The Bureaucracy Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 8
	Feb.27	Midterm
7	Mar 3	Community Power Structure Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> , chapter 11
	Mar 5	Budget Politics Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> , chapter 12 Zoltan Hajnal, “The Context of Local Policymaking: Who or what Governs?” <i>Oxford Handbook of State and Local Government</i> (Canvas) Office of the Assessor, Santa Clara County, “Annual Report 2019-2020,” (Canvas)
8	Mar 10	Library research for policy paper
	Mar 12	Interest Groups Citizen Participation Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> , chapter 10
9	Mar 17	Understanding Local Elections Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> , chapter 9 Zoltan Hajnal, “Where Turnout Matters: The Consequences of Uneven Turnout in City Politics” <i>Journal of Politics</i> (Canvas) Quiz #3

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	Mar 19	Ken Yeager, “Campaign Checklist for Gay and Lesbian Candidates” (Canvas) Ken Yeager, “The Making of a Candidate” (Canvas) <i>New York Times</i> , “Predicting Your Party” (Canvas) Local Government Observation Paper Due
10	Mar 24	Minority Groups and City Politics Readings: Ken Yeager, “The Long Struggle for LGBTQ Equality in Santa Clara County,” (2018) (Canvas) Ken Yeager, “The Day I Was Told I Didn’t Belong,” (2019) (Canvas)
	Mar 26	Quiz #4
11	Mar 31 Apr 2	Spring Break, No class
12	Apr 7	Politics and Policy: Some Local Issues and Battles Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 13;
	Apr 9	<i>New York Times</i> : “Cities Start to Question an American Ideal: A House With a Yard on Every Lot” Ken Yeager, “County accomplishments” (on Canvas) Topic and One-Page Outline of Term Paper (optional)
13	Apr 14	Regional Government Readings: <i>Local Politics</i> , Chapter 14 Film: <i>Saving the Bay</i>
	Apr 16	Role Model Paper Due
14	Apr 21	Begin City Politics Simulation
	Apr 23	No Assigned Readings: Prep for in-class city politics simulation Two-Page Outline of Term Paper (optional)
15	Apr 28	City Politics Simulation
	Apr 30	No Assigned Readings: Prep for in-class city politics simulation
16	May 5	City politics simulation No Assigned Readings.
	May 7	Term Papers Due
Final Exam	May 19	7:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.