

**Bergen Community College**  
Division of Business and Social Science  
Department of Social Sciences

Course Syllabus

POL-104: State and Local Government

Semester and year:  
Section Number:  
Meeting Times:  
Locations:

Instructor:  
Office Location:  
Phone:  
Departmental Secretary: [optional]  
Office Hours:  
Email Address:

**Course Description:**

This course is the study of state, county, and municipal political systems. The course examines the making and enforcement of public policy and the political roles of the people, political parties, political machines, and pressure groups. Intergovernmental relations and evolving patterns of metropolitan government are analyzed with an emphasis on New Jersey and Bergen County.

Credits: 3  
Pre-requisites: None  
Co-requisites: None  
General Education Course –Social Science

**Student Learning Outcomes:** As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to:

List of Student Learning Outcomes and an appropriate assessment for each:

Student Learning Outcome:	Means of Assessment:
1. Identify and define basic concepts of political science, e.g., power, politics, government, administration, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
2. Identify and distinguish between the various branches and levels of government and their respective powers.	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
3. Compare and contrast the constitutional aspects of government in different states and communities, e.g., strong mayor and weak mayor systems, long and short-ballot states, variations in appointment and removal powers of executives, etc.	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
4. Identify and contrast the various methods for citizen participation, e.g., elections and voting, lobbying, and political parties.	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
5. Analyze the decision-making process, formal and informal.	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
6. Identify these factors in their own political systems, especially New Jersey.	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.

**For General Education courses:** indicate which Gen Ed/Essential Learning Outcomes (EL1-11, below) are aligned with these Student Learning Outcomes\* using a table:

SLOs:	EL 1	EL 2	EL 3	EL 4	EL 5	EL 6	EL 7	EL 8	EL9	EL 10	EL1 1
1.	x	x						x			x
2.		x						x			
3.		x						x	x	x	x
4.		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x

EL1-Effective Speaking  
 EL2-Effective Writing  
 EL3-Mathematical Reasoning  
 EL4-Scientific Reasoning  
 EL5-Technological Competency  
 EL6-Information and Media Literacy

EL7-Social-Behavioral Analysis  
 EL8-Historical Analysis  
 EL9-Humanistic Analysis  
 EL10-Intercultural Awareness  
 EL11-Moral Literacy

\*In accordance with the *Standards for General Education Courses at Bergen Community College* (2013), all Gen Ed courses are required to address EL1, EL2, EL6, and EL11 (when appropriate), in addition to the ELO that corresponds to its area of study (EL 3-5 and 7-9).

### **Political Science Signature Assignment:**

#### **Signature Assignment: Political Flashpoints in History**

**Objective:** Choose a major event that served as a flashpoint in the political landscape of a country or state. Analyze and deconstruct the elements that led to this event and evaluate its effects on political change. Then, hypothesize an alternative outcome if this flashpoint had not occurred.

1. **Introduction:** Select a major political event from history that significantly changed the political landscape of a country or state (examples: the French Revolution, Tulsa Massacre, Civil Rights Movement, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Hurricane Katrina, the Arab Spring, or the Black Matters Movement). In your introduction, provide a brief overview of the event, including its historical context and significance.
2. **Analysis of Key Elements:** Analyze and break down the factors that led to this event. Consider political, ideological, social, economic, cultural, and global influences. How did these elements converge to create a tipping point? Address the roles of individuals, groups, or movements that contributed to the outbreak of the event.

3. **Impact of the Event:** Explore how the flashpoint directly or indirectly caused change in the political landscape. What were the immediate and long-term effects of the event on the political system, power structures, and society? Discuss in what ways the event caused a shift in governance, political alliances, or policy?
4. **Alternative Outcome:** Hypothesize what might have happened if the event had not occurred. What would the political landscape of the country or state look like today without this flashpoint? Present an analysis of how different factors might have played out in the absence of the event. Would the political tensions have erupted differently, or might the situation have remained stable? What other events or movements might have replaced this flashpoint in influencing the political climate?
5. **Conclusion:** Summarize your findings and reflect on the significance of the event in shaping the course of the political and social landscape of that country or state. Consider the lessons that can be drawn from this analysis and how the study of political flashpoints helps us better understand the dynamics of political change today.

### **Submission Options:**

1. Presentation Slides and speaker notes
  2. Paper presentation with Abstract.
- \*All submissions must include a reference list at the end.**

### **Course Content:**

This course is the study of state, county, and municipal political systems. The course examines the making and enforcement of public policy and the political roles of the people, political parties, political machines, and pressure groups. Intergovernmental relations and evolving patterns of metropolitan government are analyzed with an emphasis on New Jersey and Bergen County.

### **Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials:**

State and Local Government, 11<sup>th</sup> Ed., Ann O'M. Bowman and Richard C. Kearney; 2022 Wadsworth. Boston.

### **Research, Writing, and/or Examination Requirement(s):**

This course requires students to complete a variety of written assessments including, not limited to assignments, research/term paper/book reviews, and exams/quizzes.

### **Grading Policy:**

Final grades will be computed on the following basis:

Assignments/Discussions	20%
Paper	30%
Exams	50%

### **Numerical grading assignment:**

90-100 = A      85- 89 = B+  
 80-84 = B      75 -79 = C+  
 70-74 = C      60 -69 = D  
 59- < = F

Extensions and/or make-up exams/quizzes will only be granted if, and only if, approval has been obtained from the instructor and due to exigent circumstances substantiated by valid documentation. Approval will be contingent upon requests made before the deadline and/or scheduled date of exam/quiz.

### **BCC Attendance Policy:**

All students are expected to attend every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

### **Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements:**

#### Examples:

Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty:

[Academic Matters - Bergen Community College - Acalog ACMS™](#)

Statement on the appropriate use of AI (see the following link for guidance):

[AI-Guidance-Resource-Page.pdf \(bergen.edu\)](#)

ADA statement:

[Disability Services \(Office of Specialized Services\) | Bergen Community College](#)

Sexual Harassment statement:

[HR-003-001.2018-Policy-Prohibiting-Sexual-Harassment.pdf \(bergen.edu\)](#)

Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology:

[Acceptable-Use-Policy.pdf \(bergen.edu\)](#)

Recommended Syllabus Statements from the Office of Specialized Services:

[Syllabus Statements | Bergen Community College](#)

Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.

### **Accessibility Statement**

Bergen Community College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, contact the Office of Special Services (OSS) as soon as possible at 201-612-5270 or [www.bergen.edu/oss](http://www.bergen.edu/oss). To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with OSS. The OSS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. The OSS serves as a clearinghouse on disability issues and works in partnership with faculty and all other student service offices.

### **Student Support Services**

Bergen Community College provides exemplary support to its students and offers a broad variety of opportunities and services. A comprehensive array of student support services including advising, tutoring, academic coaching, and more are available online at



**Sidney Silverman Library Online Resources:**

[Guides BY SUBJECT - LibGuides at Bergen Community College](#)

General Search and Databases: [Library | Bergen Community College](#)

**Course Outline and Calendar:**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Topic/Activity:</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b>	<b>Assignments/Events:</b>
Week 1	State and Local Governments: A New Direction	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 2	Federalism and the States: Sorting Out Roles and Responsibilities	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 3	State Constitutions: The Fundamental Rules of State Government	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 4	Governors: Power, Politics, and Executive Leadership	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 5	The Judiciary: Independence vs Accountability	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other

			activities selected by the instructor.
Week 6	Local Government: Types and Functions	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 7	Local Leadership and Governance: Continuity and Change	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 8	Citizen Participation and Elections: Engaging the Public in Government	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 9	Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaigns: Influencing Public Policy	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 10	Public Administration: Budgeting and Service Delivery Taxing and Spending	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 11	Economic Development: Competing for Growth	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 12	Education Policy: Reading, Writing, and Reform	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 13	Criminal Justice: Cops and Correction	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.

Week 14	Social Welfare and Health Care Policy: Addressing Poverty and Sickness	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.
Week 15	Environmental Policy: Regulation and Innovation	1-7	Exams/quizzes, papers, in-class, or online discussions, writing assignments or other activities selected by the instructor.

**Possible Note to Students:** This Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.