**China University for Political Science and Law**

**State and Local Government**

**Summer 2014**

**Instructor: Dr. Richard Kerbel**

***Adjunct Lecturer of Public Policy, Taubman Center for Public Policy***

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**Brief Course Description:** The course will be taught seminar style with each class consisting of a lecture, discussion of assigned reading and an interactive exercise. The course will consist of 12 classes on various topics of local government interests. The role of state government in setting the parameters of local government policies will be discussed in each topic. While the course will focus on policy issues that are common to local governments throughout the United States, the State of Rhode Island and local governments within Rhode Island will be used for examples.

**Course Description:** The American system of governance is federated which means that several different levels of government have jurisdiction over one specific territory. These various governments affect the daily lives of citizens and make decisions about important issues ranging from taxation and services to civil rights and the environment. Students will be expected to keep abreast on Rhode Island current events by reading online daily: the Providence Journal ([www.projo.com](http://www.projo.com/)) and Go Local Prov (<http://www.golocalprov.com/>). Students will also be expected to look at conservative and liberal websites on their take about Rhode Island politics. If you want you can take a look at the opposing Rhode Island Political Web Sites On the right, check out <http://anchorrising.com/> and on the left check out [http://rifuture.org](http://rifuture.org/) . In additions students will be expected to subscribe to the Emerging Local Government Leaders newsletter (<http://elgl.org/> )

**Student Assessment**

Major assignments and participation assessment for this course are as follows:

• **Final Policy Paper and Presentation**– 30 points or 30% of the semester grade

• **Participation and attendance** – 70 points or 70% of the semester grade. Each student will be expected to lead a discussion of an article or reading and to participate in classroom discussions. In addition throughout the class, students will be asked to take part in activities such as negotiations or policy setting forums. You will be judged on your participation in those activities.

This is a seminar course. Students will be expected to lead discussions on the readings and participate in the discussions.

**Attendance Policy**

This course meets just ten or twelve times so any absence represents a significant loss of class time. Each unexcused absence will yield a 5% reduction in the final grade for the semester.

**Readings**

Course readings are selected to provide a diversity of viewpoints. Readings include works from academic authors, policymakers, business writers, think tanks, regional and international institutions, and case study materials.

**The background text book: This is not required but encouraged reading to give you the academic context for many of our discussions.**

• State and Local Government, 9th Edition

Bowman/Kearney

**ISBN10:** 1-4354-6268-8

**ISBN13:** 978-1-4354-6268-7

**Important note:** *Due to the constantly changing public policy environment, course topics and readings are subject to change as events warrant.*

Students are encouraged to submit readings via email that are relevant to course topics.

**Lecture 1 Class Theme**: Introduction to Course **Questions:** Who are the students? What are their objectives for the class? Who is the instructor? **Reading**: None assigned, review of class readings. **Activity:** Small groups to discuss local government functions in China vs. United States.

**Lecture 2 Class Theme:** Local Government **Questions:** What is the role of local governments in the American political system? What is their relationship with state governments? How do efforts to redesign state governance affect local governments and the services they provide? Do urban machines still exist? **Readings:** Bowman Chapter 10 & 12, [*The Best and Worst Run Cities in America* - 24/7 Wall St.](http://247wallst.com/2012/01/05/best-and-worst-run-cities-in-america/#ixzz2IiEQ9o1W) Journal **Activity:** Mock City Council meeting

**Lecture 3 Class Theme**: Local Government Form and Leadership **Questions:** What are the attributes of a Council Manager vs. Mayor Council form of government? Who is the community leader in a Council Manager form of government? Why does the Commission form of government still exist? How often does the form change? **Readings:** Bowman Chapter 11, **Activity:** Debate on Form of Government

**Lecture 4 Class Theme:** Policy Issue – Pension Reform **Questions:** Who was to blame? What are the policy impact of defined benefit vs. defined contribution plans? Is the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) issue being addressed? **Readings:** Bowman Chapter 13 & 14, Legal Constraints on Changes in State and Local Pensions State & Local Pensions: An Overview of Funding Issues and Challenges; **Activity:** Debate on Pension Reform Rights; **Final Policy Paper Topic Email Due**

**Lecture 5 Class Theme:** Policy Issue – Education **Questions:** Should there be a uniform national curriculum or should states and localities decide on content? Who should decide how teachers are evaluated? Has “No Child Left Behind” succeeded? **Readings:** Bowman Chapter 15; **Activity:** TBD

**Lecture 6 Class Theme**: Local Government Land Use Planning **Readings:** [Creating the Community You Want: Municipal Options for Land Use Control](http://www.dos.ny.gov/LG/publications/Creating_the_Community_You_Want.pdf)[**http://www.dos.ny.gov/LG/publications.html#**](http://www.dos.ny.gov/LG/publications.html) **,** RHODE ISLAND GENERAL LAWS related to LAND USE AND PLANNING <http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/local/RIGeneral_Laws_Land_Use%20_Planning.pdf>

Book; **Activity:** New York City Coliseum Development Project Simulation

**Lecture 7 Class Theme:** Public Safety Functions **Questions:** Does it make sense to have Police and Fire controlled on the local or state level? What are the advantages and disadvantages of volunteer firefighters? What does Community Policing mean? **Readings:** Bowman Chapter 16 MAKING COMMUNITY POLICING WORK By: Robert R. Friedmann Chicago Tribune June 30, 1992 The Effectiveness of Community Policing By Rhonda J. Tillman, Eastern Michigan University School of Police Staff & Command May 23, 2000 **Activity:** TBD **Mid Term Assignments Due**

**Lecture 8** **Class Theme:** Introduction to Negotiation, Mediation and Arbitration **Questions:** What laws govern mediation and arbitration? Are you an Arbitrator or Mediator? **Activity:** Win As Much As You Can-

# Lecture 9 Class Theme: Human Resources Management/ Labor Relations Questions: What are the roles of labor unions? Readings: China: Arbitration in China — Progress and Challenges 17 April 2013 [Nicholas Song](http://www.mondaq.com/content/author.asp?article_id=233922&author_id=1028816) Activity: Providence Journal Arbitration Simulation

**Lecture 10 Class Theme:** The Role of Governmental Regulators and Negotiating with Government Regulators **Questions:** What are the roles of government regulators? Which strategies might government regulators employ to achieve desired outcomes with the least amount of effort and resources? • What negotiation strategies are available to those who are regulated by government agencies? **Readings:** Lawrence Susskind, Dealing with the Government, Melissa Houskamp and Sanford Berg, *Regulation, Mediation, and Negotiation: Finding Win-Win Policies*, **Activity:** Negotiation Simulation

**Lecture 11: Class Theme:** TBD **Final Policy Paper Due**

**Lecture 12: Class Theme** Presentations of Final Policy Paper. **Questions:** Course Evaluation **Activity:** Student Presentation of Final Project