**POL 3111A: MA State and Local Politics – Spring 2020**

**Meeting Time: Tues/Thurs 4:00 pm – 5:15 pm**

**Classroom: Crowe 209**

**Instructor: Dr. Kirstie Lynn Dobbs**

**Office: Cushing Hall 17b**

**Office Hours: Merrimack Campus (Tues/Thurs 9:30 – 11:30; 1:30 – 3:30); Lawrence High School (Tues. 2:45 – 3:45 pm)**

**Email:** **dobbsk@merrimack.edu**

**Course Description**

This course takes an in-depth look at political processes, governance, and participation at the local and state level. Class discussion revolve around a central theme: the increased capacity and responsiveness of state and local government. We analyze why some government are better equipped than others to solve collective dilemmas and to contribute to the public good. A heavy emphasis on Massachusetts politics serves as a cornerstone of this course.

The pedagogical method applied to this class is a mixture of a lecture-based and active model of teaching. Students are expected to take notes during lectures and are also expected to be actively engaged in classroom activities and discussions. A “flipped” model of teaching will also be utilized in this course, where students are expected to have done the reading / learned the textbook material prior to coming to class. This will allow us to spend more time applying the concepts in active-learning sessions rather than lecturing on basic terminology. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. If student is more than 15 min late without notice, they will be counted as tardy. Be on time!

**Readings**

Bowman, Ann O’M, and Richard C. Kearney. 2015. *State and Local Government: The Essentials. Sixth Edition*. Cengage Learning. Stanford: Connecticut.

In addition to this book there will be supplemental readings that will be available on the course's google classroom page. In particular, you will have weekly readings from Smith, Kevin. 2019. *State and Local Government*. Readings should be completed *before* coming to class to enhance and facilitate lectures and class discussion. You should anticipate approximately 60 - 100 pages

of reading per week.

**Access to Google Classroom**

All course materials will be uploaded to Google Classroom. This includes class lectures, rubrics, and assignment sheets. Grades will also be posted on this site. To access the google classroom, go to the google classroom icon via your Gmail account and click “join class.” Then put in the access code **3ktxl4z.**

**Learning Outcomes**

After completing the course each student should:

* Have a solid understanding of how government works at the state and local system
* Be familiar with how different institutions impact local politics
* Articulate different theories and concepts associated with political science and apply them to local politics
* Understand the evidence surrounding the arguments related to whether public demands are effectively represented by policy makers
* Think critically about one’s personal locality and be able to engage in a healthy debate surrounding issues that affect your community
* Make an argument about democratic responsiveness at the local level
* Be better prepared to think critically about the relationship between local, state, and the federal government

**Grading**

* Final Exam 20%
* Semester Quizzes (10 quizzes total at 2.5 points each) 25%
* Impact of State Government on Education (Case Study of the Early College Program at Merrimack College; Service-Learning Component) 35%
* In-class Activities 20%

*Grading Scale*

A 93-100 C 73-76

A- 90-92 C- 70-72

B+ 87-89 D+ 67-69

B 83-86 D 63-66

B- 80-82 D- 60-62

C+ 77-79 F 59 and below

**Assignments**

**Final Exam (20%)**

 The final exam will be taken on May 2 from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm. This exam is composed of 7 short answer questions (you choose 5 to answer). Each question should be answered fully in 1-2 paragraphs with 2 sources from class cited in each question. You will take the final via classmarker.com and you will need to complete the exam by the end of your final exam scheduled period.

**Semester Quizzes (25%)**

You will take 10 quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz consists of 5 multiple choice questions that are pulled directly from the Bowman and Kearney text. Each quiz is associated with the textbook chapter that we are discussing that week. The quizzes will be taken online via the classmarker website, and they are open book, open note, and untimed. Take your time on the quizzes and READ the chapter BEFORE taking the quiz. To access the quizzes, go to [www.classmarker.com](http://www.classmarker.com) and login via your login information and take the quiz! Login information will be emailed to you. I will also have a copy of your login info. Due dates for quizzes are located below in the course schedule.

**Impact of State Government on Education 35%**

This class is going to place a heavy emphasis on service learning by incorporating a case study approach to understanding the impact of state education policy on local communities. Merrimack College has partnered with the Abbot Lawrence Academy at Lawrence Highschool in a program were talented high school youth take college courses at Merrimack College. Throughout the semester, we will relate this case study back to numerous concepts that we are focusing on in class (i.e. state and local relations, interest groups, political parties, taxing and spending). To complete this portion of the course, **you will travel to Lawrence Highschool 3x throughout the semester to tutor these students** on a policy paper that they are writing for the U.S. Politics course they are taking at Merrimack College. Shuttle buses will be provided. **A reflection paper will be turned in after completing your tutoring visiting at LHS.** A prompt for the reflection paper will be provided. The dates in which you may travel to LHS will be provided shortly after the semester starts.

**In-Class Activities (20%)**

Please be present in class to receive full points for the in-class activities. Each activity will have an associated worksheet that will be turned in at the end of the class period. If you are not able to attend class on the day of a graded activity please notify me ASAP so that we can make other accommodations. The grade activities are listed below.

* Play Spent!
* Know Your State and House Candidates: 2020
* Legislature Behavior Game
* Magic Genie Game!
* Court Case Activity

**Suggested News Sources**

* The Boston Globe
* Masslive.com
* Northandoverma.gov

**Due Dates and Late Policy:**

All assignments must be turned in on their due date through Sakai. Students must be present for exams and the group presentations. Only unforeseen emergencies with valid documentation will permit students to remake exams and their group presentation. Any assignments that are turned in late will receive a 5 percent deduction for each day (24 hours) that the assignment is tardy.

Assignments that are five days late will no longer be accepted, and you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Please anticipate all possible contingencies (computer failure, printer issues, etc.) and please

contact me before or as soon as possible if an issue arises. If a student contacts me about an issue after the assignment is a due, I can no longer make accommodations for that assignment.

Missed classes/Late Assignments: The only excusable reasons for missing a class or exam or handing in an assignment late are serious illnesses and family emergencies. In either case you must both 1) notify me of your situation in a timely manner and 2) provide appropriate documentation. Assignments handed in late without documentation will be penalized by 10% for each date they are late.

**Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office**

Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the Accessibility Services [**website**](https://www.merrimack.edu/academics/academic-success-center/accessibility-services/)**,** email accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library.

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

**Statement of Community Standards**

The following statement is taken from Merrimack College’s Student Handbook under Community Standards.

Before all else, the students, faculty, staff, and administration of Merrimack College form an Augustinian community that supports and challenges its members in the pursuit of truth. We declare and celebrate our common purpose, and commit ourselves:

* to serious study, generous service and courageous leadership
* to academic integrity and personal growth
* to civilized discourse in the exchange of ideas
* to friendship, diversity, and mutual respect
* to primacy of conscience and the spiritual life
* to responsibility for the common good, and
* to pride in our school and ourselves

Students have the right to express their views so long as there is nether use nor threat of force, nor interference with the rights of others to express their views (Faculty Handbook 2016, 50).

**Academic Integrity Code**

The following excerpt is taken from Merrimack’s Faculty Handbook and addresses issues surrounding plagiarism. “Plagiarism is intellectual theft. At Merrimack, the failure to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others is considered plagiarism. It is important to avoid even unintentional plagiarism by being familiar with accepted ways to acknowledge sources and by developing good note-taking and research habits.” Violations of academic integrity also include cheating on exams, fabrication, complicity, appropriation, multiple submissions, and unsanctioned collaboration. Please refer to the following link for a detailed review of the academic integrity code and penalty procedures. <https://www.merrimack.edu/live/files/365-faculty-handbook>.

The academic course penalty will be determined by your instructor. A student who violates the academic integrity code in a course may receive an F for the course, or, at the discretion of the instructor, a less severe penalty. If you withdraw from any course in which you have been accused of an academic integrity violation for which the penalty is F for the course, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will record the grade of WF on your transcript (Faculty Handbook 2016). Further action will be taken at the college level.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**1/16** Introduction to course

**1/21** New Directions for State and Local Government

* (B and K Ch. 1)
* Marston, Sallie A. "Neighborhood and politics: Irish ethnicity in nineteenth century Lowell, Massachusetts." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78, no. 3 (1988): 414-432.
* Play Spent! **(In-Class Activity 1)**

**1/28** New Directions for State and Local Government

* (B and K Ch. 1)
* Marston, Sallie A. "Neighborhood and politics: Irish ethnicity in nineteenth century Lowell, Massachusetts." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78, no. 3 (1988): 414-432.
* QUIZ 1 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**1/30** Federalism and the States

* (B and K Ch. 2)
* (Smith Part I: Federalism)
* <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/marijuana-in-massachusetts-whats-legal>
* https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/12/14/official-marijuana-legal-midnight-massachusetts/10Rl2inZQMjSPrNAMSBkCJ/story.html
* QUIZ 2 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**2/4** Federalism and the States

* (B and K Ch. 2)
* (Smith Part I: Federalism)
* <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/marijuana-in-massachusetts-whats-legal>
* https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/12/14/official-marijuana-legal-midnight-massachusetts/10Rl2inZQMjSPrNAMSBkCJ/story.html

**2/6** State Constitutions

* (B and K Ch. 3)
* https://malegislature.gov/Laws/Constitution

**2/11** State Constitutions

* (B and K Ch. 3)
* https://malegislature.gov/Laws/Constitution

**2/13** Citizen Participation and Elections

* (B and K Ch. 4)
* (Smith: pp. 19-21; 26-30; 147-149)
* QUIZ 3 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**2/20** Citizen Participation and Elections

* (B and K Ch. 4)
* (Smith: pp. 19-21; 26-30;147-149)
* Know Your State and House Candidates: 2020 **(In-class activity 2)**

**2/19** Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaigns

* (B and K Ch. 5)
* (Smith pp. 39-44)
* QUIZ 4 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**2/25** Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaigns

* (B and K Ch. 5)
* (Smith pp. 39-44)

**2/27** State Legislatures

* (B and K Ch. 6)
* (Smith pp. 45-49; 58-60)
* QUIZ 5 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**3/3** State Legislatures

* (B and K Ch. 6)
* (Smith pp. 45-49; 58-60)
* Legislature Behavior Game! **(In-class activity 3)**

**3/5** Movie: Flint Town

**3/17** \*\*\*FLEX DAY\*\*\*

**3/19** Governors

* (B and K Ch. 7)
* (Smith pp. 61-65; 69-70)

**3/24** Public Administration

* (B and K Ch. 8)
* (Smith pp. 93-96; 102-104)
* QUIZ 6 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**3/26** Public Administration

* (B and K Ch. 8)
* (Smith pp. 93-96; 102-104)

**3/31** The Judiciary

* (B and K Ch. 9)
* (Smith pp. 79-90)
* Freeman, Jody, and Adrian Vermeule. "Massachusetts v EPA: From politics to expertise." *The Supreme Court Review* 2007, no. 1 (2007): 51-110.
* QUIZ 7 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**4/2** The Judiciary

* (B and K Ch. 9)
* (Smith pp. 79-90)
* Court Case Activity **(In-class activity 4).**

**4/7** State and Local Relations

* (B and K Ch. 10)
* (Smith pp. 132-133)
* QUIZ 8 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**4/14** State and Local Relations

* (B and K Ch. 10)
* (Smith pp. 132-133)

**4/16** Local Government

* (B and K Ch. 11)
* (Smith pp. 105-113; 145-146).
* QUIZ 9 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**4/21** Local Government

* (B and K Ch. 11)
* (Smith pp. 105-113; 145-146).

**4/23** Taxing and Spending

* (B and K. Ch. 12)
* (Smith pp. 127-131; 134-138)
* QUIZ 10 DUE AT START OF CLASS

**4/28** Taxing and Spending

* (B and K. Ch. 12)
* (Smith pp. 127-131; 134-138)
* Magic Genie Game! **(In class activity 5)**

**4/30** Final Exam Review

**5/2 FINAL EXAM (11:30 am – 2:30)**