

POL 343 R: GOVERNMENT IN METROPOLITAN AREAS
(Fall 2009)

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Office Hours: T & Th: 3:30PM – 4:45PM (Walk In)

(All Other Times by Appointment Only)

Jenkins 314

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will introduce the student to the organization and functions of typical counties and municipalities in the United States. The legal foundations of counties and municipalities are discussed, as well as the relationship with state governments, from which counties and municipalities derive their authority. The governance process is described at the beginning of the course and the different types of governing bodies are evaluated, compared and contrasted. The history and evolution are described as well, as is the political process and the role of special interest groups. Counties and municipalities typically are organized into operating departments, and the functions and responsibilities of these is examined in great depth of detail. On occasions, guest speakers will be brought in to address problem areas that are typical of issues faced on a daily basis in counties and municipalities throughout the United States. The organization and structure of Miami - Dade County and its budget, as well as its multiple municipalities and special districts, will serve as a concrete example of the course content.

COURSE OBJECTIVES :

- To understand how government and society relate to, and interact with, each other;
- To understand the dynamic environment of the political process at the local government level, to include the role of non-governmental organizations;
- To understand the organization and functions of typical municipal staff and operating departments;
- To understand the importance and types of local government revenue streams and expenses;
- To understand how local governments relate to other local governments, as well as to county, regional, state and federal governments.

ACHIEVEMENT OF COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students achieve these objectives by:

- studying the related assigned material prior to each class meeting:
- participating in Socratic class discussions on course-related issues raised by the instructor, to include pertinent current events;
- writing a 10 page research paper on a topic related to the course which must be approved before the fact by the instructor. (For students desiring writing credit for the course, the paper must be 15 pages in length instead of 10.)
- taking three essay-type exams, each exam covering one-third of the course material, non-cumulative, five essay questions each, which must be answered in a thorough, comprehensive matter.

CLASS MEETINGS: POL 343 R meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00PM until 3:15PM in MM 216.

TEXTS: Stenberg, C., and Austin, S., editors, "Managing Local Government Services: A Practical Guide," Washington, D.C., ICMA 2007

Miami-Dade County Budget, FY 2009-10 (available on line)

GRADING: There will be three, co-equal exams, each worth 25% towards your final grade. In addition, a research paper is required which will be worth 20% toward your final grade. The final 5% will be based on the overall quality of each student's class recitation and participation. Also, points may be deducted for excessive, unexcused absences, or for general misbehavior.

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA: A, 93.0-100.0; A-, 90.0-92.9; B+, 87.0-89.9; B, 83.0-86.9; B-, 80.0-82.9; C+, 77.0-79.9; C, 73.0-76.9; C-, 70.0-72.9; D+, 67.0-69.9; D, 60.0-66.9; F, 59.9 or less. Course final letter grades will ONLY be released through MYUM.

EXAMS: There will be three, co-equal, non-cumulative exams, each worth 25% towards your final grade. Each exam will consist of five (5) essay-type questions which must be answered in a thorough and comprehensive manner. Students who do not know how to prepare for this type of exam are urged to visit the Academic Development Center located in Suite N-201, in the University Center. The essay questions in the exams will be based on the study assignments and on all other material addressed in class. An exam study guide will be provided to all students one week before each exam. Missed exams may be made up only with permission of the instructor, and only for students with exceptionally compelling reasons. Requests to take the final exam early (or any other exam) due to airline tickets already purchased will NOT be honored.

The time and place for makeup exams will be determined by the Instructor on a case-by-case basis. Makeup exams will be different in content from the exam given at the scheduled time. Any cheating will be dealt with through the University's formal process.

STUDY ASSIGNMENTS: Students are responsible for complying with the assignments found on the 5th page of the syllabus. Additional material may be assigned during the conduct of the course.

RESEARCH PAPER: This written assignment is required for successful completion of the course, and is worth 20% of your final grade. Students must select a subject for the research paper related to some area addressed in the textbook or in the course. The title of the paper, as well as the scope of the research, must be submitted to the Instructor by e-mail prior to beginning the research. The proposal will be evaluated and returned to the student as an e-mail reply. If approved, these e-mails become the approval page of the paper. Do not delete or otherwise lose these e-mails. The reason for this requirement is so that the student does not pick a topic so broad that he/she cannot adequately research it because of length constraints. The paper must strictly conform to the format of the American Psychological Association (APA). "The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association," (6th edition), is available for purchase from the University Bookstore, or from Amazon, and may be available in the Richter Library. In the event of a conflict in style or format with the APA Manual, the contents of the Manual will prevail. The text body of the paper must be a minimum of 10 full pages in length, and up to 12-15 pages (or so) excluding the cover page, abstract page, reference page(s), and approval page. Do not place the paper in any type of binder; merely double-staple the paper in the upper left hand corner of the document prior to turning it in. Insure that all components of the paper are in place before turning the paper in. Papers will NOT be accepted by e-mail. Plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the paper and possibly an "F" for the course. It is better to have too many references than too few. Internet references are acceptable. However, only permanent references may be cited. Blogs are NOT acceptable references. The textbook itself may NOT be used as a reference. Students are **STRONGLY** urged to keep a final version of their research paper on the hard drive of their computer, or on a CD (or flash drive) in the unlikely event that the original document is misplaced. One-half of the paper's score (i.e., up to 10 points) will be based on adherence to format, spelling, grammar and punctuation; one-half (i.e., up to 10 points) will be based on content to include logical presentation, continuity of thought, ease of readability and understanding. The instructor is available to help you with any aspect of this paper (or the course) during office visits, via e-mail, telephone, during class breaks, or before/after class. Please note the due date for the paper. (See Study Assignments page.) Papers submitted after the due date may receive a late submission penalty of one point deducted for each calendar day late.

WRITING CREDIT: Students desiring writing credit for this course should plan on the research paper having a minimum of 15 full pages in the text body.

BLACKBOARD: ALL class notices will be posted in Blackboard. Only the “Course Documents” section will be used. The syllabus is posted in that section. Students are expected to periodically check Blackboard for current course information.

CLASS DECORUM: Students must insure that all beepers, cell phones and pagers are inoperable during class hours, and especially during exams. Failure to turn these devices off during exams may result in a failing grade for the exam. Conversations between, and among, students during class hours are strictly prohibited. During exams, students will not be allowed to leave the room for any reason, especially not for a restroom break. Students are expected to have studied the assigned material before coming to class.

EXTRA CREDIT: There are no provisions in this course for extra credit work. The only makeup work allowed will be for missed exams and then, only with approval from the instructor. Consequently, all students are strongly encouraged to be present for all classes, to take notes carefully, and to study the material in the text, not merely to read it.

SPECIAL DAYS: Friday, September 11, is the last day to drop a course without a "W." Friday, October 30, is the last day to drop a class. Thanksgiving Holidays are November 26-29. Friday, December 4, is the last day of class for the semester. Exam #3 is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, from 2:00PM – 4:30PM in MM 216.

E-MAIL: In all e-mails to the instructor, please set your browser so that your real name identifies you as the sender, not your e-mail alias nor your e-mail user name. In any event, please insure that in all e-mails to the instructor, your name, course number and course section are displayed.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS: From time to time, additional reading and/or study materials may be handed out to supplement the material discussed in class. Students are responsible for this material as well as the other material listed in the syllabus and in the Study Assignments.

GUEST SPEAKERS: It is my intent to have various guest speakers present during the course to address various real-world issues which may have an impact on the ability of the local government to provide services to its citizens. It is expected that ALL students will be present when guest speakers are scheduled.

POL 343 R: STUDY ASSIGNMENTS (Fall 2009)

August 27	Syllabus distributed; course requirements; Chapter 1
September 1	Chapter 1 (contd.)
September 8	Chapter 2
September 10	Chapter 2 (contd.)
September 15	Chapter 3
September 17	Chapter 4
September 22	Chapter 4 (contd.)
September 24	Chapter 5
September 29	Exam Number 1 (Chapters. 1-5)
October 1	Chapter 6
October 6	Chapter 7
October 8	Chapter 8
October 13	Chapter 9
October 15	Chapter 9 (continued)
October 20	Chapter 10
October 22	Exam Number 2 (Chapters 6 - 10)
October 27	Chapter 11
October 29	Chapter 11 (continued)
November 3	Chapter 12
November 5	Chapter 13
November 10	Chapter 13 (continued)
November 12	Chapter 14 Research papers due
November 17	Chapter 14 (continued)
November 19	Chapter 15
December 1	Chapter 15 (continued)
December 3	Chapter 16
December 15	Tuesday, Final Exam, (Chapters 11 - 16), 2:00PM-4:30PM, MM 216

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NOTE: Depending on local and regional events, additional assignments may be given.