

Course Outline
POLS 105
State and Local Government and Politics
3 Credit Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description.

State and Local Government and Politics

Discusses government and politics at the state, county, and local levels, focusing upon the current problems of America's metropolitan areas and the conflicts between cities and suburbs; gives special attention to Maryland and the Baltimore Metropolitan area.

Prerequisite: (RDNG 052 or LVR 2); (ENGL 052 or LVE 2); (MATH 081 or LVM 1)

Overall Course Objectives (Learning Objectives)

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe and explain America's federal system of government and the relationships between the Federal government and state and local governments.
2. Describe the structure of America's systems of government at the state and local levels and identify the functions each performs, and the relationships between them.
3. Identify the major features of the constitutions of the American states, and explain the role of these constitutions in structuring state and local governments.
4. Describe the forms and levels of citizen participation in state and local politics, including the importance of public opinion, mass media, voting, and political interest groups.
5. Describe the organization and roles of political parties in organizing and influencing state and local politics and government, and the particular features of state and local elections.
6. Describe the variety, features and roles of political interest groups in influencing state and local politics and government.
7. Describe the structure and roles of state governors in leading state governments and political systems, and the particular characteristics of state governors.
8. Describe the structure and particular features of state legislatures and the functions they perform in state government.
9. Describe the structure and functions of typical state administrative bureaucracies.
10. Describe the structure and functions of typical state judicial systems.
11. Describe the various structures of community governance systems, explain the functions they perform, and describe the community power structures within which they operate.
12. Explain the particular problems facing government and politics within metropolitan areas, including conflicts and cooperation between cities and their suburbs.
13. Describe and explain the major problems facing state and local government and the solutions currently being tried in areas that are primarily responsibilities of state and local governments.

Major Topics

1. The American federal system of government
2. The variety of American state and local government institutions
3. State constitutions
4. Forms of participation in state and local government and politics
5. State and local political parties, party systems, and elections
6. Political interest groups at the state and local levels
7. State governors
8. State legislatures
9. State administrative bureaucracies
10. State judicial systems
11. Local community governing systems: cities, counties, towns, townships, special districts
12. Local executives, legislative bodies, and administrative systems
13. Metropolitan politics and problems
14. State and local public problems and policies: e.g., crime control, civil rights, education, housing, transportation, poverty, welfare, planning, budget and taxation.

Course Requirements

Students will be expected to demonstrate learning through:

1. Periodic short objective in-class exercises (“quizzes”) at the instructor’s discretion;
2. Two or more extensive in-class examinations, including analytical essay questions;
3. Additional written or oral exercises (e.g., reports, term papers) at the instructor’s discretion.

Other Course Information

1. This course is a Social and Behavioral Sciences elective.
2. Regular attendance and participation in class is a requirement for this course.
3. Students will be expected to have regular access to a required text and such additional learning material as an instructor may assign.
4. The instructor, at his/her discretion, may arrange for guest lecturers, audio/video presentations, and/or attention to current events as a part of the Course content;
5. The instructor will be available to assist students through regular office hours, telephone, and in some cases voice mail and Internet email.

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