

**Common Course Outline**  
**POLS 105**  
**State and Local Government and Politics**  
**3 Credits**

**Community College of Baltimore County**

**Description**

**POLS 105 - State and Local Government and Politics** introduces students to the systematic study of government, politics and the legislative process. Students analyze the foundation, development, and exercise of executive power at the state, and local levels of government. Students examine the structure of state courts and their role in government, and study how state and local government affects their lives, jobs, and community. This course gives special attention to Maryland and Baltimore County Governments.

**3 Credits**

**Co-requisites:** (ESOL 052 and ESOL 054) or ACLT 053

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate how to interact with state and local governments in order to solve problems and receive services;
2. simulate the process of how bills become laws in the Maryland legislature through a classroom mock legislature;
3. explain how various states approach civil and voting rights;
4. outline how Maryland and Baltimore County governments are different from other state and local governments;
5. summarize the different forms of county and local governments in Maryland;
6. describe the structure of Maryland courts and how individuals become judges;
7. identify the functions of the American federal system of government at the state and local levels, and the relationships between them;
8. identify the major features of American State Government Constitutions and explain the role of these constitutions in structuring state and local governments;
9. discuss how citizens participate in state and local politics, including the importance of public opinion, mass media, voting, and political interest groups;
10. compare and contrast the organization and roles of political parties in influencing state and local politics, elections and government;
11. analyze the roles of political interest groups in influencing state and local politics and government;
12. evaluate the roles and powers of state governors, mayors, and county executives in leading state and local governments;

13. explain the structure and functions of typical state and local executive and administrative agencies;
14. interpret issues and events affecting the current state and local political environment; and
15. evaluate the credibility of sources based on criteria discussed in class.

## **Major Topics**

- I. Governments
  - A. Governors, State Agencies, Money and Budgets
  - B. Legislative Bodies- How Laws are Created
  - C. County Government
  - D. County Executives, County Councils and County Agencies
  - E. Municipal Governments, City Councils and City Agencies
  - F. Judicial Systems, Criminal Justice
- II. People, Politics and Political Behavior
  - A. Political Ideology
  - B. Interest Groups and Political Parties
  - C. Media and Public Opinion
  - D. Campaigns, Elections and Voting
  - E. Redistricting
- III. Public Policy Process
  - A. Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations
  - B. Financing State and Local Government
  - C. State and Local Government Policy Making
  - D. Effects of Government on Communities

## **Course Requirements**

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

### **Grading/exams**

- A minimum of two examinations, including analytical essay questions.
- Participation in a minimum of 5 collaborations, debates, oral presentations and/or online discussion forums about current political events and topics.
- A research assignment or project on a selected topic of interest and approved by the instructor.

Written Assignments: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources.