

**Political Science 3150**  
**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
**Fall 2021**

**Course Description**

Includes state and local politics, in addition to metro-urban politics.

**Course Objectives**

Political Science 3150 is a survey course designed to acquaint students with the institutions, politics, and policies of state and local governments in the United States. It offers a comparative perspective of the 50 American states and the thousands of municipal and county governments. Particular emphasis is placed on Utah politics and government. A basic assumption of this course is that individual citizens have an indispensable role in government, and that conveys important privileges and obligations upon each of us. A range of ideological positions is introduced. You should be prepared to entertain positions that you support or oppose on a wide range of current and sometimes controversial issues.

The following learning objectives are addressed in the class:

1. State and local governments are examined within the framework of the federal system, from the context of the U.S. Constitution, and based on the state constitutional patterns that have developed in the United States.
2. Political organizations within states and local communities and their relationship with one another and state and local governmental institutions are explored, particularly political parties and interest groups.
3. The key institutions of state and local governments are examined in detail, including state legislatures, county commissions and city councils, governor and mayors, state and local bureaucracies, and state and local courts.
4. The class focuses on specific public policy issues facing state and local governments particularly tax policies, budget and spending policies, and education.
5. The course seeks to increase your understanding of public policies in terms of current events and public policy issues that affect your life each day. The majority of assignments will test your ability to understand and evaluate current policy issues, with particular focus on issues that currently face Utah state and local governments. Assignments will incorporate familiarity with current events, and you will be expected to relate what is going on to topics being examined in the class.
6. The course seeks to increase class communication and engagement. Discussions within the class will focus on topics that reinforce topics that are being studied that week.

7. The main objectives of the course are to encourage the empowerment of each student as a citizen of your community and state, and to enhance your political decision-making skills.
8. This course aims to improve your critical thinking and writing skills. You will be expected to write and discuss your ideas on public policy, and to improve your research skills.

### Course Instructor

**Dr. Michael Petersen**

**(801) 230-7642 (Mobile)**

[michael.petersen@usu.edu](mailto:michael.petersen@usu.edu)

**Office Hours: M-Th 10:00-11:15., and by appointment**

### Contact Information

This is an online course and we will not hold face-to-face class meetings. However, I am available in the following ways:

1. Canvas has a built in e-mail tool. If you wish to send an e-mail message to me, I am immediately notified, and will reply as soon as I see a message from you. This is also an effective way to communicate one-to-one with any other class member.
2. My USU e-mail address is michael.petersen@usu.edu. I am continually notified if I have new e-mail, and will reply to your messages as soon as I see them.
3. You may call me on my cell phone whenever you need to reach me, at 801 230-7642. My regular office hours are M-Th 10:00-11:15. You may also arrange to meet me by Zoom at a time that is mutually convenient.

### Course Resources

#### Canvas

Canvas is where course content, grades, and communication will reside for this course.

- <http://canvas.usu.edu>
  - Your username is your A#, and your password is your global password (the same one you use for Banner or Aggiemail).
- For [Canvas](#), [Passwords](#), or any other computer-related technical support contact the [IT Service Desk](#).
  - **435 797-4357 (797-HELP)**
  - **877 878-8325**
  - <http://it.usu.edu>

- - - [servicedesk@usu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@usu.edu)

## Textbook

The textbooks for the course are:

**Auto Access eBook: State and Local Government**, Bowman, Kearney, and Scavo, 11th Edition, Cengage, 2022.

This textbook is paid for through an “Auto Access Digital Materials” charge placed on your student account when you registered for the course. **The textbook is accessed from the Bookshelf link from the Canvas homepage.**

Utah Politics and Government, Adam R. Brown, University of Nebraska Press, 2018, ISBN: 978-1-4962-0180-5. This textbook is available through the USU library as a free E-book. You may access the book online, or you may download individual chapters as a pdf file. The permanent link is: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/USU/detail.action?docID=5408199>. Additional reading assignments will be accessible online using Canvas, or are accessible as part of the USU online library database. Instructions for obtaining the readings will be provided in unit instructions.

## Course Requirements

Your grade in the class will be determined by the points you earn completing the following course requirements:

1. Participation in weekly discussions will be worth 10 points each week, and a total of 150 points. A new topic will be posted on Monday morning, and that discussion will be accessible for you to post comments and responses to other students’ comments through Sunday night. To earn the 10 points each week, you must respond to the initial message that I post, and you must post a second comment that responds to one of your classmate’s post. That is the minimum requirement; but you are encouraged to contribute more than two posts each week. Your posts must also demonstrate serious engagement in the subjects we will be learning during the term by using increasingly complex knowledge and cognitive dimensions.
2. 7 unit assessments must be submitted when a unit is completed. Each unit assessment is worth 25 points. You will submit responses to me through the Unit Assessment tool as you complete reading assignments and other material included in each unit, according to the schedule above. I will review these responses, provide feedback, and award points that will be recorded in your gradebook.
3. 2 multi-unit examinations will be worth 50 points, for a total of 100 points. Information presented in class and reading assignments for units 1-3 will be covered in Exam 1 and

information presented in class and reading assignments for units 4-5 will be included in Exam 2.

4. The final examination will account for 100 points. The final examination will be comprehensive of all activities, information, and assignments covered in the course.
5. 2 research assignments will be completed during the term. The first assignment will require you to do independent research and analysis, and to submit a brief report (typically 3 to 4 pages in length). This project is worth a maximum of 50 points. The points you receive will be based on the quality of your work and timely submittal. The second research assignment will require you to investigate and research a state legislator who either represents your, or about whom you wish to become more knowledgeable. At the end of the term, you will prepare a report about your activity. This project will be worth up to 100 points.

### **Grading Policy**

Points will be assigned to examinations, unit assessments, research papers, and online discussion participation, as follows:

<b>Required Activity</b>	<b>Points for each</b>	<b>Total points</b>
Unit Examinations (2)	50	100
Weekly Discussions (15)	10	150
Unit Assessments (7)	25	175
Research Project 1	50	50
Research Project 2	100	100
Final Examination	100	100
Total Points		650

### **Grade Determination**

Based on the percentage of total points you receive for all class assignments, your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

<b>Percent of Possible Points</b>	<b>Final Grade</b>
93 – 100	A
90 – 92	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
76 – 79	C+
70 – 75	C

66 – 69	C-
60 – 65	D+
55 – 59	D
50 – 54	D-
Less than 50	Fail

## Course Schedule

Political Science 3150 is to be completed during Fall Term, 2021. The class is divided into 7 units, each of which will be completed approximately every two weeks. Reading assignments and unit assessments are scheduled for each of the sections. You must complete the 7 unit assessments, participate in weekly online discussions, complete two research assignments, and take each examination to effectively participate in the class and to earn all available points. It is possible that adjustments may be made in the schedule.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
1. Introduction	Bowman Chapters 1-2; additional reading assignments Labor Day	August 30- September 11 September 6
2. State Constitutions	Bowman Chapter 3; Brown, pp. 11-16; additional reading assignments; begin Research Project 1	September 11- 25
3. Citizens, Elections & Parties	Bowman 4, 5; Brown, chapters 3, 5 pp 87-100; additional reading assignments.	September 26- October 9
Exam 1	Units 1-3	October 9-15
4. State Legislatures	Bowman, Chapter 6; Brown, chapters 4-5, pp. 78-87; additional reading assignments; Research Project 1 due;	October 10-20
5. Executive and Judicial Politics	Bowman 7 - 9; Brown, chapters 7-8; additional reading assignments; begin Research Project 2.	October 21- November 3
Exam 2	Units 4-5	November 4-11
6. State Financial Politics	Bowman 13; Brown, chapters 2 & 10; additional reading assignments; continue Research Project 2	November 4-20
7. Education Policies	Bowman, Chapter 15; additional reading assignments; Submit Research Project 2	November 21- December 11

	Thanksgiving Holiday	November 25-27
Final Exam	Units 1-7	December 13-17

### **Attendance Policy**

This is an online class, so class attendance does not occur. Instead, students are expected to maintain a schedule by which they complete course assignments according to the course schedule. I do recognize that extenuating circumstances do occur. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes (completing course assignments) for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies that I deem appropriate. If students do face such exigencies, they must contact me to discuss and resolve the circumstances. Students may be dropped from POLS 3150 for nonattendance. Failure to complete assignments scheduled during the first two weeks of the term constitutes non-attendance.

### **Library Services**

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at [libguides.usu.edu/rc](http://libguides.usu.edu/rc).

### **Classroom Civility**

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read [Student Code Article V Section V-3](#) for more information.

### **University Policies & Procedures**

#### **COVID-19 Classroom Accommodations**

To ensure that you receive the appropriate accommodation for COVID-19 related challenges, the University requires you to fill out the [COVID-19 Questionnaire](#). Upon doing so, the University [COVID CARE Team](#) will contact you to determine your needs and how to support you. The CARE Team will also contact your instructors and provide important direction on how best

to accommodate your needs. For additional reference, please see USU's [Attendance and Excused Absence](#) policy and the [COVID-19 Classroom Accommodations](#) page.

### **Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities**

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403](#) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

### **Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"**

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

*"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."*

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;

- Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: [ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity](#)

### **Sexual Harassment/Title IX**

Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Title IX and [USU Policy 339](#) address sexual harassment in the workplace and academic setting.

The university responds promptly upon learning of any form of possible discrimination or sexual misconduct. Any individual may contact USU's [Office of Equity](#) for available options and resources or clarification. The university has established a complaint procedure to handle all types of discrimination complaints, including sexual harassment ([USU Policy 305](#)), and has designated the Office of Equity Director/Title IX Coordinator as the official responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of sexual harassment.

### **Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy**

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### **Students with Disabilities**



USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, [drc@usu.edu](mailto:drc@usu.edu)). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Students who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 or who contract COVID-19 may also be eligible for accommodations.

### **Diversity Statement**

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1712, [studentservices@usu.edu](mailto:studentservices@usu.edu), TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: <https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services>, (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1728, [access@usu.edu](mailto:access@usu.edu); TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: <https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity>, (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:  
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode>

### **Grievance Process**

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: [Article VII](#).

**Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:**

- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Student Code](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [USU Academic Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy](#)

## **Emergency Procedures**

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

## **Mental Health**

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).

Students are also encouraged to download the [“SafeUT App”](#) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.