

**San José State University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**POLS/URBP 103: Local Government and Politics (Spring 2018)**  
**4 Units**

**Professor:** Garrick L. Percival

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**Office Hours:** Monday 1-2:30pm; Wednesday 1-2:30pm; and by appt.

**Class Days/Time:** Monday and Wednesday 10:30-11:45pm

**Classroom:** Hugh Gillis Hall 116

**CANVAS Website:** <http://sjsu.instructure.com>

**Course Description**

Offers a theoretical and practical study of local politics and government. The structure, role, and functions of city and county governments are examined. Students gain knowledge of the resources and skills required for effective citizenship in their communities.

Often overlooked by the national media, local politics and government have a profound effect on people's daily lives. Air and water quality, crime, economic opportunity, and the strength of the social safety net represent just a few issues shaped by local politics and government.

Students will learn about the structure and organization of local governments and how local political context--race, class, economic conditions--affect local policymaking. Political power authority will also be explored. Who controls city hall? Who benefits? Who loses? How do elections, organized interest groups, public opinion, the media, and the actions of state and national governments shape local policymakers' authoritative decisions?

We are fortunate to live in one of the most vibrant, diverse, and innovative large cities in America. Examining local politics in San José and the surrounding Bay Area region improves our knowledge about our own communities. They serve as a laboratory to apply theories of

politics and policymaking to the decisions governments make more generally. Overall, this course seeks to build students' capacity to understand and think critically about how America's cities, counties, school districts, etc. operate in a complex yet fascinating political environment.

### **Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. **CLO1:** Learn and apply social science theories of government and politics to explain the behavior, decisions, and outcomes of real life local governments
2. **CLO2:** Acquire knowledge and practical skills necessary to be an active participant in local government and political affairs
3. **CLO3.** Learn to think critically about the role and function of local governments in the broader American federalist system
4. **CLO4.** Develop a deeper understanding of the politics, issues, institutions, and governing processes of San Jose and/or other Bay Area cities and counties.

### **Political Science Program Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

1. **PLO1. Breadth:** Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
2. **PLO2. Application:** Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
3. **PLO3. Disciplinary Methods:** Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.
4. **PLO4. Communication Skills:** Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.
5. **PLO5. Citizenship:** Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Mapping POLS/URBP 103 Course Learning Outcomes to Political Science PLOs	Program Learning Outcomes	Assessment
CLO1: Learn and apply social science theories of government and politics to explain the behavior, decisions, and outcomes of real life local governments.	PLO1, 3	Quizzes, exams, term paper
CLO2: Acquire knowledge and practical skills necessary to be an active participant in local government and political affairs	PLO2, 4, 5	Quizzes, exams, local government in action student observation, city politics simulation
CLO3: Learn to think critically about the role and function of local governments in the broader American federalist system	PLO2, 3	Quizzes, exams, term paper, city politics simulation
CLO4: Develop a deeper understanding of the politics, issues, institutions, and governing processes of San Jose and/or other Bay Area cities and counties.	PLO5	Quizzes, exams, local government in action student observation, city politics simulation

**Required Texts/Readings**

**Textbooks**

*Local Politics: Governing at the Grassroots.* Terry Christensen and Tom Hogen-Esch. 2006. 2nd Ed. ME Sharpe.

Additional assigned readings are listed on the course schedule below.

**Library Liaison**

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help learning using the library for research.

His name and contact info is: Paul Kauppila  
 Librarian (Political Science Liaison)  
 (408) 808-2042  
[Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu](mailto:Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu)

## Course Requirements and Assignments

### Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

At SJSU, students are expected to spend two hours outside of class for every one hour of class time. Because this is a **four-unit class**, you can expect to spend a minimum of eight hours per week in addition to time spent in class and on scheduled tutorials or activities. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. In this class, one of the four units is an engagement unit, which consists of online quizzes and community-based assignments. You are expected to spend 45 hours this semester (both to prepare for and to complete the work) to successfully complete this unit. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

1. Course Readings: All assigned readings are required. It is expected students complete the assigned readings before attending class each week. Students may find it necessary to reading all or portions of the assigned readings more than once to comprehend complex material. Students who feel they need additional help with effective reading comprehension strategies should consult with the professor during office hours.

2. Exams: Two in class exams—a midterm and final—are required. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true false, and essay questions covering the assigned readings and lecture/discussion material. A short study guide will be issued on Canvas one week before each exam date.

3. Quizzes: A total of **six** online quizzes will be required. Quizzes will be taken on Canvas covering material in the assigned readings. Quiz questions will consist of multiple choice, true false, matching, and fill in the blank questions. Please refer to the course schedule for appropriate due dates and times. **\*\*Students who fail to submit a quiz on time will be afforded 1 make-up quiz during the semester for half credit. Beyond that, missed or late quizzes will not earn credit unless covered under the university make-up policy.\*\***

4. Local Government in Action: Student Observation. Several experiential learning projects are tied to this course. Students will be required to attend and observe **two** of the following: a San Jose (or other Bay Area) City Council meeting; a criminal trial or sentencing hearing at a Santa Clara County Superior Court; a San Jose City Council (or Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors) candidate forum/debate; or a San Jose City Council Committee or Planning Commission hearing. Students will be required to write a short 3 page paper reflecting on what you observed and experienced.

5. Term Paper The term paper (10-11 pages) assignment asks students to research and analyze a local policy or public problem. Issues might include the local housing crisis (i.e. rising costs of housing), crime and policing, reusable bag ordinances, livable or minimum wage policies, homelessness, and urban redevelopment. Of course, there are many other

possibilities. I will distribute a separate memo with more details about this assignment in the third week of class.

6. City Politics Simulation: During the last five class periods students will participate in an in-class city politics simulation. Students will be assigned to play a specific role (i.e. mayor, city council member, city manager, fire chief, chamber of commerce leader, religious leader, non--profit organizer, etc.) and will simulate tackling real life issues and problems in the fictitious city “Woodinville.” It is expected that students will work outside of class time to adequately prepare for the simulation. I will be handing out a separate memo that provides more details about the simulation project later in the semester.

**Grading Policy:**

Students’ grades will be calculated using the following assignments (with corresponding points and percentages)

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
Online Quizzes (6 @ 10 points each)	60	10.0%
Midterm Exam	150	25.0%
Final Exam	150	25.0%
Local Government Student Observation Activity #1	30	10%
Local Government Student Observation Activity #2	30	
Local Politics Term Paper	125	20.0%
City Politics Simulation	60	10.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100%</b>

Final Course Letter Grades will be assigned using the following scale:

A+=99-100%	A=93--98%	A-=90-92%	B+=87-89%
B=83-86%	B-=80-82%	C+=77-79%	C=73-76%
C-=70-72%	D+=67--69%	D=63-66%	D-60-62%
F=59% or below			

## Classroom Protocol and Policies

### Proper Use of Technology

At times, we will be using our tablets, smartphones, and laptops to work on assignments and group projects in class. ***Aside from those times, your phones and computers need to be turned off and put away.*** In the classroom environment, texting, social networking, web searching—or any of the myriad things we all can do with our phones—hurts our ability to listen and communicate as effectively as possible. If you absolutely must use your phone, please leave the classroom. Students who violate this policy more than once will be asked to leave.

### Email Communication

The easiest way to contact me is via email. Please be aware though that I will not (unless in unusual circumstances) respond to email after normal working hours (Monday through Friday 8am-5pm). During busy times of the semester I receive a high volume of emails so please give me at least 24 hours to respond (not counting weekends for reasons just described) before sending me a follow up.

### Late papers or Assignments Policy

Make-up exams are only given in cases of excused absences in accordance with the university's policy on excused absences. Circumstances that may lead to an excused student absence are subpoenas, jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, illness of a dependent, and bereavement for immediate family. If you are a member of a SJSU varsity intercollegiate athletic team, please provide me with your team schedule during the first week of the class. **Papers that are turned in late will be penalized a full letter grade for every 24 hours past the original due date.** For example, a paper submitted 10 minutes past the deadline will be penalized 1 full letter grade. This same penalty will apply to a paper turned in up to 24 hours past the original deadline. For every 24 hours after that, a paper will be penalized an additional letter grade and so on until the start value is an 'F.' Please be aware of this policy and be sure to get your writing assignments turned in on time.

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> I want to particularly draw your attention to the university's academic integrity policy which can be found here <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf>. Please note, all exams, quizzes, and class writing assignments for this class must be your own original work and must follow the rules outlined in the university academic integrity policy.

## Additional Class Notes

This is a course that covers a lot of material in a short period of time. I encourage every student in class to participate by asking questions and actively participating in group and class discussions. Although attendance in the class is not mandatory it is obviously difficult to participate if you do not attend class. You each have a lot to bring to the class and the course becomes much more rewarding if you frequently participate.

On most class days I will provide PDF versions of Power Point slides posted to Canvas <http://sjsu.instructure.com> that provide brief headings and outlines of the day's material. I will make my best effort to have the notes posted the evening before each day's class. Canvas will be used to take quizzes, view lecture notes, relevant newspaper articles and academic papers, and when the time comes, check your performance on the graded assignments. Finally, I am more than happy to help answer any questions you have about the course at any time during the semester. If my office hours do not work with your schedule please don't hesitate to make an appointment with me outside of normal office hours. The best way to contact me to set up an appointment is via email. Of course, you can talk with me right before or right after class as well. This should be a fun and rewarding semester. Work hard and good luck!

## POLS/UBRP 103: Local Government and Politics Schedule\*

*\*Schedule is subject to change with fair notice and will be announced via email and/or in--class announcement.*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/24	Course Introduction and Overview  <u>Readings</u> <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 1 Jessica Trounstein, "All Politics is Local: The Reemergence of the Study of City Politics" <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> (2009)



5	2/19  2/21	<p>City Charters and Local Land Use</p> <p><u>Readings</u> <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 12</p> <p>State Preemption of City Policy Decisions</p> <p><u>Readings</u> Emily Badger, “Blue Cities Want to Make Their Own Rules. Red States Won’t Let Them.” <i>New York Times</i> (2017) National League of Cities, “City Rights in an Era of Preemption: A State-by-State Analysis”</p> <p><b>Assignment: Quiz #3 posted on Canvas; due 2/26 10:30am</b></p>
6	2/26  2/28	<p>Technology, Political Power, and Inequality, in Silicon Valley</p> <p><u>Readings</u> “Left Behind: San Jose and Broken Promises of neoliberalism” “The Delusions of American Technopolis” “Deep Rooted Dysfunction”</p> <p><u>Readings</u> “This Valley is their Valley” “Forging a Different Path” “Despite Economic Growth, San Jose Remains Broke” <i>Local Politics Chapter 12</i></p> <p><b>Assignment: Quiz #4 posted on Canvas; due 3/5 10:30am</b></p>
7	3/5  3/7	<p>Political Machines and Patronage Politics</p> <p><u>Readings</u> <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 5</p> <p><u>Readings</u> Jessica Trounstine, “Political Monopolies in American Cities,” chapter 1 In Class Film: “Street Fight”</p>
8	3/12  3/14	<p>Political Machine and Patronage Politics</p> <p><u>Readings</u> No Assigned Readings—Review of Midterm Exam</p> <p><b>Midterm Exam</b></p>

9	3/19	Political Reform, and the City Manager Form of Government <u>Readings</u> <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 6
	3/21	<u>Readings</u> <i>Movers and Shakers: History of San Jose post--1970</i> (on Canvas)
	3/26	Spring Break  No Assigned Readings
	3/28	No Assigned Readings
10	4/2	Formal Power in City Government: City Council and Mayors <u>Readings</u> <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 7
	4/4	<u>Readings</u> Find your San Jose representative! <a href="http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1187">http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1187</a> <b>Assignment: Quiz #5 posted on Canvas; due 4/9 10:30am</b>
11	4/9	Formal Power in City government: The Bureaucracy <u>Readings</u> <i>Local Politics</i> chapter 8
	4/11	<u>Readings</u> "What will become of Public Sector Unions Now" <b>Assignment: Local Government in Action Reflection Paper due</b>
12	4/16	Crime, Law Enforcement, and the County Prosecutor <u>Readings</u> Angela J. Davis, "Racial Fairness in the Criminal Justice System: The Role of the Prosecutor" <i>Columbia Human Rights Law Review</i>
	4/18	<u>Readings</u> Juleyka Lantigua-Williams, "Are Prosecutors the Key to Justice Reform"? <i>The Atlantic</i> (2016) John Pfaff, "A Mockery of Justice for the Poor" <i>New York Times</i>

