

**Tompkins Cortland Community College**  
**Master Course Syllabus**

**Course Discipline and Number: POSC 104**  
**Course Title: American State & Local Government**

**Year: 2020-2021**  
**Credit Hours: 3**

**Attendance Policy:** *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

**Services for Students with Disabilities:** *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

**Course Description**

This course is designed to study the forms, function, and services of state governments and representative local governments. The dynamics of state and local governments are also considered. POSC 104 fulfills the SUNY General Education Social Sciences requirement. Prerequisites: Prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 100, MATH 090, and RDNG 116 if required by placement testing. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall and spring semesters.

**Course Context/Audience**

POSC104 is appropriate for students who wish to pursue a career in the field of political science, work in the public sector, or become better educated consumers of political information and more informed citizens.

**Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations**

- Writing:** WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.
- Math:** M1 Taking MATH 090 (if needed) – Course requires limited use of very basic mathematical skills.
- Reading:** R3 Course may be taken concurrently with RDNG 116.

**Course Goals**

The goal of this course is to help students acquire a working knowledge of judicial, legislative and executive systems at the state and local level.

**Course Objectives/Topics**

Objective/Topic	# Hours
Students will gain basic knowledge of patterns and politics of power in state and local government systems.	40%
Powers to states and localities provided by the creation of state constitutions, Constitutional revision and Federalism will be examined.	20%

Students will gain knowledge and insight into the authority and balance of powers among state and local executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.	20%
Students will critically assess state and local public and economic policy making processes and decisions, elections' processes and outcomes.	20%

**General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness**

<b>CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES</b>	<b>HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES</b> (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.</li> <li>➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.</li> <li>➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions.</li> <li>➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.</li> </ul>	<p>Students are provided contemporary and historical state and local political and governmental issues to analyze and solve. Lectures, discussion and films; implementation of related assignments, group discussion and projects, student presentations, and other appropriate assessment tools.</p> <p>Individual and group critical thinking assignments and research projects are created. Library and internet databases and videos may be utilized by instructors and students.</p> <p>Students collect and analyze data from research databases and academic journals. As they analyze problems they review multiple approaches and solutions.</p>
<b>SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES</b>	<b>HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES</b> (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live.</li> <li>➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences.</li> </ul>	<p>Examination of state and local initiatives on immigration and cultural differences noted in communities and states will occur. Lectures, discussion and films; implementation of related assignments, group discussion and projects, student presentations, and other appropriate assessment tools.</p> <p>Topics covered under the sections policy, public opinion, political campaigns and ventures exposes students to wide array of global awareness issues Students will examine and analyze public and economic policies and applications. Citizens' roles in these are discussed and examined.</p> <p>Political ventures, governmental policies and citizens' actions affect the economy and environment. Related strategies and their consequences are examined.</p>

**Instructional Methods**

Appropriate methods are lecture and group and individual discussion. Active student participation is required. Multimedia presentations - CD Rom, Power Point slides, Web pages, You Tube videos - are available and should be incorporated into the teaching of this course. Course topics and order of coverage should include: the history, creation and ongoing implementation of the local and state government and politics in the United States; examination of the roles of federalism and ongoing debate; the formation of public opinion, economic and state and local policy and their impacts, political structures and civil liberties and rights.

Readings, class work and outside assignments and exams will be utilized.

**Methods of Assessment/Evaluation**

Method	% Course Grade
Required: Exams or quizzes. These may include objective questions but should also include essay responses. Written take home options may be used as an alternative.	20-80%
Required: The student must complete a written research assignment. A minimum of a five-page assignment or its equivalent must be used. For example, research papers, position papers, research reviews, annotated bibliography assignments, oral presentations with written components and group projects with written components. The assignment must include proper bibliographies or reference pages and in-text citations	10-60%
Required: Attendance and class participation. Periodic class assignments or homework must be given. These should involve critical thinking exercises or analyses of contemporary problems in criminal justice: individual and group assignments should be utilized. Each instructor will have the discretion of designing these assignments.	5-30%
Optional: Presentations - individual and group presentations may be used as desired. These may involve oral and written components and may be graded as individual or group projects.	10-40 %

**Text(s)**

Bowman, 2011 State and Local Government, 8e Cengage Learning  
 Dye. 2012 Politics in States and Communities 14e. Pearson Education.

OR other appropriate text as chosen by the department chair and instructor.

**Bibliography**

American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials. Barbara A. Bardes, Mack Shelley II, and Stephen Schmidt, 2009 Edition, Wadsworth Publishing Co.

American Government: The Essentials, 12th Edition, James Q. Wilson, John Dilulio, Jr. and Mena Bose, 2011, Wadsworth and Cengage Learning.

Understanding American Government, 12th Edition, Susan Welch, John Gruhl, John Comer and Susan Rigdon 2010, Wadsworth and Cengage Learning

Government by the People, National, State, and Local, 2009 Edition, 23/E David B. Magleby, *Brigham Young University* Paul C. Light, *Brookings Institute* Longmna Publishing.

**Other Learning Resources**

<p><b>Audiovisual</b>                      No resources specified</p>
<p><b>Electronic</b>  <a href="http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS/">http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS/</a></p>
<p><b>Other</b>                      No resources specified</p>