State and Local Politics PS203
Politics in Oregon

COURSE SYLLABUS, SPRING, 2003

Instructor: Doug Clark
Phone/Voice-Mail: 917-4557
E-Mail: doug.clark@linnbenton.edu

Office: T-212
Hours: 9am > m-w 10am > t

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

This course is designed to introduce students to the nature of American Federalism, the place of states and localities in the American system of government and to the specific character of Oregon as a political and economic system. Using Oregon as our primary case study, we will examine the structure, processes and issues that characterize life at the “local level” in the US today.

This is a particularly appropriate subject for study at this point in time because issues of local control, Federal-state relations, decentralization, and devolution of national power increasingly shape the policy debates throughout the nation. The Republican’s “revolution” puts states and localities at the core of their struggle with Washington. Meanwhile, the American left takes aim at the increasingly global power of the capitalist system and its governmental allies and emphasizes the importance of fighting the anti-social results of corporate control with grass roots organizing and local democracy. If this weren’t enough fuel for political conflict, we are also in the midst of a deep economic recession that is stripping state and local governments of their revenues and forcing leaders to adopt austerity budgets.

So, this timely subject will help students understand these current struggles over the scope and scale of government in this country and to wrestle with many of the issues which are at the top of the agendas of state and local governments throughout this nation and in Oregon in particular.

TEXTS AND READINGS:

PRMIS-State and Local Government
A RIVER LOST by Blaine Harden
THE OREGONIAN, daily and Sunday (student rates available by calling the Oregonian at 753-6016 (Corvallis) or 926-4186 (Albany)—ONLINE @ http://www.oregonlive.com/oregonian/
Additional Readings and Resources are on-line or will be distributed in class.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND EVALUATION:

To the greatest extent possible, this course will be operated as a seminar. This means that I will lecture occasionally and we will make use of formal written and video materials some of the time—but much of the course will revolve around the information and observations generated by the members of the class. For you to be successful you will need to complete the readings and exercises on time and most important, make the commitment to attend class—every time. Our activities and assignments will include guest speakers, trips to the state legislature, attendance at meetings of local government or citizen’s organizations, and interviews.
Grades will be calculated as follows:

Participation points = 20
10 discussion sheets @ 5 points each = 50
1 interview = 50
1 Legislative report = 100
1 Oregon sustainability report = 50
1 exam @ 50 points = 50

320 total possible points

A= 90%, B = 80%, C = 70%, D = 60%  (bonus points available for attendance, on discussion sheets, and the test)

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Most of the written assignments are take-homes. They should be turned in on time. I will not accept papers that are more than three (3) class meetings late. Within this time-frame, late papers will lose 40% of their value. I will try to return on-time papers within three class meetings. For late papers, I make no promises. If your attendance is good and your papers on time, you can re-write papers to improve your grade.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Generally, we will use Monday as a newspaper discussion day. Wednesday will be used for lectures, films and the introduction of new material. Friday will be set aside for discussing the readings for the week. Participation points may be earned on Mondays for leading newspaper discussion.

COURSE CALENDAR AND TOPICS SCHEDULE:

Week 1 (March 31) E Pluribus Unum in Theory and Practice
   Reading: PRIMIS, Foundations--- Federalism: Forging a Nation

Week 2 (April 7) Oregon: Where the Action Is----------Every Other Year!
   Reading: PRIMIS, The Setting of State and Local Government
            Bill Lunch, “Oregon Politics: Upstate and Down”
            Bill Lunch/Dan Balmer, “Progressive Means Yield Regressive Ends”

Week 3 (April 14) State and Local Government: The Issue is $
   Reading: PRIMIS, Financing State and Local Government

Week 4 (April 21) State and Local Government: Laws Without Government
   Reading: PRIMIS, State and Local Legislatures
            State Policy-Making
Week 5 (April 28) Innovative Oregon: Managing Growth
Reading: Brent Walth, “The Birth of the Plan”
        Brent Walth, “No Deposit, No Return………….”

Take-Home Test

Week 6 (May 5) Struggles in Paradise: The Columbia
Reading: Blaine Harden, A River Lost:
        Introduction
        Chapter 1, “Slackwater”

Week 7 (May 12) Struggles in Paradise: Economy and Environment
Reading: Blaine Harden, A River Lost:
        Chapter 2, “Better Off Underwater”
        Chapter 3, “Machine River”
        Chapter 4, “The Biggest Thing on Earth”
        Richard Clinton, “Living at the End of An Era”

Week 8 (May 19) Struggles in Paradise: The Politics of Hydro
Reading: Blaine Harden, A River Lost:
        Chapter 5, “The Flood”
        Chapter 6, “Ditches from Heaven”
        Chapter 7, “A Noble Way to Use a River”
        William Robbins, “Diminishing Abundance and the Economic Culture of the Pacific Northwest”

Week 9 (May 26) Struggles in Paradise: Regionalism and Sustainability
Reading: Blaine Harden, A River Lost:
        Chapter 8, “Wild and Scenic Atomic River”
        Chapter 9, “Born with No Hips”
        Chapter 10, “Slackwater II”

Week 10 (June 2) Struggles in Paradise: A Political Future
Reading: Blaine Harden, A River Lost:
        Chapter 11, “The River Game”
        Epilogue

Week 11 (June 9) Legislative Report due
Week 11 (June 11)  *Final Thoughts, Future Choices*

*Research Report*