

Political Science 227
Liebschutz
Fall 2004
Meliora 219
Tuesday 2:00-4:40

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NEW YORK STATE POLITICS

Overview

“After living a dozen years in New York, I don’t pretend to comprehend their politics,” observed Oliver Wolcott, an early governor of Connecticut, in the 18th century. “It is a labyrinth of wheels within wheels.” At the dawn of the 21st century, New York’s politics are still labyrinthine. *Our challenge in this course is to sort out and explain those politics, and, in so doing, to extend our understanding not only of the institutions, political processes, policies and political culture of a single state, but also of the American states more generally.*

The current New York State constitution (now more than 100 years old) establishes the state governmental institutions and stipulates their formal powers. *What are the prerogatives of the New York governor, legislature, and courts? How important are these formal powers in explaining contemporary relationships between the governor and the legislature?* New York is characterized by the existence of both strong parties and strong interest groups who, separately and together, are key factors in the state’s dynamic political processes. *What roles do parties and interest groups play in the election of state-level public officials? What roles do they play in the formulation, adoption, and implementation of public policies?* Finally, New York’s political culture is both compassionate and competitive. *How useful is New York’s political culture for understanding public policy outputs?*

These questions help to frame our study of New York State politics during this fall semester when New Yorkers, on November 2, elect 150 members of the State Assembly, 62 members of the State Senate, 29 members of the House of Representatives, a U.S. Senator, and the President of the United States.

Course Objectives

The objective of the course, in brief, is to familiarize you with the institutions, political processes, (selected) public policies, and the political culture of the Empire State.

I have designed the course to achieve this objective through common, assigned readings, guest speakers, field research, written assignments, and campaign observation opportunities.

Texts to be purchased

Required:

1. Gray, Virginia and Russell Hanson. *Politics in the American States: A Comparative Analysis*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2004.
2. Liebschutz, Sarah F. *New York Politics and Government: Competition and Compassion*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- 3 Palazzolo, Daniel J. and James W. Ceaser, *Election Reform: Politics and Policy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2004).

Recommended:

1. Hacker, Diana, *A Writer's Reference*, Bedford, latest edition
2. A second book in the University of Nebraska series on the politics and governments of the American states. [Select from Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas (2nd edition), Colorado, Hawai'i, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and West Virginia. [Note: Except for Arizona and Arkansas (2nd edition) all of these books are in the Library's collection; all can be purchased through Amazon.com and will be shipped within 2-3 days.]

Course Requirements

1. All assigned readings
2. Two Papers. Paper #1 is due on October 26. Paper #2 is due on December 10. See details below.
3. Two (individual and/or 2-person) oral presentations. The presentations will be expositions of Paper #1 and Paper #2. The oral presentations should be 15 minutes long, with a 10 minute question period following. A 1-page outline is to be distributed to the class at the outset of the presentation. Visual aids are highly recommended. Oral presentations are scheduled on November 9, and December 7.
4. Participation in class discussions. See General Class Policies.
5. Participation in field trip, if offered, to observe campaigning for state or national offices. Date and time to be arranged.

The course requirements will be weighted as follows:

Paper #1.....	35 percent
Paper #2.....	35 percent
Oral presentations.....	20 percent
Class participation.....	10 percent

Class Schedule

Topic and Assignment

Date

I. INTRODUCTION TO NEW YORK AND THE COURSE

SEPTEMBER 7

II. POLITICAL CULTURE AND DEMOGRAPHY

SEPTEMBER 14

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapters 1 and 2

Gray and Hanson, Chapter 1

Nebraska Series book, Political Culture chapter

***Elazar**, *The American Mosaic*, Chapter 8. [optional]

****Wirt**, "'Soft' Concepts and 'Hard' Data," *Publius* 21(Fall 1991): 1-13.
[optional]

III. THE STATE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

SEPTEMBER 21

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapter 3

New York State Constitution

Download at: www.dos.state.ny.us

Nebraska Series book, Constitution chapter

* **Galie**, *Ordered Liberty*, Chapter 16.

OR

* **Benjamin and Dullea**, *Decision 1997*, pages 3-43.

IV. NEW YORK IN THE FEDERAL CONTEXT

SEPTEMBER 28

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapter 4.

Gray and Hanson, Chapter 2.

Nebraska Series book, Federal System chapter

Palazzolo and Ceaser, Chapter 2.

***Liebschutz**, *Bargaining Under Federalism*, Introduction and Chapter 1.

Websites for state and national candidates,

***Hamilton, Madison, and Jay**, *The Federalist Papers*, Introduction and
Numbers 10, 17, 39, 45. [optional]

Note: *=Library Reserve Desk

**=Electronic Reserve

V. THE STATE LEGISLATURE

OCTOBER 5

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapter 6

Gray and Hanson, Chapter 5

Nebraska Series book, State Legislature chapter

Website for National Conference of State Legislatures (with links to individual legislatures): www.ncsl.org

Brennan Center, The New York State Legislative Process: An

Evaluation

and Blueprint for Reform, Executive Summary.

www.brennancenter.org

NOTE: MELIORA WEEKEND HAS SEVERAL EVENTS RELATED TO THE WORLD OF POLITICS. THE FOLLOWING ARE REALLY SPECIAL AND I HIGHLY RECOMMEND YOU ATTEND SOME OR ALL OF THEM.

Friday, October 8:

1:00-2:30 “Ms. President?: Trusting Women to Call the Shots”

3:00-5:00 PSC Department Open House; Professor Niemi on different voting systems

Saturday, October 9:

11:00-12:00 James Carville and Mary Matalin (reserved seating for political science students)

12:15-1:30 Diversity luncheon with Manning Marable, political science professor, Columbia U.

1:45-2:45 Roundtable on the future of African-American politics

3:15-4:15 Larry Kudlow of CNBC nightly broadcast Kudlow and Cramer

VI. PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

OCTOBER 12

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapter 5

Gray and Hanson, Chapter 3

Nebraska Series book, Parties and Elections chapter

Palazzolo and Ceaser, Chapters 1, 13 and one chapter on a state of your choice.

VII. THE GOVERNOR AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

OCTOBER 19

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapters 7 and 8

Gray and Hanson, Chapters 7 and 9

Nebraska Series book, Governor/Executive Branch chapter

**VIII. THE 2004 CAMPAIGNS IN NEW YORK: PRESIDENT,
CONGRESS, AND THE STATE LEGISLATURE**

OCTOBER 26

FIRST PAPER DUE

Readings:

**Gelman and King, "Enhancing Democracy Through Legislative Redistricting," *American Political Science Review* 88 (September 1994): 541-559.

<nsl.org> (**National Conference of State Legislatures**), passim.

New York Times, passim

Democrat and Chronicle, passim.

IX. STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS:

NOVEMBER 2

FOCUS ON WELFARE REFORM

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapters 10 and 12

Grey and Jacob, Chapter 2 (pp. 49-56) and Chapter 10

Nebraska Series Book, State-local, Local governance chapter

***Liebschutz**, *Managing Welfare Reform in Five States*, Chapter 4.

X. THE ELECTION RESULTS: ORAL PRESENTATIONS

NOVEMBER 9

Note: *=Library Reserve Desk

**=Electronic Reserve

XI. COURTS AND CRIMES

NOVEMBER 16

Readings:

Liebschutz, Chapter 9

Gray and Hanson, Chapter 8

Nebraska Series book, Judicial Branch chapter

XII. THE CITY OF NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 23

Reading:

Liebschutz, Chapter 11

XIII. EDUCATION EQUITY: POLICY AND POLITICS

NOVEMBER 30

Readings:

Gray and Hanson, Chapter 12

Nebraska Series book, Public Policy chapter

Campaign for Fiscal Equity, inc. v. State of New York

Download summary of the decision at: www.cfequity.org

XIV. LAST CLASS: ORAL PRESENTATIONS

DECEMBER 7

SECOND PAPER DUE

DECEMBER 10

THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

In General: The first paper, as described below, is a collaborative, 2-person team, effort. I expect you to submit and justify for my prior approval **no later than September 21** your state legislative campaign selection. I will schedule an individual conference with each team, or more than one if needed, to discuss your research strategy. I am also more than willing to hold individual conferences on your second paper, which is, as described below, either an individual or team effort

PAPER #1: DUE OCTOBER 26

Length: 9-11 double-spaced pages plus appendixes and references

Select a New York State Senate or Assembly legislative district for examination of the 2004 election campaign for Senate or Assembly.

You have two goals in this paper. The first is to describe, discuss, and analyze:

- the district's economic, social, and political characteristics
- the district's past election patterns [NOTE: Use the incumbent's prior district for this description, if possible]
- the positions and strategies and pertinent background of the candidates.

The second goal is to predict the election outcome and to justify your prediction.

You should use both primary and secondary sources.

Primary (original) sources include:

A. *Government documents* (state government publications such as the Comptroller's Reports, Governor's State of the State Messages, Assembly, Senate documents, in the Library collection, as well as from the Internet (e.g., New York State home page; home page of candidates; home page of the New York State Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment <latfor.state.ny.us>; <wxxi.org>; and <nycitizens.org>).

B. *Interviews with candidates and/or campaign staff.*

Secondary sources include:

Books;

Local and national newspapers (e.g., *New York Times*, *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, *Albany Times Union* **NOT** *USA Today*);

Journals (e.g., *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *Empire State Report*, *Governing Magazine*, *State and Local Government Review* **NOT** *Time or Newsweek*;

PAPER #2: DUE DECEMBER 10

Length: 10-12 double-spaced pages plus references and appendix materials. Place supporting tables and other materials in the appendix.

Your assignment in this paper is to analyze a single New York State public policy. You have a wide arena from which to choose, ranging from the environment, to social welfare, to criminal justice, to education, to transportation to taxes. Your analysis is to be framed within two contexts.

- The first context is the political culture, institutions, and political processes of New York.

- The second context is interstate and comparative. Your state for comparison is the one in the University of Nebraska series you have been using all semester in class discussions.

As in your first paper, you will draw on both primary and secondary data sources. I don't expect you to conduct more interviews for this paper, but rather to make use of those (obviously, only those pertinent to this topic) you carried out for your first paper.

Paper #2 should contain the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Background—the pertinent demographic, cultural, economic, social, and institutional dimensions that frame the specific policy issue in New York and in your comparison state
3. The nature of the policy problem
4. The policy alternatives for consideration by the governor and legislature of New York and your comparison state
5. The policy “solution” adopted in New York and your comparison state
6. Implementation issues, if ascertainable
7. Summary and Conclusions. Here you should ponder the broader contexts of your analysis. Do state characteristics matter in the choices made by state governments? To whom? Why?

GENERAL CLASS POLICIES

1. **Very important:** Your class participation is a key component of this course. You have the potential to make creative and original contributions. However, unless you are in class, those contributions will not be realized. Accordingly, more than one absence without a signed medical excuse will result in a drop of one letter grade from the final grade.
2. It is my policy to discourage both late assignments and incomplete grades. Work handed in after the date when due will be penalized one letter grade. Students who take an incomplete at the end of the semester will be assessed an initial incomplete penalty of 10 percent plus a further penalty of 10 percent 30 days after the end of the semester.
3. All assignments and other materials will be distributed only once. If a student finds it necessary to miss a class, he/she should make arrangements with other class members to get the materials.
4. I would appreciate hearing from anyone in this class who has a special need that may be the result of a disability. I am reasonably sure we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary, be it special seating or other accommodation. See me after class, or in my office, as soon as possible.

Writing Hints

Communications skills are essential for success. Unfortunately, not all legislators or public policy analysts or public administrators or, sad to say, political scientists, practice good skills; there are numerous examples of "officialiese" writing that obfuscates rather than illuminates. Keep the following points in mind as you develop writing skills in this course:

1. KISS (keep it simple and straightforward) should be your general guiding rule. Avoid long, convoluted sentences. Exercise correct word usage. Don't try to change nouns into verbs. Don't select words on the basis of their presumed impressiveness. For an excellent source on the KISS principle, consult William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* (New York: MacMillan, latest edition).
2. Pay attention to format. Consult a commonly accepted source and be sure your paper is consistent with that format. I strongly recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference* (Boston: Bedford, latest edition) or Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, latest edition).
3. Remember that you are responsible for the final product, so proofread carefully. Spelling and grammatical errors, sloppiness, and problems in organization will all result in grade penalties.
4. A picture is worth a thousand words. Keep this in mind as you pursue prudence in writing. Much communication in public, private, and non-profit sectors is designed to convey a message in a brief space or period of time. Diagrams, tables, and other illustrations can greatly aid this process.