

**Political Science 207**  
**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
**Spring 2008**

Section 501 (10:20 - 11:10 MWF)

Section 503 (12:40 - 1:30 MWF)

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**Office Hours: 2:00-3:30 Monday, Wednesday & Friday**  
(other days or times by appointment)

use shuttle bus - only limited student parking at Bush Library complex
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**Course Texts**

- O Thomas R. Dye & Susan A. MacManus, *Politics in States and Communities* (Prentice Hall, 12<sup>th</sup> ed., 2007)
  
- O Gary M. Halter, *Government & Politics of Texas: A Comparative View* (McGraw-Hill, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 2008)

**Course Overview**

By almost any measurement, the past two centuries of American history have produced a substantial increase in the power of the national government, much of it being at the expense of state and local governments. Sources of this "centralization" range from shifting public and elite views about the appropriate policymaking balance between the national and state governments (fueled in part by a critical evaluation of these governments' different fiscal and policy capacities) to changing constitutional understandings of the American Union to recent reforms in the political participation system that give voice to those who are more likely to benefit from an increased domestic role for the national government.

But given American political and constitutional traditions, there has usually been along with this trend toward "centralization" also a call for some sort of de-centralization, both as a goal in itself and as a means to address some of the problems in national-state (and local) relationships. Supporters of a revitalized "federal" (or at least a more decentralized) governing arrangement claim that state governments today, unlike those in the past, are reasonably representative and responsive to the people, that these governments will exercise their regulatory authority in ways that are sensitive to individual rights and liberties, and that these reformed and modernized governments now have a constitutional and institutional capacity to manage more effectively their respective public sectors. This course will examine these and other issues in an effort to evaluate whether states and localities can indeed act today in ways that inspire confidence in their governing capacities.

<b>Exam*</b> exam questions (all machine-scored) are drawn from both lectures and assigned text pages	<b>Percent of Course Grade</b>	<b>Lecture Series</b>	<b>Text Chapters**</b> see <i>Key Terms...</i> & lecture notes for specific assigned topics
P Exam 1 - Fri, Feb 8	20	P Changing American Union	D & M: Chs. 1 & 16 Halter: Chs. 1 & 11:256-60
P Exam 2 - Fri, Mar 7  <b>NOTE: Exam 2 will be held on the Friday preceding the start of Spring Break - so make your travel plans accordingly .</b>	25	P Fiscal and Policy Capacity of States & Localities  P Constitutional Understandings of the American Union	D & M: Ch. 14 Halter: Ch. 10  D & M: Ch. 3*** Halter: Ch. 2:33-40
P Exam 3 - Mon, Apr 7	25	P Individual & Minority Rights and the Regulatory Authority of the States (Part 1)	D & M: Chs. 2,15:532-43 555-66 Halter: Ch. 2:16-33
<b>Final Exam</b>			