

University of Montana
Baucus Institute Department of Public Administration & Policy
Alexander Blewett III School of Law
PUAD 526: State and Local Government
Fall 2020: August 19 – November 23
Online
Three (3) Credit Hours

Instructor: Dr. Christina Barsky

Pronouns: She/her/hers

Classroom: Online

Office: LAW 149 or remote

E-Mail: Christina.Barsky@mso.umt.edu

E-mail is the most reliable way to reach me. In general, I reply to messages within 48 hours (or **two business days**) of receipt. Please include **PUAD 526** in the subject line of your message (this increases my reply efficiency).

Office Telephone: 406-243-2871

Mobile Telephone: 406-426-1726

Call or text, Monday-Friday between 8am and 5pm.

You must leave a voice message for me to know that I have missed your call.

Office Hours/Meeting Virtually: Wednesdays & Thursdays 2:30-3:30pm (in-person or virtually) or by appointment.

Please visit www.calendly.com/doctorbarsky to schedule a meeting.

To meet outside the available hours, please e-mail me. Include a few days/times you are available and what you would like to discuss.

Privilege

I would like to begin our time together by acknowledging that we, at the University of Montana, are in the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples, including the Séliš, Ksanka, and Qlispè. Many others, including Blackfeet, Nez Perce, Shoshone, Bannock, and Coeur D'Alene, had and continue to have a crucial presence in the area. We acknowledge the role that the governance and legal system has played in the removal of Indigenous peoples from these lands, and, through our commitment to education, service, and scholarship, strive to improve the quality of justice and equitable policy for future generations. Doing so demands respect for tribal sovereignty and Indigenous cultures as well as accountability to the needs and perspectives of Indigenous peoples, who, from time immemorial to the present and until the end of time, protect and remain connected with this land on which we gather, live, learn, and work.

I situate myself as a guest actively working against colonialism and injustice. I thank the people of Turtle Island, the First People, for the privilege of learning in this space.

Inclusion

All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, you will have the opportunity to indicate the name you should be called and the pronouns with which you should be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support students in doing so as well. Throughout the semester I will push you to think about inclusivity and how we, as students of public administration, can prepare ourselves to best serve the public.

COVID-Safe Policies

Central to our public service mission is collectively working together. Although this course does have assignment deadlines that should be followed, the Department asks that if you are sick or become sick, to please work with the department chair (Dr. Sara Rinfret) to develop a plan for successful completion in this course. The Department will follow federal, state, local, university and CDC guidelines for COVID-19. If a student, a member of their family or immediate social group becomes symptomatic, please follow federal, state, local, university, and CDC guidance and work with DPAP department chair and course professor (me) to complete required coursework. Please take the time to review our [Department's COVID-Safe FAQ guide](#).

Learning During a Pandemic

We are living through a truly unique time – not one of us has experienced a global pandemic. Many in our DPAP family “plan to plan,” finding comfort in being prepared and mitigating disorder. The only thing that *is* certain is *uncertainty*. With this in mind, I propose the following principles to foster a successful, supportive learning environment:

1. Your health and safety – physical, mental, and emotional – are *the most important*. We will prioritize supporting one another
2. Together, we will encourage intellectual nourishment, social connection, support, understanding, and personal accommodation
3. We will remain flexible and adaptable in these unprecedented, dynamic times

Information pertaining to SARS-CoV-2 /COVID-19, including resources for coping with stress and managing mental health are located under the “COVID-19” tab on our Moodle class page.

Course Description

This course is designed to offer an overview of how decisions are made at the sub-national level (that is, state and local) in the United States. In doing so, students will develop an understanding of both the theory and practice of government administration outside the federal bureaucracy. Because 2020 is a presidential election year and elections are administered at the state and local level, this course will capitalize on the opportunity to consider state and local government through the lens of election reform and administration. As a result of the unique American democratic experiment (that is Federalism), policies, problems, and solutions are frequently addressed throughout the nation’s 50 state governments and more than 89,000 local governments, well beyond the halls of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. This course will utilize both academic and practitioner approaches to examine state and local governments in the United States.

Expectations for Student Learning for this Course & the University of Montana’s MPA Program

1. Understand how public policy is made at the state and local level
2. Explore the dependencies and interdependencies of varying government entities
3. Apply knowledge to explain current developments facing state and local governments
4. Critically evaluate the role of power, representation, culture, diversity, and inclusion (i.e., cultural awareness) in the public sector
5. Demonstrate graduate-level writing, critical thinking, research, analytical, and public speaking skills

Required Course Materials

Books and Readings:

- Smith, Kevin B. & Greenblatt, A. (2020). *Governing states and localities* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
 - **S&G** in the course schedule
- Moodle required readings (noted with an asterisk in the course schedule, let me know if you experience challenges with the quality of scanned materials)
- Weekly (Monday) e-mails (make sure you check your UM e-mail regularly)
- Watch weekly lectures
- Watch, listen, and read additional materials as posted (e.g., podcasts, budgeting in the news)

MPA Portfolio

If you are using any assignments from this course for your final MPA portfolio, it is your responsibility to keep track of individual grades and professor feedback. Use your computer’s “snipping tool” or screenshot to capture graded feedback to save with your files. [We ask that you very carefully read the MPA Portfolio requirements listed on our website](#) (e.g., you cannot use outlines or case write-ups). We ask that you be mindful of individual and group projects you participate in each semester so you stay on track – we appreciate you doing so. Each DPAP professor will always offer an option to complete projects independently. If you have MPA portfolio questions, please contact the MPA Director.

Course Expectations

Using Moodle

Since this is an online course, you are required to visit our Moodle site at least once per day. Participate in Moodle 101 for students if you are unfamiliar with the platform. Visit <http://umonline.umt.edu> to access the class.

Weekly E-mails & Lectures

Every Monday (or, if Monday is a University holiday, the following day) I will send an e-mail via Moodle to your University of Montana e-mail account providing important updates for the week. Be sure to read each e-mail as soon as you receive it. As well, every week I will post a brief video lecture that provides an overview of the materials for the week and/or highlights of a specific skill, idea, or practice. These videos are organized by week and are embedded in our Moodle site. Videos **are not** a replacement for the weekly readings. *If video lectures are not already posted, they will be published by 10:00pm Monday each week.*

UM E-Mail

I expect you to use your umontana student e-mail address for all communications and that you will check this account regularly (i.e., at least once per day). [This link](#) provides an overview of UM e-mail.

Professionalism and Communication

E-mail is far and away the best way to reach me, **remembering to include “PUAD 526” in the subject line.** Text messaging is appropriate if you have a time-sensitive need (like scheduling a meeting immediately). I am eager to answer your questions; however, ask that you first consult the syllabus, then look at my weekly e-mails and lectures, and then come to me with your requests. Central to our learning environment is professionalism and respect in communications.

Help with Technology

Call UOnline by phone, 406-243-4999 or email umonline-help@umontana.edu if technological problems arise. There is no on-call assistance during nights or weekends. I cannot provide IT support, so please contact the appropriate University staff if an issue arises.

Navigation Information

Links for all course sign-ups, the most recent syllabus, general feedback videos, and other material and resources are housed under the “Resources” tab on our class Moodle page.

Course Feedback, Drafts, & Examples:

- Please allow for up to ten (10) full **business days** after the due date to receive assignment feedback
- Students should work with the [UM Public Speaking and Writing Center](#) to review drafts of written work.
 - I am happy to review a draft **after** you do so, but 72 hours prior to due dates (and only once per assignment)
- Sample assignments are not provided for graduate-level courses

Guidelines for Written Work:

- You are expected to practice professional, graduate-level writing and will be evaluated on content, organization, writing/grammar, and following assignment instructions
- Work must be typed, double-spaced (unless otherwise noted), utilize 12-point font, and have one-inch margins
- You are required to utilize proper and appropriate citations. This means parenthetical (in-text) citations and a reference page (APA is preferred. However, since public administration is multi-disciplinary, any academic style is acceptable. *Notify me as to of what citation style you are using, if not APA.*
- Assignments are due on the date/time listed in the course schedule
- All assignments must be turned in electronically (on Moodle) as a .doc or .docx file (Microsoft Word). If I cannot open the document, you will not receive a grade. E-mail submission of assignments will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made
- Student collusion for individual assignments is not allowed and will be treated as an act of plagiarism. Self-plagiarism (e.g., turning in the same assignment in different classes) will be treated as plagiarism. If you have questions, please contact me.

Mastery-Based Learning (Course Grading):

I employ the concept of mastery-based learning in this course. The idea is that you will achieve a high-level of understanding of our subject matter by progressing at the pace appropriate for your learning.

Rather than assign scores for assignments throughout the term, your assignments will be assessed using the scale below. You will have the opportunity to revise assignments that need revision in order to meet expectations. In addition, I will provide written and/or verbal feedback on assignments within 10 business days. My feedback will include identifying strong

elements of your work, drawing your attention to areas for improvement or expansion, questions for consideration, and suggestions to improve your knowledge of course competencies. All assignments for this course must be completed and meet expectations to pass the class.

Approaching learning through a mastery-based process is designed to enhance your experience and foster an open conversation, between you and me, about work product, understanding of content, critical thinking, and assessment. Part of this process includes a mid-term reflection, 1:1 research conference, and an end-of-term self-assessment.

I use the following scale:

AE = Above Expectations. Above expected product. You contribute thoughtful and productive ideas, producing very high-quality work. You demonstrate synthesis of and critical engagement with material and pay close attention to detail, going above what is expected. Work demonstrates evaluation and creation.

ME = Meets Expectations. Product produced meets what is expected. You deliver quality work that meets assignment and course criteria. You do what is necessary and adequately engage with the material. You pay attention to detail and adequately complete all elements of an assignment. Work demonstrates application and analysis.

NE = Near Expectations. Product approaches or nearly meets expectations. Your work comes close to meeting the expected/necessary criteria. Engagement with course material is lacking or insufficient. Greater attention to detail would improve the product. Work demonstrates understanding.

DMN = Does Not Meet Expectations. Product does not meet expectations. Work that does not meet expectations reflects minimal effort and poor-quality contributions. These products do not meet minimally-required standards for the course and assignment and fail to demonstrate engagement with the subject or material.

To earn a B (Meets Expectations) in this class you must:

- Meet the criteria for all assignments
- Incorporate feedback into revised assignments, when it is first received
- Demonstrate attention to detail
- Actively participate in class discussions and exercises
- Work collaboratively with your group (if applicable)
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Revise all assignments so they meet the course expectations
- Meet due dates for assignments that require them
- Attend and be prepared for meetings/conferences with the professor (e.g., mid-term reflection)
- Check UM email and Moodle regularly
- Follow graduate and professional writing guidelines

To earn an A in this course (Exceptional), you must do the above and:

- Turn in high-quality assignments the first time you submit them
- Produce ethical, creative, unique, and engaging assignments
- Demonstrate not only topic competency, but synthesis
- Employ problem-solving and individually investigate solutions to challenges as they present
- Receive feedback and critique in an open, constructive manner
- Demonstrate a commitment and interest in the course topic, applied project, and group work
- Show careful attention to detail that reflects editing and consideration for your audience

Earning an A in this course means that you have produced exceptional work and your performance in all aspects of the course has been outstanding.

Please set an appointment with me to discuss any questions or concerns related to mastery-based learning. It is always better to talk sooner rather than later.

Assessment of Subject Mastery (Assignments):

This semester you will be assessed on 1) participation & practice; 2) Democracy Madness; and 3) Election Reform Proposal

Please see the appendix for details about the assignments and expectations.

Course Schedule

You must stay up with the course readings and assignments in order to maximize your online classroom experience. Although this is a general outline of readings, the schedule is subject to change as the semester proceeds. Students will be notified of any changes or modifications to the course schedule.

The readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on Moodle, required, and organized by week.

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments
Week 1 (Aug. 19 - Aug. 23) <i>Aug. 20 7-8:30pm</i>	Introduction The Patchwork Quilt <i>Optional: Could MT Gain a 2nd Congressional Seat? Redistricting after the 2020 Census</i> (requires registration)	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 1 - Montjoy* Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce yourself (Moodle) - Vote on Round 1 of Democracy Madness by 12:00pm (noon) on 8/22 (Moodle) - Sign-up for introductory Zoom session by 12:00pm (noon) on 8/22 (Google Doc) - Sign-up for Week 6 1:1 research meeting by 12:00pm (noon) on 8/22 (Calendly) - Sign-up for Coach week by 12:00pm (noon) on 8/22 (Google Doc)
Week 2 (Aug. 24 - Aug. 30)	The Concept of Political Culture	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elazar (3 readings)* - Fife & Miller* Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zoom with Dr. B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take the Local Government quiz prior to Zooming - Vote on Round 2 of Democracy Madness by 12:00pm (noon) on 8/29 (Moodle) - Begin thinking about your Election Reform topic
Week 3 (Aug. 31 - Sept. 6)	Layer Cakes and Marble Cakes: Federalism	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 2 - Hale, Monjoy, & Brown (Chpt. 1)* - King* - Mills* Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions for AG Fox due by 12:00pm (noon) on 9/5 (Moodle)
Week 4 (Sept. 7 - Sept. 13) <i>Sept. 7, Labor Day</i>	The Ground Rules: Constitutions <i>University Holiday</i>	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 3 - Hale, Monjoy, & Brown (Chpt. 3)* - Coleman*

<i>Sept. 8, 5-6:30pm</i>	<i>Special Guest Speaker AG Tim Fox</i>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend Attorney General Fox's presentation (Zoom) - Election Reform Proposal Component 1 due by 12:00pm (noon) on 9/12 (Moodle)
<u>Week 5</u> (Sept. 14 - Sept. 20)	Venmo Me Later: (Budgeting and) Finance	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 4 - Creek & Karnes* - Montjoy* - Mohr et al.* - Burris & Fischer* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy Madness Matchup 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaches post videos by 10:00pm on 9/15 - Discussion closes 9/19 at 12:00pm (noon)
<u>Week 6</u> (Sept. 21 - Sept. 27)	Who Decides? Political Participation	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 5 - Burden, Canon, Mayer, & Moynihan* - Barreto, Cohen-Marks, & Woods* - MIT Election Lab 2018 Turnout* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1:1 research meeting with Dr. B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Come prepared to discuss your Election Reform proposal - Mid-term reflection due by 12:00pm (noon) on 9/26 (Moodle)
<u>Week 7</u> (Sept. 28 - Oct. 4)	Pulling the Strings: Parties and Interest Groups	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 6 - Lewis* - Hale, Montjoy, & Brown (Chpt. 5)* - Mohr, Pope, Kropf, & Shepherd* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch DPAP Cultural Awareness video - Complete mid-semester learning evaluation (sent from Moodle) by 12:00pm (noon) on 10/3
<u>Week 8</u> (Oct. 5 - Oct. 11)	Serving or Steering? Legislatures	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 7 - Hale & McNeal* - Bentele & O'Brien* - Biggers & Hanmer* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election Reform Proposal Component 2 due by 12:00pm (noon) on 10/10 (Moodle)
<u>Week 9</u> (Oct. 12 - Oct. 18) <i>Oct. 12, Indigenous Peoples Day</i>	Politicizing Justice: Courts	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 9 - Hale, Montjoy, & Brown (Chpt. 4)* - Brennan Center for Justice Status of Redistricting Litigation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crocker* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play the Redistrict Game - Democracy Madness Matchup 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaches post videos by 10:00pm on 10/13 - Discussion closes at 12:00pm (noon) on 10/17
<u>Week 10</u> (Oct. 19 - Oct. 24)	State Celebrities: Governors and Executives	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 8 - Tokaji* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Election Reform Proposal
<u>Week 11</u> (Oct. 26 - Nov. 1)	That Dirty 11-Letter Word: Bureaucracy	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 10 - Burden, Canon, Mayer, & Moynihan* - Herd & Moynihan* - Hale & Slaton* - Kimball & Kropf* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy Madness Matchup 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaches post videos by 10:00pm on 10/27 - Discussion closes at 12:00pm (noon) on 10/31
<u>Week 12</u> (Nov. 2 - Nov. 8) <i>Nov. 3, Election Day</i>	New Laboratories of Democracy? The Local Level <i>University Holiday – VOTE!</i>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S&G Chpt. 11 - Hale, Montjoy, and Brown (Chpt. 2)* - Atkeson & Saunders* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turn in your 270 to Win forecast by 12:00am (midnight) on 11/2
<u>Week 13</u> (Nov. 9 - Nov. 15) <i>Nov. 11, Veterans Day</i>	The Voter Experience: Can I vote? Two Steps Forward, One Step Back <i>University Holiday</i>	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shelby County v. Holder (in brief) - Kumar* - Portillo, Bearfield, & Riccucci* - Vasilogambros - Equal Justice Initiative <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election Reform Proposal Component 3 due by 12:00pm (noon) on 11/14
<u>Week 14</u> (Nov. 16 - Nov. 22)	You've Got Mail: The COVID-19 Election How Will We Cast Ballots in the Future?	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Southwell* - Alvarez, Hall, & Trechsel* - Alvarez, Hall, Levin, & Stewart III* - Hernson, Hanmer, & Koh* <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy Madness Matchup 4

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaches post videos by 10:00pm on 11/15 - Discussion closes at 12:00pm (noon) on 11/21
<u>Week 15</u> (Nov. 23)	Final Work Due	Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete end-of-term learning evaluation (sent from Moodle) - End-of-term reflection due by 5:00pm on 11/23 (this is a Monday)

Classroom Policies

Extra Credit: I do not offer extra credit for this course.

Make-up Exams: There is no exam in this course.

Classroom Etiquette: Our classroom will be a civil and supportive space. Should anyone fail to act in an appropriate manner, I reserve the right to remove them from course discussions.

E-Mail Etiquette: E-mail is an effective tool and a good way for you to reach out to me with questions, but it does not replace speaking “face-to-face.” If you have involved questions about course material, your performance, or simply want to check-in, please set up a time to meet with me via Zoom. Please include **PUAD 526** in the subject line of your e-mails and keep professionalism in mind.

Incompletes or Withdrawals (“W”) from the Course: Please see the University’s add/drop [policies](#).

Late Assignments: I expect you to turn in assignments on time. With this being said, I understand that the lives of the individuals in our DPAP community are dynamic and require flexibility. It is my preference that you reach out to me sooner, rather than later (e.g., **72 hours before an assignment is due**) about adjustments to the course schedule. I respect you – it is OK if you need extra time to complete work. Part of respect is believing you and your autonomy – I do not need you to ‘prove,’ explain, or answer why – I simply ask that you let me know of your need for extra time, so that I can plan accordingly. All assignments must be completed to receive a grade for the course.

University Attendance Policy: Please review the course participation and attendance policy (above). Students who are registered for this course but do attend the first two class meetings may be required by the professor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit students on the course waitlist to add classes. Students not allowed to remain in the course must complete a drop form or drop the course via CyberBear to avoid receiving a failing grade. Students who know they will be absent should contact the professor in advance.

Wikipedia: The “Truth by Consensus” is not reliable (and sometimes not valid). Wikipedia should not be cited in any assignment. Rather, you should become comfortable citing scholarly research and peer-reviewed sources as a graduate student at the University of Montana. Visit the Mansfield Library website and Google Scholar for resources. Reach out to me for further help, if necessary.

Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism): Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. More information can be found in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). All work submitted for this class must be your own. Duplicated work (e.g., work completed for another class) will be considered an act of self-plagiarism. Acts of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid plagiarizing, cite each reference or source (direct quotes, paraphrases, *and* ideas and charts/graphs) you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When using the direct quotes, use quotation marks and appropriate citation (e.g., APA) that include the page number and work’s title. If you’re not sure if it’s plagiarism, err on the side of citation.

Moodle: This course is supported by Moodle. Please refer to the site regularly for additional readings, supplemental material, announcements, grades, assignment submissions, or updates to the schedule. When submitting assignments on Moodle, students should attach Microsoft Word .doc or .docx files.

Sensitive Course Materials: Advanced degree programs seek to expand and challenge student assumptions, worldviews, and conceptions. Therefore, we engage with a wide range of material that do not necessarily affirm personal or broadly accepted understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the professor.

Disability Assistance: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities and instructors. For more information, visit [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact DSS in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406/243.2243. As your professor, I will work with DSS to provide an appropriate modification.

Cultural Leave Policy: The University of Montana Cultural and Ceremonial Leave Policy states: Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student's customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student's attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.

Appendix

Participation and Practice

You will complete a number of practice and reflection exercises for this class. The exercises are designed so you can apply the concepts and theories we cover in the course and allow you to reflect on your learning. All class exercises must be completed to meet the minimum expectations for this course.

Week 1: Complete by 12:00pm (noon) on 8/22
Introduce Yourself: Follow the prompts on the discussion forum on Week 1 of our Moodle page
Vote on Round 1 of Democracy Madness: Link to the bracket is available on Week 1 of our Moodle page
Week 2: Zoom dates vary; Vote for Democracy Madness by 12:00pm (noon) on 8/29
Zoom with Dr. B: Complete the local government quiz , review the syllabus, and prepare questions prior to the Zoom session
Vote on Round 2 of Democracy Madness: Link to the bracket is available on Week 2 of our Moodle page.
Week 3: Complete by 12:00pm (noon) on 9/5
Question(s) for Attorney General Tim Fox: Submit at least one question for Attorney General Tim Fox via the Wiki on Week 3 of our Moodle page
Week 4: 5:00-6:30pm Mountain on 9/8
Attend Special Guest Speaker Attorney General Tim Fox's presentation. Link to the Zoom event is available on Week 4 of our Moodle page.
If you are unable to attend "live," contact me no later than 9/4 for an alternative assignment.
Week 6: 1:1 meeting dates vary; Mid-Term Reflection due by 12:00pm (noon) on 9/26
1:1 Research Conference: Prepare for and attend your 1:1 Research Conference. We will discuss the progress you have made, any challenges you are encountering, questions you have, and your performance on Component 1 of the Election Reform Proposal.
Mid-Term Reflection: Turn in a document (on Moodle) that addresses the following three questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reflect on your thinking, learning, and work to date. What are you proud of?2. How have I helped your learning? What can I do tomorrow to help you more?3. What changes can you make to enhance your learning in this course?
It is OK to use bullet points or other devices when preparing your mid-term reflection.
Week 15: learning evaluation dates TBD; End-of-Term Reflection due by 5:00pm on 11/23
Complete the course learning evaluation (sent via e-mail from Moodle/UMOnline)
End-of-Term Reflection: Turn in a document (on Moodle) that addresses the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What class activities or assignments helped you learn the most?2. What made you curious in this class?3. What are some of the most interesting discoveries you made while working on the Election Reform Proposal project?4. How did I help your learning? What can I do tomorrow to help you more?5. What changes did you make to enhance your learning in this course?
It is OK to use bullet points or other devices when preparing your reflection.

Democracy Madness

Like crowning a NCAA basketball champion from a wide field of contenders, democracy reform is a broad topic with more than one potential winner. There are more ideas for fixing our electoral process than we can possibly discuss this semester. To get us in the frame of mind necessary to reform our electoral system, we will vote, discuss, and debate until we pick a single winning reform by the end of the term.

This is Democracy Madness. An idea borrowed from [The Fulcrum](#) and adapted to suit our classroom needs, I, your Democracy Madness Commissioner, have seeded 64 proposals for democratic reform. Reforms have been selected based on four topical regions: 1) Elections; 2) Voting; 3) Campaign Finance; and, 4) Potpourri (the best of the rest). Seeds were determined using random assignment. You will be asked to vote (via a link in Moodle) during Week 1 and Week 2 of the course to determine the Sweet Sixteen democracy reforms we will discuss during Weeks 5, 9, 11, and 14. As your Commissioner, I reserve the right to add a wildcard contender (or two) depending on our class size. After all, who doesn't love a Cinderella Story.

During our Democracy Madness Matchup weeks, you will play either the role of a **coach** or a **commentator**. You will serve as a coach **one time** during the semester and will sign-up for which week you will be a coach during Week 1. You will be randomly assigned a democracy reform (team) by the end of Week 3.

Coaches are expected to:

Research	Consult the academic literature, government publications, and whitepapers for previous research on your democracy reform topic. Use reliable sources to build an understanding of your team.
Define	Simply and concisely define the democracy reform. Consider how you would explain the proposal to a member of the general public.
Record	A 3-minute video presentation via Zoom covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Your team (democracy reform): what it is, what it does, why it matters, and if it is used anywhere at present (if so, be specific)- What proponents say about the democracy reform- What opponents say about the democracy reform- What level of government and which actors would need to be involved to bring the reform to fruition Instructions for recording a Zoom video are posted on the Resources page on Moodle.
Post & Discuss	Your video must be posted as a new discussion on Moodle by 10:00pm Tuesday, the week of your Democracy Madness Matchup. As the coach for your team, you will lead and engage in an ongoing discussion with your commentator classmates about your video and democracy reform throughout the week. Democracy Madness Matchups close at 12:00pm (noon) on Saturdays.

The weeks that you are not a coach, you will play the role of a **commentator**. Commentators are expected to:

Watch	View both coach videos
Participate	Engage in both Democracy Madness Matchup discussions
Engage	Ask the coach and fellow commentators thoughtful questions. Connect the coach's video to what you are reading in class. What questions do you have? How does this democracy reform promote (or not) our pillars of public administration? Take part in the Matchup throughout the week. Engagement early in the week is part of active participation (meeting expectations). As your Commissioner, I look for quality over quantity. <i>Don't be like John Madden – as your Commissioner, I am looking for more substance than “if you score more points than the other team, chances are you'll win the game.”</i> Democracy Madness Matchups close at 12:00pm (noon) on Saturdays.
Regulation	Change (like reform) can be hard. Democracy Madness regulations require evidence be cited for claims made during the Matchup. Like coaches, commentators are responsible for backing up assertions with academic, government, or other trusted and reliable sources.

Note – our class is divided between two discussion groups, you will only participate in your group's Matchup.

Election Reform Proposal

Throughout the term, you will engage in an in-depth project designed to give you and your ideas the power to determine the future of our democracy. If voting is fundamental to democratic governance, election administration provides the foundation of our American experiment. As you will learn this term, the U.S. is unique insofar as our central government is not responsible for the delivery of elections. Rather, election administration is the domain of subnational governments – meaning each of us may encounter a different experience from ballot design to ballot access, from vote mode to voter registration, and beyond, on November 3 (if not before). Even if we all live in the same state.

For the Election Reform Proposal, you will complete three interconnected components that, in the end, will result in a polished report that **proposes a specific state or local election reform. Your objective is to identify an electoral problem and develop a reform solution to address it (for a specific state or locality).** You will determine the appropriate audience for your proposal based on your location – for example, a County Board of Supervisors, a County Election Administration Advisory Commission, a state’s Chief Election Administrator, a state legislative committee, and so forth.

As you write each component of your Election Reform Proposal, consider three factors:

1. **Audience.** Write with your reader in mind. Reflect on the reader’s pain points or major questions.
2. **Expertise.** Your work should reflect a complete investigation and research. Highlight your expertise.
3. **Problem-Based and Solution Focused.** Identify, address, and return to the specific problem your reform addresses. The problem should be timely and relevant. You must propose a detailed solution designed to address the problem. Generally, solutions are offered after examination of the problem and potential remedies.

Component 1: Problem Statement (Due September 12th at 12:00pm noon Mountain)

In 2-3 double-spaced pages:

Clearly state the current problem. Be sure to explain the significance of the problem and its consequences

- *You want to be sure to answer the “so what” question. Put another way, why do we care and why is this a problem?*

Place the problem into context

- Include where the problem is located (the focus of your proposal)
- Which people are impacted?
- What and how resources are affected by the problem?
- What’s at stake?
- *Be specific*

Consider the problem’s causes

Provide evidence by using at least three academic or government sources.

Component 2: Background (Due October 10th at 12:00pm noon Mountain)

In 5-7 double-spaced pages

Include enough information about your problem and the context of the situation that someone informed but unfamiliar with the specific issue can understand

- Consider your audience when deciding what background information to include – be judicious

Consider any necessary historical roots/information that informs your problem

- How has this problem developed over time? Has the problem always existed? Is it staying the same/getting better/getting worse?
- Have solutions been proposed previously? What happened?

Identify the problem’s causes and consider the issues/topics that are discussed in this course

- Pay attention to the actors involved – e.g., bureaucrats, politicians, citizens, and interest groups

Address why the timing is right for your reform

Provide evidence by using at least five academic or government sources.

It is appropriate to use charts, tables, and graphics in these types of proposals – be sure to cite source material (including data).

Include revisions to Component 1 with Component 2 when you turn it in (i.e., total page length should be Component 1 + Component 2 = 7-10 pages). Total page numbers do not include references and images.

Component 3: Solution (Due November 14th at 12:00pm noon Mountain)

In 5-7 double-spaced pages

This is the “ta-da” moment of your project where you present your electoral reform (i.e., the solution to the problem discussed in previous components). You should argue, professionally and with the facts, for your solution in this Component.

Describe your proposed electoral reform

- Consider a step-by-step approach that details how you intend your reform to be implemented

Justify your solution

- Provide evidence from academic, government, and other trusted and reputable sources to explain why your solution is an appropriate and effective course of action
- Weigh your reform against other potential solutions
- Again, consider if your reform has been successful in other places as evidence of its efficacy

Address who and what is necessary for your solution to be successful

- Pay attention to actors, process (does a law have to be passed?), and implementation

Include a conclusion that summarizes your major points and reiterates your reform proposition.

Add an executive summary (akin to an abstract that provides a brief overview of your proposal’s major points) to the beginning of your paper. This executive summary should provide all the necessary highlights of your proposal at a glance.

Include a catchy, accurate title

Provide evidence by using at least five academic or government sources.

It is appropriate to use charts, tables, and graphics in these types of proposals – be sure to cite source material (including data)

Include revisions to Component 1 and Component 2 with Component 3 for a complete, final proposal. Total page length should be around 15 pages (not including references or images).