

POLS 207: State and Local Politics

Course Schedule/Links — Fall 2026

Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative and may be revised. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. Readings are due on the date listed.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings / Assigned Material
1	8/24	Introduction & syllabus overview	—
8/24	8/26	Federalism	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 2, <i>Federalism: The Power Plan</i>
2	8/31	Constitutions	Podcast: <i>A Texas-Sized Look at Our Constitution on its 150th Birthday</i> (State Bar of Texas)
	9/2	APSA Conference — no class	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 7, <i>Legislatures: The Art of Herding Cats</i>
3	9/7	Labor Day — no class	—
9/7	9/9	State legislatures	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 7, <i>Legislatures: The Art of Herding Cats</i> ; <i>A Beginner's Guide to Understanding the Texas Legislature</i> (Texas Policy Research); Video: <i>Texas Legislature 101: The Art of Texas Politics</i>
4	9/14	State legislatures	Podcast: <i>The Polarization of State Legislatures</i> (Not Another Politics Podcast—up to 18:00)
9/14	9/16	Governors and courts	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 8, <i>Governors and Executives: There Is No Such Thing as Absolute Power</i>
5	9/21	Midterm 1	—
9/21	9/23	Elections	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 5, <i>Political Attitudes and Participation: Venting and Voting</i>
6	9/28	Elections	<i>Revitalizing Local Democracy: The Case for On-Cycle Local Elections</i> (Michael Hartney)
9/28	9/30	Elections	<i>How Partisan Are U.S. Local Elections? Evidence from 2020 Cast Vote Records</i> (Conevska et al.)
7	10/5	Parties and interest groups	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 6, <i>Parties and Interest Groups: Elephants, Donkeys, and Cash Cows</i>
10/5	10/7	Parties and interest groups	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 6, <i>Parties and Interest Groups: Elephants, Donkeys, and Cash Cows</i>
8	10/12	Parties and interest groups	<i>How Active Are Interest Groups in Local Politics</i> (Sarah Anzia, Ch. 3 of <i>Local Interests</i>)
10/12			

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Course Schedule (continued)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings / Assignments
	10/14	Texas interest groups case study: data centers	Podcast: <i>A Permit Loophole for AI Power Plants</i> (Texas Standard); Article: <i>Hundreds of Data Centers Are Coming to Texas. Here's What You Need to Know.</i> (Texas Tribune)
9	10/19	Finance	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 4, <i>Finance: Filling the Till and Paying the Bills</i>
10/19	10/21	Finance	<i>Representation in Municipal Government</i> (Chris Tausanovitch and Chris Warshaw)
10	10/26	Midterm 2	—
10/26	10/28	Local government (counties, city councils, and mayors)	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 11, <i>Local Government: Function Follows Form</i>
11	11/2	Local government (counties, city councils, and mayors)	<i>The State of Local Lobbying</i> (Julia Payson, Ch. 2 of <i>When Cities Lobby</i>)
11/2	11/4	Local government (counties, city councils, and mayors)	<i>Business Owners and Executives as Politicians: The Effect on Public Policy</i> (Patricia Kirkland)
12	11/9	Education	Smith & Greenblatt Ch. 13, <i>Education: Reading, Writing, and Regulation</i>
11/9	11/11	Education	Podcast: <i>Texas Has Been Taking Over More School Districts in Recent Years. Now You Can Track Them.</i> (Texas Standard); <i>Texas Families Can Now Apply for Private School Vouchers. Here's What to Know.</i> (Texas Tribune)
13	11/16	Crime and policing	<i>How Partisan Is Local Law Enforcement? Evidence from Sheriff Cooperation with Immigration Authorities</i> (Dan Thompson)
11/16	11/18	Housing	<i>Land Use Regulations and Multifamily Housing Development</i> (Maxwell Palmer, David Glick, and Katherine Einstein, Ch. 3 of <i>Neighborhood Defenders</i>); <i>Texas Lawmakers Laid the Foundation for a Housing Boom. Here's How.</i> (Texas Tribune)
14	11/23	Housing	<i>Warding Off Development: Local Control, Housing Supply, and NIMBYS</i> (Evan Mast)
11/23	11/25	Reading day — no class	—
15	11/30	State Senate Presentations	—
11/30	12/2	State Senate Presentations	—
16	12/7	Final exam	—