GOVT 706/ PUAD 750  
SEMINAR ON FEDERALISM AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS  
Fall 2019—Van Metre 477

Dr. Timothy Conlan  
Research 328  
Phone: 703-993-1427  
email: tconlan@gmu.edu

Office Hours:  
Th 4-4:30, 7-7:30  
and by appointment

Course Description: This course is a graduate level survey of intergovernmental issues in politics and governance. Specific topics to be explored include: theories and controversies concerning the appropriate roles of different levels of government, the intergovernmental context of policy making and service delivery in the United States, the evolution and performance of the American federal system, aspects of comparative federalism, and the politics of intergovernmental reform.

Course Structure: The course will be conducted as a graduate seminar. Its success will depend on active and informed participation by everyone in the course. All participants will be expected to read and analyze each week's readings, and all students should expect to be called on in the course of class discussions. In addition, there will be an opportunity for discussion of individual research topics and assigned oral presentations.

Learning Objectives: This course is designed to enable students to master or become familiar with:

1) Major theories—political, philosophical, economic, and administrative—concerning the advantages and disadvantages of a federal form of government.
2) Theoretical rationales and empirical evidence concerning the assignment of functions among various levels of government in multi-level systems.
3) The historical development and evolution of the U.S. federal system.
4) The challenges of intergovernmental policy making and implementation in the United States.
5) The fiscal, regulatory, and judicial contours of contemporary American federalism and their implications for intergovernmental relations; and
6) Approaches to and prospects for intergovernmental reform in American federalism.

Required Texts: This course is cross-listed in both Political Science and Public Administration/Public Policy, and the subject matter reflects all of these disciplines. It is also designed to accommodate both doctoral and masters level students, with requirements that vary accordingly. Doctoral students are expected to read all of the required material indicated for each week, including some additional readings which are marked phd. They may also wish to read some or all of the recommended readings in order to explore certain topics in greater depth. MA, MPP, MS, and MPA students are required to read all assignments except those marked phd, although you are encouraged to at least skim those as well.

The following books will be available for purchase at the University’s Arlington campus bookstore. They will be supplemented by articles and readings available through journals.
accessed through library databases or posted on the course Blackboard page. Collectively, the readings are intended to serve several complementary purposes: to give a descriptive and analytical overview of contemporary intergovernmental issues; to provide a modicum of historical and comparative perspective on key issues; to highlight influential analytical frameworks; to illustrate alternative models of research design and methodology; and to draw upon a variety of different sources of information and analysis.


**Recommended:**


**Written Assignments:** For doctoral students, the written requirements for this seminar include three short papers, a take-home midterm exam, and one major research paper. Two of the short papers will consist of brief, 3-5 page analyses of a week's assigned readings. These will typically be structured around debates or controversies in the field, with different authors presenting alternative views. Topics will be selected during the first class. Each analysis will be summarized and orally presented during the appropriate class. Another short paper will be a critique of two or more draft research papers prepared by your colleagues in this seminar. Masters-level students will be expected to prepare only one weekly analysis, the draft paper critique, along with the midterm exam and shorter research paper.

Each seminar participant will also prepare a more detailed research paper (25-40 pp for PhD candidates, 15-20pp for MA/MPA students) which utilizes an appropriate methodology to analyze an intergovernmental program or issue of interest to the student. Students will exchange and critique drafts of each other's papers prior to final submission of the paper for a course grade. Such critiques will constitute the final short paper assignment for all students.

**Course evaluation:** Final grades for this course will be based on general class participation and oral presentations (15%); short written assignments (20%); take home midterm (25%) and the major intergovernmental research paper (40%).
Class Schedule:

THE CONTEXT OF FEDERAL GOVERNANCE

(Aug 29) An Introduction to Federalism


David Robertson, Federalism and the Making of America, chap. 1.

(Sep 5) Theoretical Perspectives on Federalism:


Recommended:


¹Link available on course blackboard page.
(Sep 12) **The Theory and Early Development of American Federalism**

Robertson, chaps 2-3.


Recommended:


(Oct 19) **Dynamics of Centralization: American Federalism in the 20th Century**


Robertson, chaps 4-9.


Recommended:

Morton Grodzins, The American System (Rand McNally, 1966)


ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE IN AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

(Sep 26) National Policymaking in an Intergovernmental System


Michael Doonan, *American Federalism in Practice*, chaps 1, 2 and 5.


RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE

Recommended:

Stephens and Wikstrom, American Intergovernmental Relations, chap 5.


(Oct 3) Implementation in an Intergovernmental Context

Conlan, Posner and Regan, *Governing Under Stress*, chaps 1, (3 or 4), (5 or 6), 10.

Paul Manna, *Collision Course*, chap. 2.

Doonan, chaps 4, 7.


Recommended


Mazmanian and Sabatier, *Implementation and Public Policy*

(Oct 10) **Fiscal Federalism**


**Take Home Midterm Distributed**

**Take Home Midterm Due Back, via email, on October 17**

Recommended:


(Oct 17) **The Rise of and Responses to Coercive Federalism**


Recommended:

Conlan, From New Federalism to Devolution, pp. 85-92; chap. 10.


(Oct 24) The Courts and American Federalism


U.S. Supreme Court, Nat’l Federation of Independent Businesses et. al. vs Sebelius.


Recommended:

John Nugent, Safeguarding Federalism: How States Protect Their Interests (Oklahomoa Univ. Press, 2009), pp. 6-16, 54-75.1 PhD


(Oct 31) States and Localities in the Federal System

Barry Rabe, “Regionalism And Global Climate Change Policy: Revisiting Multi-State Collaboration As An Intergovernmental Management Tool,” in Intergovernmental Management for the 21st Century.1

Michael Doonan, “Massachusetts leads the way,” chapter 8 in American Federalism in Practice.

Recommended:

Stephens and Wikstrom, American Intergovernmental Relations, chaps 7-9.

Jungah Bae and Richard C. Feiock, “Managing Multiplexity: Coordinating Multiple Services at a Regional Level,” State and Local Government Review 2012 44: 16-29


CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE AND REFORM

(Nov 7) Contemporary Issues in American Federalism


Recommended:


Alice Rivlin, Reviving the American Dream, (Brookings, 1991).

(Nov 17) DRAFT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE AND EXCHANGED

(Nov 21) Research Colloquium: Group Discussion of Draft Papers
Paper evaluations due. Course Evaluations

(Dec 5) REVISED PAPERS DUE AND PRESENTED

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

University Honor Code

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason
University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

PIA HONOR CODE POLICY

The Honor Code policy endorsed by the members of the Department of Public and International Affairs relative to the types of academic work indicated below is set out in the appropriate paragraphs:

1. Quizzes, tests and examinations. No help may be given or received by students when taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, whatever the type or wherever taken, unless the instructor specifically permits deviation from this standard.

2. Course Requirements: All work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement of any course in the Department of Public and International Affairs. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.