

**IDS 4930: Florida Legislative Politics
Spring 2023**

January 9 - May 5, 2023

Asynchronous Online

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Cornacchione

Office Location: 234 Pugh Hall

Office Hours: M/W 2:00-3:00PM; OR by appointment

Zoom Office Hours: [Spring 2023 Office Hours](#)

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the workings of the Florida Legislature and the landscape of current Florida Politics. Florida represents a large state with an increasingly interesting and dynamic political environment. The state faces many challenges, in a variety of areas, including health, environmental, education, and criminal justice. This course is 100% online and is asynchronous in design. Students may work at their own pace, but must complete assignments by the designated due date for the module.

Readings

There is one required text for this course:

Colburn, D.R., 2013. *From yellow dog Democrats to red state Republicans: Florida and its politics since 1940*. University Press of Florida.

In addition to selected chapters in the book, students will be responsible for additional readings listed in the course schedule. All additional readings will be available on Canvas.

Assignments

Your grade in this course will be based on 4 components. Each assignment within these categories is worth 100 points. The description and weighting of these components is listed below.

Perusall and Discussion Board Posts	10%
TIP Assignment Report	20%
Committee and Policy Area Report	20%
Legislative Tracking Report	50%

Discussion Board and Readings: In order to assess your grasp of course content, you will be required to participate in at least one discussion board per module, and you will also be required to read and annotate your academic readings in Perusall. Perusall is interactive software that allows you to read and annotate a text along with your peers. You can highlight, ask questions, and respond to your classmates' comments and questions. More information is available on Canvas.

TIP Assignment Report: The TIP Assignment Report is your preliminary exploration of your specific assignment in Tallahassee. The complete assignment description is on Canvas. In 2-3 pages, you will detail your legislator, office, or other organization to which you are assigned.

Committee and Policy Area Report: Here, you will select a specific legislative committee and policy area -that is of interest to you. If you are assigned to a specific legislative office, please select a different committee from the one on which your legislator serves. You will write a 3-5 page report on the committee's purpose, leadership, agenda, etc. As part of this report, you are required to attend or view at least 2 committee meetings. These committee meetings can be attended in person or viewed on the Florida Channel - a link to the recording is usually available on the committee's webpage.

Complete assignment details are listed on Canvas. Assignment due March 15 @11:59PM.

Legislative Tracking Report: Your biggest assignment will be a legislative tracking report. You will select one bill from the committee/policy area you wrote about in the Committee and Policy Area Report. This assignment is laddered, meaning you will be turning in drafts of sections prior to turning in the final report. Each component draft is worth 5% of your grade, and the final draft is worth 25% of your final grade, with a combined total of 50% of your final grade. Complete assignment details are on Canvas. Below is a breakdown of the components of the assignment:

- STEP 1: Bill identification and explanation of choice in bill **due March 10 @11:59PM**
- STEP 2: Bill description (in layman's terms) and impact (economic, societal, etc.) **due March 24 @11:59PM.**
- STEP 3: Synopsis of Academic Research on this policy topic **due April 7 @11:59PM.**
- STEP 4: Synopsis of similar legislation attempted in other states **due April 14 @11:59PM**
- STEP 5: Conclusion draft with overview of bill's history, from introduction to status by the end of the semester, and likely predictions of the final status of the bill **due April 17 @11:59PM.**

COMPLETE LEGISLATIVE TRACKING REPORT (ALL SECTIONS COMBINED AND UPDATED WITH A REFERENCE PAGE) DUE APRIL 26 @11:59PM.

Grading Scale

I adhere to the University letter-to-grade conversion chart for all exams, papers, assignments, quizzes, and final grades. Grades ending in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole percentage point.

93 or above=A	90-92=A-	87-89=B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-	77-79=C+
73-76=C	70-72=C-	67-69=D+	63+-66=D	60-62=D-	0-59=F

Grade Changes: I am certainly open to and actively encourage you to challenge me both in class as well on disputed test questions/essay points – sometimes, I make mistakes and sometimes, it is possible that more than one answer or perspective is correct. If you present an empirically-defensible case as to why your answer/assumptions are also correct (for which I originally took off points), I will gladly give back partial or full credit, depending on the quality of your argument.

However, at the end of the semester, there are inexorably a handful of students who send me a late-night email requesting (and sometimes incoherently demanding) that I raise their final grade, whether from a D+ to a C-, or a B+ to an A- or anywhere in between. Two remarks on this rather bold and questionable strategy.

1. I try to be charitable in terms of the grading scheme already – both the attendance and participation grades (30% of your final grade) are designed to give your grade a “cushion.”
2. Secondly, the “But I NEED a/an (insert grade here)”, or “can you *just* raise my grade x-number of points” arguments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of grades. Implicit in this statement is the assumption that grades are capriciously handed out on the instructor’s whim or fancy and are not based on the student’s demonstrated mastery of the material. Grades reflect your mastery of the course material. There are many things YOU can do to enhance your mastery of the material, and consequently, your grade.
 - Complete all module assignments
 - Read materials
 - Ask questions
 - Do not procrastinate on assignments.

I will not respond to emails asking for extra points, or for grades to be bumped up. If a student wishes to dispute a grade on an assignment or test, the student must request an appointment or come during office hours and present a compelling case as to why extra points should be awarded.

Email Policy

Please include your first and last name and course information in the subject line of your email. When I receive your email, I will make every effort to respond in a timely manner, usually within 48 hours. Though you may receive a reply sooner than that, you should not expect an immediate response. Please treat all email correspondence with your instructor as you would treat any other professional exchange.

Accordingly, I expect emails to be respectful and polite, to use correct grammar and complete sentences. I reserve the right to summarily delete rude, disrespectful, and/or poorly written emails without reply. Please note that I have structured the course and office hours to best assist you in mastering the materials. Please utilize office hours, in-class time, and your syllabus to answer any doubts you may have. Finally, I will contact you via your UF designated email address via Canvas, so please see to it that your account is set such that you are able to receive these communications.

Academic Honor Policy

UF students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. Requirements, expectations, and violations can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>.

It is your responsibility to know university policies and procedures, and to hold yourself to the highest standards.

Academic Accommodations

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University of Florida policy, students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: 1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Resource Center; and 2. Bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. The syllabus and other materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to UF students with disabilities, contact the:
Disability Resource Center

001 Reid Hall

DRC@ufsa.ufl.edu

352-392-8565

disability.ufl.edu

Other Helpful Links

UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

UF Writing Center: <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect the parameters of evaluation, including grading and the scheduling of the final exam, this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. I will provide you with advance notice in class and via your university registered email contact.

Course Schedule

Module	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	Overview and Introduction to Florida Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Colburn Chapters 1 & 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introductions Discussion Board 1<ul style="list-style-type: none">DUE JAN. 13 @11:59PMTIP Assignment Report<ul style="list-style-type: none">DUE JAN. 27 @11:59PMDiscussion Board 2: What are the big issues in Florida?<ul style="list-style-type: none">DUE FEB. 3 @11:59PM

2	Representation in Florida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colburn, Chapter 3 ● Jansa et al (2019) ● Squire Index (2017) ● Fourinaies & Hall (2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Board 3 - (See Canvas for topic). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE FEB. 10 @11:59PM ● Committee and Policy Areas Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FEB. 24 @11:59PM
3	The Florida Voter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colburn, Chapter 4 ● USF Pre-Election Survey 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Board 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE MARCH 3 @11:5PM ● Legislative Tracking Assignment Step 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE MARCH 10 @11:59PM ● Committee/Policy Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE MARCH 15 @11:59PM ● Legislative Tracking Assignment Step 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE MARCH 24 @11:59PM
4	Partisan Politics in Florida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colburn, Chapter 7 ● Hinchliffe & Lee (2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Board 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE APRIL 3 @11:59PM ● Legislative Tracking Assignment Step 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE APRIL 7 @11:59PM ● Legislative Tracking Assignment Step 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE APRIL 14 @11:59PM <p>Legislative Tracking Assignment, Step 5 DUE April 17 @11:59PM</p>
5	Current Issues in Florida Politics and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colburn, Chapter 5 ● Farrell (2019) ● Merivaki (2019) ● Lax & Phillips (2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion Board 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE APRIL 21 @11:59PM ● Legislative Tracking Assignment COMPLETE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DUE APRIL 26 @11:59PM