

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Connections Category

Connections: Understanding Individual and Social Responsibility

Connections courses direct students to apply and integrate discipline-specific knowledge and skills to the significant issues challenging our individual and shared responsibility as global citizens. Students will learn to analyze and evaluate cultural contexts, examine issues on both a local and global scale, and apply system-level approaches to the stewardship of our social and physical environments. Although they may be used with a major or minor program, *Connections* courses are classes at the 200-level or above designed for the general student population, and may be taken *only after* students have earned at least 21 hours in **WKU Colonnade Program** coursework or have achieved junior status. *Connections* courses may not have graduate components or prerequisites other than approved courses within the **WKU Colonnade Program**.

The **Colonnade Program** is designed to incrementally build student skills in argumentation and the use of evidence beginning with discipline-specific coursework in the *Foundations* and *Explorations* categories. By extension, *Connections* courses are intended to be summative learning experiences in which students apply basic knowledge to larger and more complex social, global and systemic issues of concern, in other words, to use appropriate *evidence* to support cogent *arguments*. Proposals should address how *evidence and argument* are integral in the design of the course and the assessment of student learning.

Proposed courses must be designed to address specifically the goals and outcomes of one (1) of the subcategories listed below.

Social and Cultural (3 hours): Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. Courses will consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape societal norms and behaviors, the independent and collective or collaborative artistic expression of those values, and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs. Students who complete this course will:

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

Local to Global (3 hours): Students will examine local and global issues within the context of an increasingly interconnected world. Courses will consider the origins and dynamics of a global society, the significance of local phenomena on a global scale, and/or material, cultural, and ethical challenges in today's world. Students who complete this course will:

1. Analyze issues on local and global scales.
2. Examine the local and global interrelationships of one or more issues.
3. Evaluate the consequences of decision-making on local and global scales.

Systems (3 hours): Students will examine systems, whether natural or human, by breaking them down into their component parts or processes and seeing how these parts interact. Courses will consider the evolution and dynamics of a particular system or systems and the application of system-level thinking. Students who complete this course will:

1. Analyze how systems evolve.
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

Glossary of Terms

Connections Subcategory Goals: The broader statements in each subcategory that describe the type of learning experience fostered in the subcategory. The paragraphs preceding each subcategory's list of three Connections student learning outcomes on page 1 of this document are the *Connections Subcategory Goals*. For example, in the Social and Cultural subcategory, the goals statement begins: "Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. . . . and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs."

Course Goals: Applicants must articulate how the proposed course will facilitate the Connections Subcategory Goals. This articulation results in a statement of *course goals*, a description of the specific learning experience that is fostered in the proposed course. For example, applicants in the Social and Cultural subcategory should explain specifically how the proposed course engages students in investigations of the "ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. . . . and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs."

Connections Student Learning Outcomes (Connections SLOs): The statements that describe, in behavioral terms, how students demonstrate that each course goal has been met. The *Connections student learning outcomes* (3 per subcategory) are listed on page 1 of this document and begin with the verbs *analyze*, *examine*, and *evaluate*. For example, a course goal for PHIL 212 is: "Students will examine how intersections of sex, race, class, and sexual orientation shape how gender is expressed." The *Connections student learning outcome* that is aligned with this course goal is: Students will "analyze the development of self in relation to others and society."

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): A *student learning outcome* is a clear, concise, measurable statement that describes, in behavioral terms, how students can demonstrate their mastery of a concept, process, skill, theory, etc. Course proposals and syllabi will likely include *student learning outcomes* in addition to the Connections SLOs, but are not required to. Applicants are encouraged to reference [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) and the WKU Center for Faculty Development's [lecture by Dr. Jerry Daday](#) and the [PDF of the slides from the lecture](#) when composing measurable learning outcomes, in particular in choosing *verbs* that describe student learning (students *evaluate* and *synthesize* and *analyze*, for instance, rather than *understand* or *explore*).

Assessment: For the purposes of this document, *assessment* is "an ongoing process designed to monitor and improve student learning. Faculty explicitly define what they want students to learn, collect empirical data that indicate the extent of the learning, and use the data to improve the program."¹ *Assessment* must be distinguished from *evaluation* of student learning in the sense that instructors evaluate students and assign grades, which may not be used directly as an assessment for Connection courses. An *assessment* plan must determine the degree to which the course has facilitated student learning in the context of the Connections subcategory goals and Connections SLOs. Random sampling of 20% of the whole is often the best approach for assessing Connections SLOs for courses with multiple sections per semester. Assessment of a sample of the whole might be a better approach for courses that are offered only once or twice per year.

Evaluation: The determination of a student's success or failure on a particular assignment or in a course. In other words, *evaluation* means assigning student grades. For the purposes of this application, *evaluation* is distinguished from assessment.

Artifact: The evidence of student learning that will be used in the assessment of Connections SLOs. *Artifacts* may be examinations, clean (unmarked) copies of student papers, a student-produced written synthesis/reflection of student learning, a project or presentation, or other tangible evidence of student learning may be assessed with the rubric provided by the Colonnade Committee or with another rubric proposed by the applicant.

¹ Allen, M. J. (2006). *Assessing General Education Programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. p. 1.

Colonnade Connections Course Proposal Systems Subcategory

Proposal Contact Name, E-mail, and Phone: Joel Turner, joel.turner@wku.edu, 5-2728

College and Department: Potter College, Political Science

Proposal Date: 2/13/18

1. Course Details:

- 1.1 Course prefix (subject area), number and title: PS 304 State Government
- 1.2 Credit hours: 3
- 1.3 Prerequisites²: None
- 1.4 Crosslisted and/or equivalent courses (prefix and number): None
- 1.5 Expected number of sections offered each semester/year: 3 per calendar year
- 1.6 Is this an existing course or a new course? Existing
- 1.7 Proposed implementation term: Summer 18
- 1.8 Where will this course be offered? (Bowling Green main campus, regional campuses, online? List all.) Bowling Green main campus and online

2. Provide a brief course description (100-200 words).

This course will analyze the political features of the American states and their individual governmental systems. Using a comparative approach, this course will investigate the political, cultural, and systemic reasons why states often arrive at very different solutions to address common policy concerns, especially given the similar constraints under which these states often operate.

The course will begin by exploring the ideas which serve as the underpinning of state political systems, such as state political cultures, state constitutions, and federalism. We then transition by examining the development of, and evolution of, the components of state political systems, specifically governors, state legislatures, and state judiciaries. The course concludes by investigation how the development and evolution of state political systems influences policymaking in various areas, including education, crime, taxation, and social policy.

3. Explain how this course provides a *capstone* learning experience for students in Colonnade (compared to an introductory learning experience). Explicitly address how students in the course apply knowledge from multiple disciplines to the significant issues challenging our individual and shared responsibility as global citizens.

I contend that a combination of factors make this course a capstone learning experience. First, the interdisciplinary nature of this course makes it an ideal candidate for inclusion in Colonnade. Although the primary backdrop for course discussions will be the political reasons why state governments are structured as they are and function as they do, students will certainly consider other disciplines in our analyses and classroom discussions. Specifically, the course will examine topics closely related to psychology, race, economics, history, criminology, religion, and sociology. Taking this interdisciplinary approach helps ensure that students have a more thorough understanding of the problems facing state governments as well as their responsibility with regard to helping address those problems.

Secondly, the assignments given in PS 304 ensure that students who complete this course have the tools to both understand and analyze the structure and function of state political systems. Students are required to engage and discuss readings for the assigned textbook as well as articles from academic journals and political news sources. These readings expose students to different perspectives on the development of, and the

² Courses may require prerequisites only when those prerequisites are within the Colonnade Foundations and/or Explorations listing of courses.

problems facing, state governments, and ultimately prepare them to evaluate and analyze different viewpoints on state government. Students will also be exposed to guest speakers in the course, such as politicians, political candidates, and even political and social activists. This has been beneficial in that it has allowed students to interact with, and get a better understanding of, those who are involved in the day to day functioning of state political systems. Additionally, students are required to demonstrate their ability to critically evaluate and analyze on a paper assignment, where they must select a problem facing state governments, explain why it is important, evaluate various methods proposed to address said problem, and ultimately make the case for which approach they believe would be most effective.

4. List the *course goals* (see *Glossary of Terms*), and explain how are they aligned with the **Connections student learning outcomes.** In the table below, describe in the right-hand column explicitly how the course meets each Connections SLO for the Systems subcategory. Descriptions in the right-hand column should be consistent with statements listing of course activities, readings, etc. in the syllabus attached to this application.

Connections Student Learning Outcomes	How does the course meet these learning outcomes? (Align course goals to Connections SLOs)
<i>Example: Analyze how systems evolve.</i>	<i>Example: Students analyze both the development and evolution of the mental system within an individual (e.g., (i) the utilization of various mental and sensori-motor components in an individual's development of a theory of mind and a capacity for joint attention, and (ii) causal and historical conditions of reference of singular terms and their neural realizers in an individual's cognitive system) as well as the essential role that causal history plays in the development across individuals of mental states with propositional contents (e.g., how the evolution of syntactic processing in humans' mental system can account for conditions of veridical representation of one's environment).</i>
1. Analyze how systems evolve.	This course will provide students the opportunity to examine both historical and contemporary features of state governments. This will allow students to better understand the evolution of many of the institutional structures of state governments today. Students will also have the opportunity to compare important characteristics of different state political systems across state lines as well as with the federal government. This comparison will permit students to both temporally and conceptually assess the evolution of state political systems.
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.	This course will require students to analyze the judicial process from both a theoretical and practical perspective. The first portion of the course will require students to assess the underpinning of state systems, including state political cultures, state constitutions, and federalism. A second segment of the course will require students to assess how this underpinning has impacted the development and evolution of state political institutions, specifically the executive, legislature, and judiciary. The final portion of the course will require students to apply this theoretical knowledge, as they will examine the ways in which the development and evolution of these governments has influenced state level policymaking in a variety of issue areas.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.	A substantial amount of the course will require students to think in terms of politics, or more simply put, who gets what and why do they get it. Inherently, thinking politically involves keeping in mind the tools of politics, which are power, resources, and rules, and understanding how those tools are utilized by decision makers

	operating within the constraints of a state’s political and economic context. By engaging material in this way, students are better able to understand the motivations regarding why specific decision are made. Additionally, this approach allows students to understand the sustainability of the system, as external pressures lead members to both respect and operate within well-established political norms.
--	--

5. List additional student learning outcomes, beyond the three Connections SLOs, that will guide student learning in this course (if any).

- Students will be able to describe the various institutional arrangements used to govern the states.
- Students will be able to explain the major schools of thought concerning what leads state governments to produce particular types of policies.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate research on specific institutions, forms of political behavior in the states, and specific state public policies.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate the role of the states in the American political system.

6a. Explain how the department plans to assess each of the Connections student learning outcomes beyond course grades. Note: SACSCOC requires assessment of SLOs to compare Bowling Green campus, online, and regional campus learning experiences; some consideration of such a distinction must be included in the right-hand column, when applicable.

Connections Student Learning Outcomes	Identify the “artifact(s)” (assignments, papers, activities, etc) that will be used for assessing each learning outcome beyond course grades. Applicants must be explicit in describing how the artifact(s) provides evidence of student learning for each Connections SLO.	Describe in detail the assessment methods the department will employ for this Connections course. Assessment plans must produce a separate evaluative rating for each Connections SLO.
<i>Example: Analyze how systems evolve.</i>	<i>Example: The department will use several questions, added to the final exam, in order to assess how well the course’s learning outcomes are being met. Each question will correspond to a separate Connections Student Learning Outcome for the Systems Subcategory.</i>	<i>Example: At the end of each semester the final exam answers of 30% of the students in the course will be selected at random for assessment. Each answer will correspond to one of the three Colonnade Student Learning Outcomes. At the beginning of the next semester a faculty member will assess each answer using the attached rubric. The names of the students and of the instructor will be eliminated before the assessment takes place. Assessment results will be communicated to the Department Head, who will then follow up with the faculty who teach the course and the department.</i>
1. Analyze how systems evolve.	Students are required in their exams to illustrate a thorough understanding of how each institution of government has developed and evolved over	A portion of the class will be sampled and assessed according to the rubric below. The goal is that at least 70% will receive a 2, and at least 30% will receive a 3.

	time. In addition, in their final paper students will address how the system functions with regard to addressing problem in the context of an ever changing political atmosphere.	
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.	Students will achieve this through successful completion of their exams. Specifically, the second exam they take will feature a number of questions which require students to do this.	A portion of the class will be sampled and assessed according to the rubric below. The goal is that at least 70% will receive a 2, and at least 30% will receive a 3.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.	The final paper does exactly this, as students are required to critically analyze state problems from an institutional and policymaker perspective.	A portion of the class will be sampled and assessed according to the rubric below. The goal is that at least 70% will receive a 2, and at least 30% will receive a 3.

6b. Include the rubric that will be used for Connections assessment (either in the space below or as an attachment). Also, for each of the SLOs briefly note what benchmarks you will use to determine whether the course successfully met its goals for each of the rubrics.

The Department of Political Science will establish an assessment committee to evaluate the effectiveness of meeting the stated learning objectives for all colonnade classes. Each academic year, the committee will collect a random selection of research papers and examinations with all identifying student information removed. The committee will assess these samples following the course outcomes:

- 4 = outstanding (far exceeds expectations)
- 3 = good (exceeds expectations)
- 2 = average (meets basic expectations)
- 1 = poor (does not meet basic expectations)

The committee's targets are:

- 70% of the work will score 2 or higher.
- 30% of the work will score 3 or higher.

Below is a sample of the holistic rubric that may be used to assess the Connections learning objectives for PS 304:

	Criteria
--	-----------------

Local to Global Connections Learning Objectives	1 Poor (does not meet basic expectations)	2 Average (meets basic expectations)	3 Good (exceeds expectations)	4 Outstanding (far exceeds expectations)
Analyze how systems evolve	Has a very limited understanding of the history and evolution of key components of state governments	Has a basic understanding of the history and evolution of key components of state governments	Can meaningfully analyze the history and evolution of key components of state governments	Critically analyzes the history and evolution of key components of state governments
Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.	Has a very limited understanding of how individual components contribute to state governments	Has a basic understanding of how individual components contribute to state governments	Can meaningfully discuss how individual components contribute to state governments	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of how individual components contribute to state governments
Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself	Exhibits very superficial understanding of how system-level thinking informs decision making and public policy	Exhibits a basic understanding of the key decision makers and the consequences of the decision-making process	Meaningfully evaluates the consequences of the decision-making process on public policy and system sustainability	Demonstrates a nuanced and well-developed analysis and advanced evaluation of how system-level thinking influences decision-making and public policy

7. Evidence & Argument Artifact. As the capstone experience for the Colonnade Program, Connections courses are expected to include activities, assignments, or other learning experiences that will produce at least one “artifact” (research paper, presentation, major project, etc.) that can be used to evaluate students’ ability to identify, synthesize, and make use of evidence in support of cogent and persuasive arguments. What “artifact” in the proposed course could be used for this purpose? (Note: This could be, but is not required to be, the same “artifact” identified in 6a above.)

The research paper required for this course will function as the primary assessment artifact. In this assignment, students are required to identify a state level policy program, investigate the pros and cons of various proposals designed to address this problem, and utilize this evidence to make a compelling, persuasive argument in favor of one of the proposed solutions.

8. Attach a sample course syllabus. The course syllabus must contain the three Connections student learning outcomes for the subcategory as well as any additional student learning outcomes listed in this application, and those learning outcomes must appear in every section's syllabus.

TR 8:00 - 9:20 AM
Grise 340

Instructor: Joel Turner
E-Mail: joel.turner@wku.edu
Office: 314 Grise Hall
Office Hours: 11:00 AM-12:30 PM TR and by appointment

Introduction/Course Objectives: The goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of government and politics as designed and practiced in the fifty states. The states have similar governmental designs, address many of the same problems, and operate under similar institutional, economic, and social conditions. Yet, state governments often produce vastly different policies to address similar problems. Identifying and explaining what leads state governments to produce different solutions to similar problems can provide insight into how democracies work, and in this class we focus on exactly that.

By the end of this course:

- Analyze how state governments develop and evolve.
- Compare the study of individual actors within state governments to the analysis of the entire state political system.
- Students will be able to describe the various institutional arrangements used to govern the states.
- Students will be able to explain the major schools of thought concerning what leads state governments to produce particular types of policies.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate research on specific institutions, forms of political behavior in the states, and specific state public policies.
- Evaluate how system-level thinking informs state governmental decision-making and the sustainability of the state governments.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate the role of the states in the American political system.

Textbooks: Governing States and Localities. 6th ed. Kevin Smith and Alan Greenblatt.

Format: This course features a mix of lecture and discussion. Active participation is expected.

Course Requirements:

Three Exams	100 pts each
Paper Assignment	100 pts
Quizzes	50 pts
Survey Assignment	50 pts

Exams: There will be three multiple-choice exams given during the course of the semester, each covering 1/3 of the material. The third exam will serve as the final exam. Exam questions will come from lectures as well as the assigned readings. You will need to bring a scantron and a #2 pencil on exam days! Make-up exams will be given only in extraordinary circumstances, and I reserve the right to give a make-up exam that differs substantially from the normal exam.

Writing Assignment: This assignment will require you to write a persuasive essay arguing for a position on the state policy area of your choice. In this paper you should make sure to:

1. Provide an in-depth description your chosen problem area
2. Discuss why you chose this problem
3. Describe at least two proposed solutions to this policy problem
4. Choose which policy you think would be most effective (and tell why)

The paper should be 6 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font. It should include a title and reference page (which do not count toward the four page requirement). The assignment is due in class on Thursday, April 12 (late papers are docked 10 points per day, and papers are considered late at the end of class on April 12). Papers are worth 100 points.

Quizzes: To ensure you are reading and engaging the material, we will have quizzes during the semester. Quizzes will cover lectures and reading assignments, and may or may not be announced. You have the possibility of earning 50 total points on this component of the course. You will not be allowed to make up missed quizzes.

Survey Project: The final requirement is your participation in the Big Red Poll. This will require you to call for one evening during the two week period in which we are conducting the poll. Specific dates and times for the poll will be discussed during the first two weeks of the course. This activity is worth 50 points.

Policy on Attendance: Students are expected to attend class and be on time.

Contact with the Instructor: Email is the best way to contact me, as I check it on a regular basis. Please feel free to contact me at any time for any reason. Also, feel free to come by my office during my office hours or any other time I happen to be in my office. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, contact me and we can schedule a convenient time for us to meet. Also, be sure to check your campus email account on a regular basis, as that is how I will communicate with you outside of class. I am not responsible for email messages you do not receive due to problems with email forwarding, etc.

Blackboard: I will use Blackboard to post grades, lecture notes, make announcements, etc. Therefore, you should check the course website on a regular basis.

Classroom Conduct: During this semester we will discuss controversial topics that people have strong, and vastly different, opinions on. It is important that you understand that we can disagree without being disagreeable. Therefore, I expect you to show respect to your professor and your fellow classmates, particularly during discussion. **Disrespectful activities include, but are not limited to: unnecessary conversation, foul language, inappropriate comments, text messaging, listening to your iPods, reading the paper, sleeping, playing games or surfing the net on your laptop, chronic tardiness, and other generally disrespectful activities.** Finally, **TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE!!!** I do not want to see them or hear them during class.

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with University policy, student with disabilities who require accommodations for this course (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC-A 200 of the Student Success Center in Downing Student Union. The phone number is 745-5004. Do not request accommodations without a letter from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Academic Misconduct: I do not tolerate cheating in any form. Anyone caught cheating will be given a zero on the assignment in question and be referred to University officials for further disciplinary action. Please see the University handbook for more information on what constitutes academic misconduct and the official university procedure for dealing with such misconduct. An on-line version of the handbook can be found at: www.wku.edu/handbook/.

Grading Scale: Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

90% - 100%	= A	60% - 69%	= D
80% - 89%	= B	59% and below	= F
70% - 79%	= C		

Syllabus Change Policy: This syllabus and the contained course calendar and assignments may change as the semester progresses. Syllabus alterations will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. Ignorance of course changes will not be accepted as a reason for failing to complete course assignments and reading

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:

I. Readings: GSL Ch. 1-3, 5

- A. Why Study State Politics?
- B. State Political Culture
- C. Federalism
- D. State Constitutions
- E. Citizen Participation and Elections

Exam I: February 22nd

II. Readings: GSL Ch. 6-10

- A. Parties and Interest Groups
- B. Legislatures
- C. Governors
- D. State Courts
- E. Bureaucracy

Exam II: April 5th

III. Readings: GSL Ch. 4, 11-14

- A. Local Government
- B. Taxing and Spending
- C. Education Policy
- D. Crime Policy
- E. Social Policy

Exam III: May 10th @ 8:00 AM