Course Description
This course is a study of the state, country and municipal government systems, including interrelationships between these systems and within the federal government.

Prerequisite: ENG 101.

3.0 Cr (3 lect/pres, 0 lab, 0 other)

Text and References

Course Focus
This is a class that is designed to give students an overview of politics and policy in state and local governments in the United States. While there is often a great deal of focus on national politics, state and local politics probably affect all of our lives more directly and concretely. We look at states from the comparative perspective, comparing states and local governments to one another to identify patterns across states as well as recognize the differences between them. The goal of the course is to help students understand the importance of state and local governments as well as to understand how state policy affects citizens in the United States.

PSC 215 CORE CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES

All courses approved for the general education core curriculum help students develop communication skills and/or critical thinking.

This course develops communication skills through at least four written discussion assignments on
various topics in state and local government. In addition, students will be required to complete all reading assignments and communicate their learning through class discussion and tests.

This course develops critical thinking skills through the reading and interpretation of Supreme Court briefs and discussions. Written assignments will reflect students’ critical thinking on the procedural and substantive view of key problems. In addition, discussion assignments will include such topics as mass media political influence, media bias, party functions, and political ideologies.

Course Goals
The following list of course goals will be addressed in the course. These goals are directly related to the performance objectives. (*designates a CRUCIAL goal)

1. Explain the basic principles of state and local government.
2. Explain the powers of state and local government.
3. Explain the processes of state and local government.
4. Explain the structures of state and local government.
5. Define key terms.
6. Analyze the impact of “Dillon’s Rule”, local charters, the Tenth Amendment, and Supreme Court decisions in regulating the national-state-local relationships.
8. Differentiate between special act, general act, and home rule charters.
9. Identify the different types local governments
10. Describe the different types of local governments
11. Explain key concepts.
12. Identify the structures, powers, and responsibilities of local governments.
13. Discuss the differences in state constitutions
14. Discuss the forms of state government.
15. Explain how the combination of politicians’ electoral needs, desire to exercise power, and make good public policy impact the policy-making process at the state and local levels.
16. Analyze the effect of wealth and media on the state and local political process.
17. Describe the various types of political parties and interest groups and evaluate their influences (as well as that of private business) on the political process.
18. Identify the requirements and processes relating to voting, nominations, and elections.
19. Explain the relationship between elected officials and their constituents
20. Explain public policy decisions at the state and local levels.
21. Describe the basic structure and operations of state legislatures, especially as they relate to the legislative process.
22. Explain the various roles played and powers exercised by state governors while in office.
23. Describe the basic organizations and responsibilities of the office of other statewide elective executive branch officials
24. Describe the role and power of the elected judiciary at the state and local levels
25. Describe the structure and procedures of the elected judiciary at the state and local levels
26. Analyze the performance of state and local governments in meeting the needs of citizens.
27. Suggest reforms in the way state and local government operates to make it more responsive to citizen interests.
28. Explain some of the major problems confronting states and localities, suggest possible solutions to them.
29. Identify the propose and necessity of state and local government.
30. Explain the need for active citizen involvement in the democratic process.

Student Contributions
Students are expected to be fully prepared for class by completing all reading assignments in full before the class session. Attendance is a critical factor to success in this class as lecture will enhance students understanding of reading assignments.

Course Evaluation
Your final grade for the course will be determined by the average of all exam/test/quiz scores and completion of all required assignments. See CLASS INFORMATION Section for specific details about scoring procedures and due dates.

TCL's grading scale is:
90 - 100 = A
80 - 89  = B
70 - 79  = C
60 - 69  = D
Below 60  = F

Course Schedule
The class meets for 3 lecture/presentation hours per week. The content will be introduced in the same order as they are listed in the course goal section. The content goals will be finished in a varied manner.

ADA STATEMENT
The Technical College of the Lowcountry provides access, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. To request disability accommodation, contact the counselor for students with disabilities at (843) 525-8228 during the first ten business days of the academic term.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
There is no tolerance at TCL for academic dishonesty and misconduct. The College expects all students to conduct themselves with dignity and to maintain high standards of responsible citizenship.

It is the student’s responsibility to address any questions regarding what might constitute academic misconduct to the course instructor for further clarification.

The College adheres to the Student Code for the South Carolina Technical College System. Copies of the Student Code and Grievance Procedure are provided in the TCL Student Handbook, the Division Office, and the Learning Resources Center.

ATTENDANCE
The College’s statement of policy indicates that students must attend ninety percent of total class hours or they will be in violation of the attendance policy.
Students not physically attending class during the first ten calendar days from the start of the semester must be dropped from the class for NOT ATTENDING.

Students taking an online/internet class must sign in and communicate with the instructor within the first ten calendar days from the start of the semester to indicate attendance in the class. Students not attending class during the first ten calendar days from the start of the semester must be dropped from the class for NOT ATTENDING.

Reinstatement requires the signature of the division dean.

In the event it becomes necessary for a student to withdraw from the course OR if a student stops attending class, it is the student’s responsibility to initiate and complete the necessary paperwork. Withdrawing from class may have consequences associated with financial aid and time to completion.

When a student exceeds the allowed absences; the student is in violation of the attendance policy. The instructor MUST withdraw the student with a grade of “W”, “WP”, or “WF” depending on the date the student exceeded the allowed absences and the student’s progress up to the last date of attendance or

Under extenuating circumstances and at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the class, allow the student to continue in the class and make-up the work. This exception must be documented at the time the allowed absences are exceeded.

Absences are counted from the first day of class. There are no "excused" absences. All absences are counted, regardless of the reason for the absence.

- A student must take the final exam or be excused from the final exam in order to earn a non-withdrawal grade.
- A copy of TCL’s STATEMENT OF POLICY NUMBER: 3-1-307 CLASS ATTENDANCE (WITHDRAWAL) is on file in the Division Office and in the Learning Resources Center.

HAZARDOUS WEATHER
In case weather conditions are so severe that operation of the College may clearly pose a hardship on students and staff traveling to the College, notification of closing will be made through the following radio and television stations: WYKZ 98.7, WGCO 98.3, WGZO 103.1, WFXH 106.1, WWVV 106.9, WLOW 107.9, WGZR 104.9, WFXH 1130 AM, WLWH 101.1, WSOX 1230 AM, WAEV 97.3, WTCO TV, WTG S TV, WJWJ TV, and WSAV TV. Students, faculty and staff are highly encouraged to opt in to the Emergency Text Message Alert System. www.tcl.edu/textalert.asp

EMERGENCY TEXT MESSAGE ALERT
Students, faculty and staff are highly encouraged to opt in to the Emergency Text Message Alert System. Participants receive immediate notification of emergency events and weather cancelations via text messaging on their cell phones. Participants can also opt in to receive non-emergency news and announcements. Go to www.tcl.edu. On the homepage, click on “emergency TextAlert at TCL” and fill out the form or go to www.tcl.edu/textalert.asp

GRADING METHODOLOGY
The final grade must be 70 or more (a grade “C” or better) in order to pass the course and progress to the next course. Students absent from an examination or presentation will receive a “0” grade for the examination unless other arrangements are made with the individual instructor prior to the examination or presentation day or on the examination or presentation day before the test/presentation is scheduled to be given.
The student is responsible for notifying the instructor for the reason of the absence. It is also the responsibility of the student to contact the appropriate instructor to arrange to make up the examination. Arrangements may be completed by telephone.

If the instructor is not available, a message should be left on the instructor’s voice mail AND with another member of the faculty or administrative assistant. The make-up exam will be scheduled and the instructor will decide the method of examination. Messages sent by other students are unacceptable.