

Syllabus for POLS 2209, Section 001
State and Local Government
Fall 2015
MWF 8:30 am – 9:45 am, F-115

Professor: Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

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Course Description: While our attention is most often drawn to the political happenings in Washington, D.C., a great deal of the policymaking that impacts our daily lives occurs in statehouses across the 50 states. Indeed, state governments legislate on issues including welfare, healthcare, social policies, education, infrastructure, and many others. Understanding how state institutions and behavior shape policy outcomes is substantively interesting, but the states also provide political scientists with leverage over larger questions, including power, representation, and responsiveness. They do so by providing a comparative context for testing how variation in institutions and political behavior relate to these broader concepts. This course will address both how the states themselves are substantively interesting, as well as how they are used to understand broader issues in political science.

Prerequisites: There are no specific prerequisites for this course, however it will be very helpful to have a basic understanding of the structure and function of government in the United States.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

- Goal 1: Students will learn how to use the states to comparatively study broader topics in political science
 - Objective 1.A: Students will be able to read and interpret scholarly articles that use the states for comparative analysis
 - Objective 1.B: Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, and report differences in state policy and their causes and effects
 - Objective 1.C: Students will be able to research state policies and formulate policy proposal memos

- Goal 2: Students will learn how and why state governments differ
 - Objective 2.A: Students will be able to identify basic differences in state institutions
- Goal 3: Students will learn how state politics affect the daily lives of citizens
 - Objective 3.A: Students will be able to find, read, and evaluate news articles about state politics
 - Objective 3.B: Students will be able to compare and contrast how state governments and the federal government interact with citizens

Methods for Learning and Teaching: This course will contain a mix of lecture, class discussion, and student presentations. It is vital for your own comprehension of the course material that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings and any relevant happenings in the news. Assignments will test your comprehension of the course material and policy memo assignments will help you develop important writing skills that have practical “on the job” application.

Reaching Our Goals

Attendance: Your attendance in class is always expected. Attending class will allow you to keep up with the course material and provide for meaningful discussion as a class. I will be taking attendance in order to grade participation, but also as a way to get to know you. Please contact me via [e-mail](#) if you are unable to attend class. I will follow the University’s attendance policy when it comes to excused absences. See http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/policypro/content/docs/2030_060414.pdf.

Preparation and Participation: I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read in class. Contributing to class discussion will make the course more interesting and will enhance your understanding of the material. Furthermore, it is important to keep up with current policy debates in the news, since they will be useful for reinforcing the concepts discussed in class.

Do Not Suffer in Silence: Please do not suffer in silence throughout the course if you are struggling. Instead, let me know — as soon as possible — what things are not making sense and we can work it out. If you are having a problem of any kind in the course, please talk to me about it.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course, if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you right away when any changes are made.

Cell Phones and Laptops: Please be respectful of your fellow students and me by silencing your cell phone during class and limiting laptop use to only class-related activity.¹

Current Events: Politics happens in real time and the material we cover in class relates to these events. This is a great opportunity to become informed about political happenings nationally, in New Jersey, and in Atlantic City. We will regularly discuss current events that are related to the class. Please be aware of what is going on, particularly as it relates to the states. I will regularly tweet news stories relevant to our class using the hashtag #pols2209.

E-mail Policy: I will work to respond to e-mails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Readings

The following book is required for the course:

Donovan, Todd, Daniel A. Smith, Tracy Osborn, and Christopher Z. Mooney. 2015. *State & Local Politics: Institutions and Reform*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth. ISBN: 978-1285441405.

Additional required readings that are not from the Donovan et al. book will be made available on Blackboard.

Textbooks are expensive. Please feel free to buy the third edition of the Donovan text. In order to help you keep track of readings in the third edition, I have listed the page numbers for both the third and fourth editions in the course schedule below.

Lecture Slides

I will be using lecture slides throughout the course. These will be uploaded to the [course website](#) prior to each class period.

¹In fact, research demonstrates that students who take handwritten notes generally perform better than those that use laptops: Mueller, Pam A. and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking.” *Psychological Science* 25(6): 1159-1168.

Assessing Your Progress Towards Our Goals

The following types of assessment will be used to track your progress towards meeting our course goals: (Almost) weekly writing assignments, two policy memos, a policy briefing, attendance, and participation. Each component represents the following percentage of your final grade:

(Almost) Weekly Assignments	50%
Policy Memo 1	10%
Policy Memo 2	20%
Briefing	10%
Participation and Attendance	10%

We will use the following grade scale:

Letter	Percent
A	94 to 100
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
B-	80 to 82
C+	77 to 79
C	73 to 76
C-	70 to 72
D	60 to 69
F	59 and below

(Almost) Weekly Assignments: Most weeks there will be a short writing assignment assigned based on the content for that week. Each assignment can be found in [Appendix A](#) of this syllabus, so you can start working on them as soon as you would like. Assignments will often ask you to integrate the content from the course with current happenings in state and local politics. Recognizing that it can be difficult to turn these assignments around each week and that we all have off weeks, I will drop your lowest grade at the end of the semester. This is also why I have provided the prompts ahead of time. The assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard by the start of the class period they are due.

Policy Memos: Many of your upper-level courses provide training for writing long research papers, but much professional writing is far shorter. Indeed, condensing research into short memos is a completely different, yet vitally important, skill for your future career. To this end, you will be required to write two policy memos for this class. Everyone in the class will be given a topic and material for the first memo to model how to write succinctly. You

will then have your choice of topics for the second memo and will be expected to craft a well-written and researched final product. You, along with the other students studying your topic area, will brief the class on your policy recommendations. See a description of these assignments in [Appendix B](#).

Memo Deadlines	
Assignment	Due Date
First Memo	October 30
Topic for Final Memo	October 30
Briefing	December 2 – 9
Second Memo	December 14

Participation: Attending class is incredibly important. It not only enriches the learning experience for yourself and your classmates, but also prepares you for succeeding in the working world. Thus, attendance and participation will represent 10 percent of your final score. See [Appendix C](#) for participation grading guidelines.

Students also have an obligation to notify me within the first three weeks of the semester if they will miss any class session due to a religious observance. I am pleased to do this, but will need notification in order to plan make-up work.

Make-Up Grades: You are allowed to make-up academic work only in the case of excused absences. These absences may include missing class for a [University-sanctioned activity \(with proper documentation\)](#), [illness](#), [religious observance](#), or [family emergency](#). If you know in advance that you are going to miss class, please contact me before the absence to make arrangements for completing the work. If you are absent for an unexpected reason, please check in with me as soon as possible. You will have one week from the day of your return to class to make up a missed assignment.

Extra Credit: There are currently two opportunities for extra credit this semester. On September 16, Stockton has invited Bryan Stevenson as its Constitution Day keynote speaker. Professor Stevenson is one of the most respected civil rights attorneys in the country. His keynote address will focus on the Constitution and issues of racial justice. Given the recent events in Charleston, Baltimore, Ferguson, and other cities across the United States, this talk is highly relevant to our class. I will extend up to 2 percentage points of extra credit for attending his talk (6:30 pm in the Campus Center Event Room). You must submit a 2-3 page discussion of his talk and how it applies to what we are learning in class. This is due on Blackboard by class on Friday September 25.

On October 6, Stockton has invited Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-Ewing Township, Mercer County) as the keynote speaker for the 12th Annual Fannie Lou Hamer

Human and Civil Rights Symposium. Representative Coleman is serving in her first term in the United States Congress and previously served eight terms in the New Jersey General Assembly. She is the first African American female to represent New Jersey in Congress. She also previously served on Stockton's Board of Trustees. I will extend up to 2 percentage points of extra credit for attending her talk (12:30 pm in the Performing Arts Center). You must submit a 2-3 page discussion of her talk and how it applies to what we are learning in class. This is due on Blackboard by class on Monday October 12.

Academic Honesty

Stockton University takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

This course includes both individual and group assignments. All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless I clearly state that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation should speak with me and review the following [website](#) about conducting research and properly citing sources. Furthermore, please choose a [single citation style](#) and stick with it.

In an examination setting, unless I give explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in class or take home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to me also constitutes a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is my policy to follow procedures established by the University. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=17>.

Disabilities

The [Learning Access Program](#) (LAP) provides services to students with disabilities. The services are meant to help students devise strategies for meeting college demands and to foster independence, responsibility, and self-advocacy. Registration for support services is strictly voluntary and on a confidential basis. Students MUST contact LAP immediately when they want to request reasonable accommodations for this course and can do so at any time during the semester, though earlier is better.

Course Schedule

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible, but we may take more time on some concepts and less time on others. For this reason, a digital version of this syllabus can be found on [my website](#). Slides used in class will also be posted on the online syllabus before class. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class or via e-mail and the online syllabus will be constantly up-to-date. Required course readings are listed and due dates for assignments are in bold. Links to some additional readings are included in the syllabus on my website, others will be uploaded to Blackboard. If you have trouble, please do not hesitate to [e-mail](#) me. The abbreviation DSOM 4 refers to the fourth edition of the textbook, DMS 3 refers to the third edition.

Week 1: Introduction

- September 2: Introduction to the class and each other
- September 4: Why do we study the states?
 - DMS 3, Chapter 1
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 1

Week 2: Federalism

- September 7: No Class – Labor Day
- September 9: Federalism
 - DMS 3, Chapter 2
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 2
- September 11: Federalism Today
 - Rose, Shanna and Cynthia J. Bowling. 2015. “The State of American Federalism 2014-15: Pathways to Policy in an Era of Party Polarization.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 45(3): 351-379.

Week 3: Participation, Elections, and Criminal Justice Policy

- September 14: Participation and Elections
 - DMS 3, Chapter 3
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 3
 - **Federalism Assignment Due**
- September 16: Federalism and Local Policing
 - Kiker, Cadman R. III. 2015. “From Mayberry to Ferguson: The Militarization of American Policing Equipment, Culture, and Mission.” *Washington and Lee Law Review* 71(4): 282-298.
 - Ramsey, Donovan X. “Tracking Police Violence a Year After Ferguson.” *FiveThirtyEight Politics*. <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/ferguson-michael-brown-measuring-police-killings/>.
- September 16: Constitution Day Speaker
 - [Bryan Stevenson](#)
 - 6:30 pm in the Campus Center Event Room
 - **Extra Credit opportunity (see above)**
- September 18: Participation and Elections
 - Berinsky, Adam. 2005. “The Perverse Consequences of Electoral Reform in the United States.” *American Politics Research* 33: 471-491.

Week 4: Direct Democracy and Parties

- September 21: Direct Democracy
 - DMS 3, Chapter 4
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 4
 - **Participation and Elections Assignment Due**
- September 23: Direct Democracy
 - Lascher Jr., Edward L., Michael G. Hagen, and Steven A. Rochlin. 1996. “Gun Behind the Door? Ballot Initiatives, State Policies and Public Opinion.” *Journal of Politics* 58(3): 760-775.

- September 25: Careers in State and Local Government
 - **Stevenson extra credit Due**

Week 5: Parties and Interest Groups

- September 28: Parties
 - DMS 3, Chapter 5
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 5
 - **Direct Democracy Assignment Due**
- September 30: Interest Groups
 - DMS, Chapter 6
 - DSOM, Chapter 6
- October 2: Interest Groups
 - Rosenthal, Alan, Burdett A. Loomis, John R. Hibbing, and Karl Kurtz. 2003. “How Special are the Special Interests?” In *Republic on Trial: The Case for Representative Democracy*. Washington DC: CQ Press. Pp. 117-136.

Week 6: Legislatures

- October 5: Chamber Characteristics and Professionalization
 - Boehmke, Frederick J. and Charles R. Shipan. 2015. “Oversight Capabilities in the States: Are Professionalized Legislatures Better at Getting What They Want?” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* Pre-Press.
 - DMS 3, pp. 229-233, 245-253
 - DSOM 4, pp. 212-216, 227-233
 - **Parties and Interest Groups Assignment Due**

- October 6: 12th Annual Fannie Lou Hamer Human Rights and Civil Rights Symposium
 - [Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman](#)
 - 12:30 pm in the Performing Arts Center
 - **Extra Credit opportunity (see above)**
- October 7: Elections and Redistricting
 - Forgette, Richard, Andrew Garner, and John Winkle. 2009. “Do Redistricting Principles and Practices Affect U.S. State Legislative Electoral Competition?” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 9(2): 151-175.
 - DMS 3, pp. 233-244
 - DSOM 4, pp. 216-226
- October 9: Policymaking and Memo Writing
 - DSM 3, pp. 253-271
 - DSOM 4, pp. 234-251
 - Writing a Successful Policy Memo

Week 7: Legislatures, Governors, and Bureaucracy

- October 12: Policymaking
 - Jenkins, Shannon. 2008. “Party Influence on Roll Call Voting: A View from the U.S. States.” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 8(3): 239-262.
 - **Coleman extra credit due**
- October 14: Guest Speaker
 - [NJ State Senator Joseph Kyrillos \(R-Monmouth\)](#)
- October 16: Governors and Bureaucracy
 - DMS 3, Chapter 8
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 8

Week 8: Governors, Bureaucracy, and Courts

- October 19: Governors and Bureaucracy
 - Barrilleaux, Charles and Michael Berkman. 2003. “Do Governors Matter? Budgeting Rules and the Politics of State Policymaking.” *Political Research Quarterly* 56(4): 409-417.
 - **Legislatures Assignment Due**
- October 21: Courts
 - DMS 3, Chapter 9
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 9
- October 23: Courts
 - Brace, Paul, Melinda Gann Hall, and Laura Langer. 2001. “Placing State Supreme Courts in State Politics.” *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 1(1): 81-108.

Week 9: Fiscal Policy

- October 26: Fiscal Policy
 - DMS 3, Chapter 10
 - DMOS 4, Chapter 10
 - **Governor and Courts Assignment Due**
- October 28: State and Local Finances
 - Kiewiet, D. Roderick and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2014. “State and Local Government Finance: The New Fiscal Ice Age.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 105-122.
- October 30: Choose your own adventure
 - **First Memo Assignment Due**
 - **Topic for Final Memo Assignment Due**

Week 10: Local Government

- November 2: The Structure of Local Governments
 - DMS 3, Chapter 11
 - DSOM 4, Chapter 11
- November 4: No Class – Advising Day
- November 6: The Structure of Local Governments
 - Boyne, George A. 1992. “Local Government Structure and Performance: Lessons from America?” *Public Administration* 20: 333-357.

Week 11: Local Government

- November 9: Local Governments and State Policymaking
 - Riverstone-Newell, Lori. 2013. “The Diffusion of Local Bill of Rights Resolutions to the States.” *State and Local Government Review* 45(1): 14-24.
- November 11: Local Service Provision
 - Warner, Mildred and Robert Bebdon. 2001. “Local Government Restructuring: Privatization and Its Alternatives.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 20(2): 315-336.
- November 13: Local Land Use and Environmental Policy
 - DMS 3, Chapter 12
 - DMOS 4, Chapter 12

Week 12: Urban Politics

- November 16: Are Cities Dying?
 - Glaeser, Edward L. 1998. “Are Cities Dying?” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12(2): 139-160.
 - **Local Government Assignment Due**

- November 18: Mayors vs. Managers
 - Frederickson, H. George and Gary Alan Johnson. 2001. “The Adapted American City: A Study of Institutional Dynamics.” *Urban Affairs Review* 36(6): 872-884.
- November 20: Change and Renewal
 - Juday, Luke J. 2015. *The Changing Shape of American Cities*. Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia.

Week 13: Atlantic City

- November 23: Cross-Border Competition
 - Repetti Toni and SoYeon Jung. 2014. “Cross-border Competition and the Recession Effect on Atlantic City’s Gaming Volumes.” *UNLV Gaming Research & Review Journal* 18(2): 23-38.
- November 25: Plan for Renewal
 - [City of Atlantic City’s Recovery Plan](#)
- November 27: No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Policy Briefings

- November 30: Presentation Preparation Day
 - **Urban Politics Assignment Due**
- December 2: Policy Briefings
- December 4: Policy Briefings

Week 15: Policy Briefings

- December 7: Policy Briefings
- December 9: Policy Briefings
- December 11: No Class – Reading Day

Week 16: Finals Week

- December 14: **Final Memos due via e-mail by Noon**

Appendices

A (Almost) Weekly Writing Assignments

Please only spend 1-2 single spaced pages on each question for each assignment (sometimes less than 1 full page works fine). Of course, note that some questions are multi-part. Be clear and succinct in your answers and label the start of each answer with the appropriate question number. Assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard by the start of the class they are due.

A.1 Federalism Assignment (Due September 14)

1. With the expansion of the federal government, some scholars declared that federalism is dead (i.e., power has been centralized within the federal government, leaving less for the states). Is this true? Why or why not? Support your argument using practical examples of federal and/or state power and action, as well as the Rose and Bowling (2015) article.
2. Explain the Supreme Court's role as an umpire in disputes between the federal government and the states. Use the recent ruling on same sex marriage (*Obergefell vs. Hodges*) as an illustration of your points.

A.2 Participation and Elections Assignment (Due September 21)

1. In class, we discussed how the reduction of barriers to political participation is necessary, but not sufficient, for increasing political participation in the long-term. Briefly explain the barriers to political participation in the states. How do these barriers and their effect on participation potentially shape policy outcomes at the state-level? What other element(s) is (are) necessary for boosting participation and how can we encourage it through policy?

A.3 Direct Democracy Assignment (Due September 28)

1. Explain how direct democracy (i.e., initiatives and referenda) can serve as a “gun behind the door” for state legislatures. Discuss the expected direct and indirect effects of initiatives on state policy, as well as the evidence for whether these effects actually occur. When discussing policy outcomes, be sure to compare initiative states to non-initiative states.

A.4 Parties and Interest Groups Assignment (Due October 5)

1. Rosenthal, Loomis, Hibbing, and Kurtz (2003) seek to answer the question of whether the relationship between legislatures and interest groups is beneficial or detrimental to representative democracy. Briefly discuss the role of interest groups in state politics - what they do, why they exist, etc. Then answer Rosenthal et al.’s question - are interest groups good or bad for representative democracy? Make sure you weigh both their purpose and their dangers. Use the evidence available to make an argument, do not just give your opinion.
2. Summarize the benefits and drawbacks of having political parties. Why do we have parties? What benefits do they provide? Be sure to talk about the benefits presented by Wright and Schaffner, but do not feel limited to just talking about those. How can parties negatively effect representation?

A.5 Legislatures Assignment (Due October 19)

1. New Jersey has a part-time legislature, whereas Pennsylvania has a full-time legislature. First, do a little background reading about both bodies and how they operate. Provide a very brief summary. Then, discuss how differences in legislative professionalism may effect the policymaking process in these two states. Providing practical examples of their differences would be helpful. How might the type of legislature affect the power of the governor?

A.6 Governor and Courts Assignment (Due October 26)

1. Discuss the role of the governor in the legislative process. Talk about their formal and informal powers. Also talk about their power relative to the legislature. What institutional and behavioral factors increase and decrease their relative power (make sure you use both lecture material and the Barrilleaux and Berkman (2003) article in your assessment)?

A.7 Local Government Assignment (Due November 16)

1. Discuss the difficult fiscal environment facing local governments. What methods can they use to meet the demands of their residents? How does their structure affect their performance? Do we expect too much of local government, or simply provide too little funding?
2. Discuss how local governments can lead policy change within their states and facilitate the adoption of innovative policies. Read about the banning of plastic bags in California and use it as a motivating example in your discussion. How did local government action result in state adoption of the ban? How is the state's political environment complicating the implementation of this ban?

A.8 Urban Politics Assignment (Due November 30)

1. Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of mayor-council and city manager forms of government.
2. What is your opinion on the Mayor's plan for restoring Atlantic City? Do you think anything is missing? Is the city dying (see Glaeser 1998) and how can it be renewed?

B Policy Memo

The memo is the most basic means of communication within complex organizations. Writing clear, brief, accurate memos is an essential skill of any successful professional in the political and business realms. A skillfully crafted memo has many advantages, including (1) improving the reader's understanding of the topic, (2) saving time by making the information available to many people at once, (3) providing the basis for securing an agreement among contending people, and (4) providing a written record that may become important in reviewing the history of decisions made within the organization.

In this course, you will write two memos. Each memo must be less than two pages, single-spaced. Exceeding this limit will result in a one letter grade deduction for the assignment.

You must submit a hard copy of the first memo in class on the day that it is due and the second memo via e-mail by noon on the University-designated final exam day (December 14). The memo should have one inch margins and 12 point font. Each policy memo must have the following information: (1) the date sent; (2) my name as the recipient; (3) your name as the person sending the memo; and (4) a "subject heading" that describes the main topic discussed.

You will be provided a topic for your first memo and some starter research materials on the topic. You will then select the topic for your second memo and need to inform me of your selection by October 30. Finally, you will be required to brief the class on your policy recommendations during the last two weeks of class. More instructions on this will be given later.

There are three parts to each memo: a definition of the problem; a review of at least two options for dealing with the problem; and your specific recommendation (as well as the rationale supporting your recommendation). Accurately use material assigned in this course and other sources to inform and support your ideas.

Your grades will be based on meeting the requirements of each memo and upon the evaluation of content, form, and grammar. Remember that polished, persuasive writing is expected. Please attach to each memo the list of references you use to support your ideas. Feel free to use quotations, examples and data as well; just be sure to stay within the two-page limit.²

²Adapted from Dr. Christine Kelleher Palus

C Participation Grading Guidelines

A = A student earning an A comes to nearly all classes prepared and can demonstrate superior comprehension of the material. They contribute to the class conversation, but don't dominate it. They make thoughtful contributions that advance conversation, showing interest in and respect for others views. They are demonstrably engaged in course material and content.

B = A student earning a B misses only a few classes, but attends having completed the readings and is able to demonstrate comprehension of the readings, perhaps lacking fully integrated views toward the material. They make thoughtful comments when called upon, show respect and interest in other students views, and occasionally contribute without prompting. This student is making a good-faith effort to participate in class, but may not have the integration of ideas of an A student or may not participate as often.

C = A student earning a C misses several classes, but arrives having completed the readings and able to discuss their most basic tenets. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and gives only minimal answers when called upon. They are putting forward some effort, but appear to be uninterested in the material and do not participate much without prompting.

D = A student earning a D misses close to half of the classes, and when present has difficulty positively contributing. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class, and when prompted, gives responses that may be off-topic and demonstrate a lack of knowledge or preparedness. They are putting forth less than average effort in the course and may be having a negative impact on others.

F = A student earning an F misses over half of the classes, and when present, cannot demonstrate they have read the material or thought about the concepts. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and does not give answers related to the question being asked when prompted. They do not appear to be interested in the content of the class and are putting forth a very minimal level of effort.