COURSE DESCRIPTION:
In 2012, a preliminary count by the Census Bureau recorded more than 89,000 government agencies active in the United States. These jurisdictions range from small and isolated — for example, a rural mosquito abatement district — to agencies that span huge geographic areas and provide vital public services to millions of constituents. In this course, we will study the impact of governmental decentralization and fragmentation on democratic representation, voter behavior, and policy outcomes. We will focus particular attention on the vertical and horizontal relationships between agencies, examining current empirical and theoretical debates through a broad comparative lens.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Participation (30% of Overall Grade)
   Students should complete the assigned readings ahead of time and come to class ready to discuss the material. In addition, students will need to post at least two discussion questions on Carmen each week, based on the material assigned for that week. The questions must be posted at least 24 hours before each class.

2. Referee Reports (30% of Overall Grade)
   Students will write four referee reports during the course of the semester on assigned readings of their choice. Only one report will be accepted for credit during any given week. The referee reports should be about three to four pages long (double-spaced); clearly identify and discuss the empirical, theoretical, or methodological contribution of the chosen reading; and identify and discuss any weaknesses or potential extensions that may provide fertile ground for future research.

3. Research Paper: Replication and Extension (40% of Overall Grade)
   After choosing an existing publication of their choice, students will need to: (1) replicate the analysis and results reported by the author(s); and (2) extend the analysis to make an original contribution to the literature. This contribution may be empirical (e.g., replicate analysis using different data from a different place; provide a better measure for a theoretical construct used in the original analysis); theoretical (e.g., control for a relevant
variable omitted from the original analysis; formalize the model in a different way and solve for the equilibrium); or methodological (e.g., rerun the author’s analysis using a method more appropriate for the data-generating process). The goal is for students to finish the course with a draft paper that will be ready for submission to a major political science journal or presentation at a conference. Initial results will be presented in class on March 28 and the final draft must be submitted during the week of final exams. Students may base their research on one of the readings assigned in the course or on a different (but related) topic of their choice.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND SCHEDULE:

Thursday, January 10: Introduction to Federalism

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Thursday, January 17: Fiscal Federalism — Theory and Practice

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:
Thursday, January 24: Competitive Federalism

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**

Thursday, January 31: Policy Diffusion

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**

Thursday, February 7: Voters and Elections

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Thursday, February 14: Accountability, Corruption, and Interest Groups

**Required Readings:**

Thursday, February 21: State-Local Relations

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**

Thursday, February 28: Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Identity

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**
Thursday, March 7: Political Parties

*Required Readings:*


Thursday, March 14: Spring Break

Thursday, March 21: Government Formation and Consolidation

*Required Readings:*


Thursday, March 28: Student Paper Presentations

Thursday, April 4 – No Class

Thursday, April 11 – No Class

Thursday, April 18: Federalism as an Equilibrium

*Required Readings:*