

W-Seminar: Federalism and Its Impact on American Society, Politics and Culture

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Texas, California, Kansas, Illinois - The United States is often called a “nation of states,” and for good reason. Its federal system gives individual states significant power to govern themselves while remaining part of a unified country. This balance between state and federal authority affects every aspect of life in the U.S., from laws and policies to education and culture. But how exactly does this system work? And what happens when states and the federal government disagree?

In this seminar, we will explore the concept of federalism and its impact on American society. Topics include how states handle controversial issues like sexual education, abortion laws, and gun regulations, as well as their approaches to economic policies and environmental protection. The recent political landscape, particularly after Donald Trump’s election, has further highlighted the importance of federalism. Trump's win sparked debates about the limits of federal power and emboldened many states to take their own paths on key issues such as immigration, healthcare, and climate change.

As part of your seminar paper, you might compare different states, analyzing how their policies differ and why. While research is essential, your paper will also require critical thinking and your own analysis to go beyond the facts.

This course will help you develop a deeper understanding of the U.S., improve your research and writing skills, and think critically about how laws, culture, and politics - especially in polarizing times - shape a country.

Possible research topics:

Abortion Laws in the U.S. – Healthcare Equality or State Control?

Sex Education in the U.S. – Knowledge for Protection or Abstinence for Safety?

States' Rights – Innovation or Polarization in the U.S.?