

# LAW 7222: State and Local Government

In the United States of America, individual states and local subdivisions thereof play a critical role in shaping the contours of our daily existence. While they bear significant responsibility for the financing and provision of most domestic public goods and services, they also enjoy substantial law-making and regulatory authority in furtherance of these ends. As such, their operation offers key opportunities for political participation and civic engagement. Yet, notwithstanding their vital functions and notable features, these public entities are too often relegated to the backdrop of our collective consideration, as concerns with pronounced federal implications typically proliferate in the national dialogue on law and politics. Though the obscurity can temporarily be pierced when a complaint of purportedly regional proportions captures our attention, this course reorients the conversation by centering the source, scope, and limits of local government power in addition to the theoretical perspectives that inform debates on the appropriate allocation of authority in the decentralized polity. Through this undertaking, we will consider the constitutional status of states and local governments as well as the applicable legal rules that both structure their powers and inform their obligations. The endeavor will not only engage with the relationship of local governments to state and federal institutions but will also provide a forum for contemplating the dynamics within, between, and among local governments as well as the communities and individuals that compose them. Over the course of the semester will glean deeper insight into the impore of local government power in effecting major issues and how competing conceptions seek to resolve theses dilemmas in specific contexts including: local government formation; boundary change; home rule; intergovernmental relations and metro-polotical economic growth; locavoting; redevelopment initiatives; city property own

**Credits:** 3.0