

PSC 101-009: Introduction to American Politics
Fall 2007
12:00-1:45 PM, Tuesdays & Thursdays
Location: BEH 121

Instructor: Dr. Nancy Brune

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Office: Wright Hall A220. *Phone:* 895-5230

Office Hours: 2:00-3:00 PM Tuesdays & Thursdays; & by appointment.

Please note: Please use e-mail if you need to contact me. E-mail will be checked once a day.

Course

This course, which satisfies the UNLV United States and Nevada Constitution requirements, provides an overview of the political institutions, processes, and cultures in the United States and in Nevada. It also includes an examination of current political, economic, and social issues and policies.

Textbooks

- Ginsberg, Lowi and Weir. 2007. We the People: An Introduction to American Politics. 6th edition.
- Bowers. The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics (3rd edition)

Additional Reading

Discussions of current events related to U.S. and Nevada government and political activities will enhance your understanding of material covered in this class. You should become familiar with current political events through regular reading of newspapers (i.e. Las Vegas Review-Journal, Washington Post, New York Times, Los Angeles Times), and through watching/listening to television/radio news and discussions shows.

Requirements

1. Readings: Assigned readings should be completed before the lecture on that topic.
2. Homework Assignments: There will be two homework assignments. Specific information on the assignments will be given out in a separate handout.
3. Examinations: There will be four exams (including the final exam). The quizzes are not cumulative. **No make-ups will be given unless extraordinary circumstances exist and, a legitimate excuse and adequate documentation are provided prior to the examination that will be missed.** If extraordinary circumstances require a student to miss an exam, the student will have the opportunity to make up the exam on the last day of scheduled class only, December 6. There will be no make-up exam for the fourth exam, which will be given only on December 11, during exam week.

Grading

There will be 4 CLOSED BOOK exams throughout the semester (including the final). Students must bring a Scantron form, a pencil/pen and exam (blue) books to each exam. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice questions, true/false statements, fill in the blank, and short essays. Exams will cover readings, lectures, and any additional handouts/readings.

There will be two homework assignments which must be handed in at the beginning of the class. The homework assignments will be graded on a) how well the student answers the question; b) the thoughtfulness and clarity of argument; and c) the quality of writing. No extensions will be granted. Late homework assignments will be deducted a grade each day.

Percentage of Grade

Homework Assignments (2 @ 15% each)	30%
Quizzes (4 @ 15% each)	60%
Participation	5%
Attendance	5%

The standard university grading system will be used when issuing final grades: A=94+, A-= 90-93, B+=87-89, B=84-86, B-=80-83, C+=77-79, C=74-76, C-=70-73, D+=67-69, D=64-66, D-=60-63, F=0-59.

Class Attendance

Attendance in this course is crucial and roll will be taken. You may not attend class if you are not registered for the class. You may not attend a course section if you are not registered for that section. If you are requested by the Registrar or an Advisement office to obtain a faculty signature for any kind of add/drop or other administrative action, you will be referred to the Chairman of the Political Science Department. If you must leave class before it is over, please notify me before class. The instructor reserves the right to institute pop quizzes if attendance becomes an issue throughout the semester and excessive absences are noted. The instructor will not post class lectures so if a student misses a class, he/she is responsible for getting the class notes.

Class participation

The course will be taught in a lecture format with emphasis on student participation. Your contributions to the class through your attentiveness, the frequency and quality of your contributions, and the degree of your preparation will influence your grade. While the syllabus provides a structured path, current events may suggest some worthwhile detours. The contents and/or dates of this syllabus are thus subject to change.

Classroom Conduct

Students must arrive on time and be prepared to begin class on time. If late arrivals become a problem, the doors will be locked once class has started. Students may use laptop computers only to take notes. If a student is caught using the internet or emailing during class, the student will be asked to leave the class and will be marked "absent."

Cell phones, ipods, MP3 players and pagers must be turned off and stored out of sight. If a cellphone goes off or a student is using an electronic device during class, the instructor will confiscate the phone for the remainder of the class. No recording devices will be permitted. No food or beverage (except water) is allowed in the classroom. Classroom behavior should always be courteous, respectful of others, and consistent with the expectations set forth by the university.

Academic Misconduct and Copyright Violations

Neither cheating nor plagiarism (using the words or ideas of another without citing the source) will be tolerated. Any attempt to cheat on an examination will be subject to the most severe penalty the University allows. Please review the University handbook for penalties.

"Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution." See the "Student Academic Misconduct Policy" (approved December 9, 2005, located at <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>).

You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violation of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability as well as disciplinary action under University policies. To familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright website at: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright>.

Communication Policy

Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after admission to the university. Non-admitted students should contact the Student Help Desk at (702) 895-0761, in the Student Union Room 231, or by e-mail: studenthelp@unlv.edu. See <http://rebelmail.unlv.edu/> for information. Students are responsible for all information provided in this manner. The instructor will post grades on the class WebCT site.

Disability Resource Center

UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offering reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are: VOICE (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, FAX (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

Religious Holidays and Official Extracurricular Activities

If the date of any of the examinations conflicts with a religious holiday that you observe or an official extracurricular activity, the instructor must be notified no less than 1 week prior to the examination so that alternative arrangements can be made. For extracurricular activities, official documentation will be required. If you are going to miss a class when homework is due, you are expected to turn your homework in at a previous class so that no late penalty is applied.

UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1		
August 28	Class Introduction	READ Syllabus Carefully!
August 30	Institutions, Culture & Politics	We the People, Ch. 1; Sagebrush State, Ch. 1
Week 2		
September 4	The Constitution	We the People, Ch. 2, Sagebrush Ch. 2
September 6	The Constitution	
Week 3		
September 11	Federalism	We the People, Ch. 3
September 13	Federalism	
Week 4		
September 18	EXAM #1	
September 20	Civil Liberties	We the People, Ch. 4, Sagebrush Ch. 3
Week 5		
September 25	Civil Rights	We the People, Ch. 5
September 27	Civil Rights	
Week 6		
October 2	Public Opinion	We the People, Ch. 6
October 4	The Media	Assignment #2 DUE , We the People, Ch. 7
Week 7		
October 9	Political Participation	We the People, Ch. 8, Sagebrush Ch. 4
October 11	Political Participation	
Week 8		
October 16	Political Parties	We the People, Ch. 9
October 18	EXAM #2	
Week 9		
October 23	Campaigns and Elections	We the People, Ch. 10
October 25	Groups and Interests	We the People, Ch. 11, Sagebrush Ch. 5
Week 10		
October 30	Congress	We the People, Ch. 12, Sagebrush Ch. 6
November 1	Congress	
Week 11		
November 6	The Presidency	We the People, Ch. 13, Sagebrush Ch. 7
November 8	The Presidency	
Week 12		
November 13	EXAM #3	
November 15	Bureaucracy	We the People, Ch. 14
Week 13		
November 20	Bureaucracy Making Policy	
Week 14		
November 27	The Courts	We the People, Ch. 15, Sagebrush Ch. 8
November 29	The Courts	Assignment #2 Due
Week 15		
December 4	Review	
December 6	Make-up Exams	
Week 16		
December 11	EXAM #4	

