

## Syllabus: PSC 101



Supreme Court Building, Washington, DC

**PSC 101: 15 8:00-9:45 WRI C148**  
**PSC 101: 13 2:00-4:15 WRI C148**

### Course description

PSC 101 Introduction to American Politics (Satisfies the United States and Nevada Constitutions requirement.) Survey of United States national, state, and local governments with attention to unique aspects of Nevada government. 4 credits.

### Instructor:

Peter Pizor, Ph.D.  
Part-Time Instructor  
WRI A224  
(702) 895-5248  
(702) 493.3374  
[peter.pizor@unlv.edu](mailto:peter.pizor@unlv.edu)

**Office hours:** M-W 9:45--11:15 AM  
and by appointment

### Why you should take this class?

This class introduces the fundamental concepts underlying the governments of the United States and the State of Nevada. It is designed for those with no previous background in political science.

### Textbooks

Schmidt, Shelley, and Bardes. American Government and Politics 2007-2008 Alternative Edition. Thomson-Wadsworth.

The Sage Brush State. 3 Edition. Bowers.

Both are available in the UNLV bookstore. The Schmidt, Shelley and Bardes text is also available online. It is highly recommended that you stay abreast of current events through reading a magazine such as *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, or through careful monitoring of newspapers and internet news sources.

### Requirements

This course includes six quizzes, two examinations, and class participation which may sometimes be measured in the form of a quiz. A quiz may not be retaken. There is no "extra credit".

**Outcomes:** As measured by the tests, quizzes, and class participation, students will learn the essentials of the structure of the governments of the United States, and Nevada. Common terms pertaining to institutions, political behavior, and the constitutional process will be mastered. Students will attain an understanding of the fundamental concepts underlying the constitutions of the United States and Nevada.

### Class Participation

You are expected to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions. As a rule of thumb, you should plan to spend about an hour or two going over your notes from the readings and preparing for class each week after you have completed the readings. If you must miss a class, please notify the instructor in advance. More than 5 unexcused absences or unprepared sessions will lower your class grade.

### Exams and Quizzes

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The examinations include multiple choice and essays. Students are required to bring scantron forms, a number 2 pencil, and a blue book. Tests include the current chapters as well as questions of importance from earlier chapters. The final is comprehensive. Quizzes will be conducted roughly every two weeks and consist of multiple choice style questions taken online in a timed environment. The tests and quizzes are comprehensive and address the concepts introduced in the two textbooks as well as the lectures.

### Key dates, readings, and tests

#### Reading Assignments for PSC 101:

Week of:		Chapter (American Government)	Tests
8/25		1 Founding of US	
9/1 (Labor Day )		2 Constitution	Quiz
9/8		3 Constitution/ Federalism (Bowers 1,2)	
9/15		4 Civil Liberties	Quiz
9/22		5 Civil Rights (Bowers 3)	
9/25		6 Public Opinion/ Political Socialization	Quiz
9/29	Midterm 10/1	Review of Part 1	
10/6		7 Interest Groups	
10/13		8 Political Parties	Quiz

10/20		9 Campaigns and Elections	
10/27		10 Media and Cyber Politics	Quiz
11/3		11 Congress Bowers 6 Nevada Legislature	
11/10		12 residency Bowers 7 Nevada Governor	
11/17		13 + Bowers NV Local Government	Quiz
11/24		14 + Bowers Nevada Judiciary	
12/1		Review	
Final exam	Week of 12/8	Final exam	Final

Calculating the final grade:

Content area	Points	Number of events	Possible points	
Tests	50	2	100	
Quizzes	15	6	90	
Participation	10	Each class	10	
Total			200	

The total points earned will be averaged and assigned letter grades based on the table below. Missing 4 or more classes results in a 5 point deduction in the final course grade. This is roughly one half a letter grade.

93 +	A	74-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	- 59	F

### WebCampus

This course will use WebCampus as the primary way of communicating with students outside of the classroom. Most lecture notes will be posted there—normally on the day of the class. Links, notices, and supplemental information will also be found there. Be aware the posted lecture notes are incomplete and are intended to supplement, but not replace class room lectures. Do not use the email link on WebCampus.

All email correspondence is to be through [peter.pizor@unlv.edu](mailto:peter.pizor@unlv.edu).

## **Policies**

*Your right to learn.* The classroom is a safe space for the discussion of issues pertaining to the course. Behaviors that interfere with the rights of others, including, but not limited to ringing cell phones, beepers, and distracting conversations are not allowed.

*Cheating:* There will be none. Any attempt at gaining outside assistance on exams, in any form, will result in failure of the entire course.

*Religious Holidays:* Any student missing quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of a religious holiday shall be given an opportunity to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of session 1 of her or his intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering a test or examination at an alternative time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university which could not reasonably have been avoided

*Disabilities:* If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the Disability Resource Center for coordination in your academic accommodations. The DRC is located in the Reynolds Student Services Complex in Room 137. The DRC phone number is 895-0866 (TDD: 895-0652).

*General:* The policies of the University of Nevada Las Vegas as stipulated in the Student Handbook, are included in this syllabus by reference. That document provides important information and procedural guidelines.

*Cell phone:* sending, receiving, checking messages, listening to IPODs, wearing Bluetooth ear pieces, and similar activities disrupt from the purposes of the class and are not permitted. Each infraction may be penalized up to 2 points on your final average. Repeated infractions will result in a failing grade for the course. Use of a cell phone, or similar wi-fi device during an examination will result in a grade of 0 for that test.

*Do not use:* Computers and any form of recording device may not be used during class.

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus as appropriate.