

## Syllabus: PSC 101



Supreme Court Building, Washington, DC

**PSC 101: 15 8:00-9:45 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 A216  
(702) 895-1498

[peter.pizor@unlv.edu](mailto:peter.pizor@unlv.edu)

**Office hours:** Monday and Wednesday 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

Coleman &  
Goldstein [Understanding American Politics and Government](#) (2009)  
& Howell

The book includes an access code to unlock portions of the exercises and quizzes that are posted on the course web site. The access code comes with the purchase of a NEW text book. Alternatively, the access code can be purchased as a stand alone.

Pearson [MyPoliSciLab Student Access Code Card \(for valuepacks\)](#) (2009)

The full text of the book is available online on the course web site. If you are comfortable with online reading there is no reason to purchase a physical book.

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.

The Nevada Constitution and other documents pertaining to Nevada government and politics are posted on the course web site. You will not need to purchase a separate textbook for the Nevada component of the course.

### **Requirements**

This course includes weekly online quizzes or exercises, and two examinations.

**Outcomes:** As measured by the tests and quizzes 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 each week—usually on Wednesday. The weekly quiz consists of multiple choice style questions taken online in a timed environment. For some weeks, there will be a graded on-line exercise or simulation in place of the weekly quiz. They all carry the same grading weight. The quiz or exercise will be available for 24 hours starting at 1:30 pm Wednesday and closing at 6:00 pm Saturday. The quiz or exercise must be taken during the time window scheduled and a missed quiz may not be made up unless there is an official excuse turned in written form prior to the quiz. A missed quiz earns the grade of zero for the purposes of computing your average grade. The midterm and final exams are comprehensive and address the concepts introduced in the book as well as the lectures. Quizzes address materials in the text,

lectures, discussions, and current events. From time to time, concepts from earlier in the term will be introduced into the quiz as a means of reviewing important political science concepts.

### Reading Assignments for PSC 101:

Course week (Monday )		Chapter (American Government)	Tests (Except for the midterm there will be an online quiz or exercise each Wednesday-Saturday.)
8/24		Chapter 1-2 Introduction/Political Culture	Quiz or Exercise
9/7 (Labor Day-no class)		Chapter 3 The Constitution (part 1)	Quiz or Exercise
9/14		Chapter 3-4 Constitution (part 2)/ Federalism Nevada Government Materials will be posed on line.	Quiz or Exercise
9/21		Chapter 5 Civil Liberties	Quiz or Exercise
9/28		Chapter 6 Civil Rights Nevada Government Materials	Quiz or Exercise
10/5		Chapter 7-8 Public Opinion/ Political Participation	Quiz or Exercise
10/12	Midterm 10/14	Review of Part 1 Comprehensive Midterm	No Quiz or Exercise
10/19		Chapter 9-10 Voting, elections, campaigns; Media and Politics	Quiz or Exercise
10/26		Chapter 11 Political Parties	Quiz or Exercise
11/2		Chapter 12 Interest Groups	Quiz or Exercise
11/9		Chapter 13 Congress/NV Legislature	Quiz or Exercise
11/16		Chapter 14 Presidency/NV Governor	Quiz or Exercise
11/23		Chapter 15 Courts/NV Courts	Quiz or Exercise
11/30		Chapter 19 State and Local Government	No Quiz
12/7 to 12/12 Final exam week	Final exam	Final exams are scheduled by the Registrar and will take place at the date and time specified.	Comprehensive in class final

Calculating the final grade:

The final grade will be based on the student's average on all exams and Quiz/Exercise grades. This is the simple average of all Quiz or Exercise and test scores noting the number of possible correct answers and the percentage that the student earned from that total. For the purposes of averaging the final grade the midterm and the final have 100 points each.

The total points earned will be averaged and assigned letter grades based on the table below.

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, any changes, and supplemental information will also be found there. Be aware that 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).

The full text copy of the required textbook is available on the course web site. Access to this is by a code that can be purchased with the textbook (included with new books) or as a stand alone from the University Bookstore.

### 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 a quiz, examination, 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. Laptops may not be open during class.

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus as appropriate. All modifications will be posted on the course web page.