

PSC 403Z: Topics in Public Policy: Morality Politics
Fall, 2009:
Dr. Jelen

Contact Information:

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Office Hours:

MW 11:30 am -12:30 pm
M 2:30-3:30 pm
T: 11:00 am -2:00 pm
or by appointment

Required Texts:

Moral Controversies in American Politics Raymond Tatalovich and Byron Daynes (editors) (3rd edition).
Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America Morris P. Fiorina, with Samuel J
Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope.(2nd edition).

Objective:

This course is intended to provide critical analyses of the legal, institutional, and behavioral issues underlying public policy issues involving questions of personal or social morality: Church-state relations, abortion, capital punishment, gun control, obscenity and pornography, and gay rights. The purpose is not to support any particular perspective on any of these issues, but to understand (sympathetically and critically) diverse positions on these controversial policy areas, to identify assumptions underlying different positions, and to assess the effects of public debate on these issues on democratic governance and civility.

Grading:

There will be two essay exams: A midterm exam, given on October 14, and a final exam, given on December 7. Each exam counts for 30% of student's final grade. In addition, on or before December 2, each student will submit a critical review of Morris Fiorina's *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. This review, which should be 5-10 double-spaced typed pages in length, will include a summary of the book's main arguments, as well as the evidence on which the arguments are based, and a critical evaluation of the plausibility of the authors' thesis. This review will count for 30 per cent of the student's final grade.

In addition, there will be several out of class assignments throughout the semester. Collectively, these assignments will count for 10% of student's final grade.

Policies:

Exceptions to the final exam schedule and the paper deadline will only be granted in cases of **documented** medical or bereavement considerations. Make-up midterm exams will be administered on December 2

Grade appeals will be submitted in writing no less than 48 hours after the return of a graded assignment. Responses to such appeals will also be written.

Academic Misconduct – “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.”

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism: “Using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources.” See the “Student Academic Misconduct Policy” (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>.

Any instance of academic misconduct results in failure of the entire course.

Students are expected to attend all classes, and to arrive promptly on time.

No use of cell phones will be permitted under any circumstances. **Any** appearance of a cell phone or other

electronic devices during exams will be considered academic misconduct, and will result in failure of the entire course. **No** recording of lectures is permitted under any circumstances. Instructor reserves the right to restrict use of any electronic device (including, but not limited to, personal computers, Blackberries, Ipods) at instructor's discretion.

Copyright – The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **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 violations 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, you are encouraged to visit the following website: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright/>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC) – It is important to know that over two-thirds of the students in the DRC reported that this syllabus statement, often read aloud by the faculty during class, directed them to the DRC office.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. Faculty should not provide students accommodations without being in receipt of this plan.

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, TDD (702) 895-0652, fax (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

Religious Holidays Policy -- Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester 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 last day at late registration of his or her 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 the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university which could not be avoided.

<http://catalog.unlv.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=44&bc=1>

Tutoring -- The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring and academic assistance for all UNLV students taking UNLV courses. Students are encouraged to stop by the ASC to learn more about subjects offered, tutoring times and other academic resources. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex, #22 on the current UNLV map. Students may learn more about tutoring services by calling (702) 895-3177 or visiting the tutoring web site at: <http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/tutoring/>

UNLV Writing Center – *The following statement is recommended for inclusion in course syllabi:*

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. 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. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

A Useful Website: For a variety of services to assist students in their academic endeavors, log on to http://tlc.unlv.edu/student_success.htm

Course Schedule:

- I. Culture Wars (August 24-26)
Tatalovich and Daynes, Foreward, Introduction.
- II. Church-State Relations (August 31-September 23)
Tatalovich and Daynes, 6 (Jelen)
- III. Abortion: (September 28-October 12)
T & D 1 (Strickland)

Midterm exam: October 14

- IV. Capital Punishment: (October 19-28)
T & D, 4 (Steel and Steger)
- V. Gun Control: (November 2-9)
T & D, 7 (Spitzer)
- VI. Obscenity and Pornography (November 16-18):
T & D, 9 (Daynes)
- VII. Gay Rights: (November 23-25)
T & D, 5 (Ellis)
- VIII. Culture Wars Revisited (November 30)

December 2: Make-up midterm

December 2: Book review due

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 7, 1:00 pm