

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS

FALL 2005

Instructor: Mr. Gordon Stirling
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Office: A-226/WRI
Office Hours: MW, 1:00-1:45 PM and 4:00-4:45 PM
or by appointment

Course: Political Science 101
Section: 006
Location: Rm. 106 BEH
Time: MW, 7:00-8:45 PM

Description: This course is an introduction to the political institutions and processes of the United States and Nevada Governments. Successful completion of this course satisfies UNLV's U.S. and Nevada Constitution requirements. During the course, we will examine political, economic and social issues as they relate to political institutions and processes.

Required Texts:

Government by the People, Brief Fifth Edition, Burns, Peltason, Cronin, Magleby, O'Brien and Light

Sagebrush State, Nevada's History, Government and Politics, Second Edition, Michael W. Bowers

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for Political Science 101.

Attendance: Roll will not be taken; however, students will be responsible for all material, including that presented in class. Therefore, regular class attendance is strongly advised.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to understand and comply with UNLV regulations regarding academic honesty, including, but not limited to, plagiarism and cheating. Any attempt to cheat on an examination will be subject to the most severe penalty the University allows.

Copyright and Fair Use Laws: The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with 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, the University encourages you to visit its copyright website at: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright/>.

Class Conduct and Interruptions: In accordance with UNLV's student conduct code and student expectations, it is important to maintain a class atmosphere conducive to listening, learning and concentration. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off and put away during class. Late arrivals, early departures, leaving and returning, eating in class, "side-bar" conversations and other inattentive behavior during class interrupt the flow of discussion and concentration of other students, and should be avoided. Polite intellectual discourse and inquiry, with respect for the views and opinions of classmates, will be the norm in class. No tape recording of class sessions is permitted, as it can inhibit class participation.

Disabilities: The UNLV Disability Resource Center (DRC) houses the resources for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room 137. Their numbers are: (702) 895-0866/Voice; (702) 895-0652/TDD; and (702) 895-0651/Fax. For additional information, please visit <http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/drc>.

Assignments and Grading:

Exams

There will be three closed-book exams. The results of each exam will comprise 30% of your grade. Students will be graded on knowledge and understanding of textbook reading assignments and class lectures. Reading assignments and exam dates are set forth in the schedule below. The exams are not cumulative. Material from the readings not included in the lectures may be the basis of exam questions.

Electronic dictionaries are not permitted to be used during exams.

Make-up Exams and Early Exams

Religious Holidays: If you miss an examination because of a religious holiday that you observe, you will have the opportunity to make up the examination. You must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the examination so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Official Extracurricular Activity: If the date of any of the examinations conflicts with an official extracurricular activity, notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the examination and provide official written notification no less than one week prior to the examination so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Extraordinary Circumstances: Ordinarily, make-up exams will not be given except for the reasons cited above. However, if extraordinary circumstances seem to require one, then students must do the following in order to qualify: (1) inform the instructor at least one week prior to the exam; and (2), provide documentation afterwards. All make-up exams for the first and second exams will be given on the last day of scheduled classes only.

There will be no make-up exam for the third exam, which will be given during exam week.

Early exams will not be given.

Class Discussions of Current Events

Discussions of current events related to U.S. and Nevada government and political activities are an integral part of this course. Participation in these discussions will comprise 10% of your grade. Be prepared to be called on during class. You should become familiar with current political events and trends through regular reading of newspapers and/or internet news sites, and through watching or listening to television and radio news and discussion shows.

Grade Percentages

90%-100% = A

80%-89% = B

70%-79% = C

60%-69% = D

Below 60% = F

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 29, 31

Introduction; Syllabus
Constitutional Democracy

Burns – Chapter 1

September 7

American Federalism
Nevada History and Statehood

Burns – Chapter 2
Bowers – Chapters 1 and 2

September 12, 14

Political Culture and Ideology

Burns – Chapter 3

September 19, 21

American Political Landscape

Burns – Chapter 4

September 26, 28

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Burns – Chapter 5

October 3

First Exam

October 5

Public Opinion, Voting and Elections
Nevada Political Parties and Elections
Nevada Interest Groups and Lobbying

Burns – Chapter 6
Bowers – Chapters 4 and 5

October 10, 12

The Media and American Politics

Burns – Chapter 7

October 17, 19

U.S. Congress
Nevada Legislature

Burns – Chapter 8
Bowers – Chapter 6

October 24, 26

U.S. Presidency
Nevada Executive

Burns – Chapter 9
Bowers – Chapter 7

October 31, November 2

Congress and the President

Burns – Chapter 10

November 7

Second Exam

November 9

U.S. Federal Bureaucracy
Nevada City and County Governments
Nevada State and Local Finance

Burns – Chapter 11
Bowers – Chapters 9 and 10

November 14, 16

U.S. Judiciary
Nevada Judiciary

Burns – Chapter 12
Bowers – Chapter 8

November 21, 23

The First Amendment

Burns – Chapter 13

November 28, 30

Equal Justice Under The Law
Civil Rights and Liberties in Nevada

Burns – Chapter 14
Bowers – Chapter 3

December 5, 7

Policy-Making: Economic, Social, Foreign, Defense

Burns – Chapters 15 and 16

December 12 (8:10 pm)

Third Exam