

Introduction to American Politics

POLITICAL SCIENCE 101
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Fall 2005

Professor: Michele Kuenzi
Phone: 702-895-4693
Office: Department of Political Science; Wright Hall B211
Office Hours: Mondays 3:30 -5 p.m, Thursdays 12:45 - 2:15 p.m. and by appointment
Email: michele.kuenzi@ccmail.nevada.edu

Class Meets: Mondays 5:30PM-9:00PM in BEH 124

Introduction: In this class we will discuss the structure and workings of the American Political System. We will examine the major participants and institutions of the national and state government and explore how these actors and institutions interact within our political structure to produce public policies. Special emphasis is given to conflicting theories of power and influence as they apply to different groups. As a framework we will look at how these actors, groups, institutions, rules and processes interact to serve the interests of citizens and contribute to or detract from our struggle for democracy, equality and justice.

Texts:

We the People: An Introduction to American Politics, 5th edition. Edward S. By
Ginsberg, Lowi and Weir. Norton, 2005.

The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics. By Michael W.
Bowers. University of Nevada Press, 2002.

Grades

The total number of points that can be achieved in this course is 400. The points are allocated in the following way:

	Number of Points	Percentage Equivalent
Quizzes	100	25%
Mid term	120	30%
Attendance	20	5%
Participation	20	5%
Final Exam	140	35%
Totals	400	100%

In other words, quizzes count for 25% of your grade, the mid term for 30%, attendance for 5%, participation for 5%, and the final examination for 35%. **The final examination will be cumulative.**

According to the point system, final grades will be assigned in the following way:

A	374 points to 400 points
A-	358 points to 373 points
B+	346 points to 357points
B	330 points to 345 points
B-	318 points to 329 points
C+	306 points to 317 points
C	290 points to 305 points
C-	278 points to 289 points
D+	266 points to 277 points
D	250 points to 265 points
D-	238 points to 249 points
F	237 points and below

Exams: There will be a midterm and a final exam. They will be based on the assigned readings and lectures and consist of mostly multiple choice questions. Students will need two number 2 pencils for the exams. **Make-up exams will not be given** except in the case of extreme circumstances. The student must be able provide documentation that the absence is for a reason recognized by the university (e.g., illness, death in the family, observance of a religious holiday) and make arrangements with me **prior** to the scheduled exam date. If it is absolutely impossible to make prior arrangements with me, students must contact me as soon as possible about the situation. (Please notify me of any planned absences for religious holidays or official extracurricular activity for UNLV by **September 26, 2005**).

Quizzes

Four quizzes will be administered during the course. **The quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class.** Students may drop their lowest quiz score. Since the lowest quiz score can

be dropped and students know in advance the dates of the quizzes, **no makeup quizzes will be administered.**

Quizzes and exams will be based on material covered during class in lectures, films or class discussions and from the required readings. I will periodically introduce current event articles or materials as they relate to the topics and concepts being covered in class. Students will, of course, be responsible for this material as well as material covered in films and guest lectures.

Attendance, Participation and General Expectations

Attendance will be taken at each class. Students may miss up to 2 classes without losing attendance points. Because students are already allowed 2 absences during the term, which is the equivalent of 2 weeks of classes, 4 points will be subtracted from the attendance points for every absence beyond 2, whatever the reason for the absence. Attending class is a very important part of the learning process. If anyone foresees the possibility of missing class more than two times, she/he should consider taking PSC 101 when she/he will be able to attend all of the classes. **Signing the attendance sheet for another student is a form of fraud**, and anyone participating in this activity will be penalized.

Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged. Of course, participation should be constructive, and all comments should be relevant to the material being covered in class. Students must **do all of the reading!** I will call on students in class and expect their answers to reflect familiarity with the ideas and information in the readings. Respect should be shown for all other class members at all times. Inappropriate and disruptive participation/behavior will result in a drop in the student's grade. If you are habitually late, the participation and attendance portions of your course grade will be marked down substantially.

Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive promptly and have a collegial demeanor. Students are not allowed to sleep, read newspapers, listen to headphones, or talk to others during class. Engaging in these behaviors will result in a drop in the student's grade. **You must turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices during class. Any exceptions must be cleared with me in advance. If you look at your cell phone during a quiz or exam, you will receive a zero for that quiz or exam.**

I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus. Students will be responsible for knowing any changes made to the syllabus during class time whether they were in attendance or not. The instructor's lecture notes are not available to students; it is the student's responsibility to obtain class notes from a classmate, should class be missed.

Disability Policy: Learning Enhancement Services (LES) is the office to provide Disability Services. If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact LES for coordination in your academic accommodations. LES is located in the Reynolds Student Services Complex, suite 137. The phone number is 702-895-0866 or TTD 702-895-0652 or you may visit their website at www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les.

Schedule

	Topic	Readings
August 29	Introduction	
September 5	Labor Day; NO CLASS	
September 12	Institutions, Culture, and Politics The Constitution	We the People ch.1; Sagebrush ch. 1 We the People ch.2
September 19	Federalism Civil Liberties	We the People ch.3 ; Sagebrush ch. 2 We the People ch.4; Sagebrush ch. 3
September 26	Quiz 1 Civil Rights	We the People ch.5
October 3	Public Opinion The Media	We the People ch.6 We the People ch.7
October 10	The Media & Public Opinion: Manufacturing Consent Political Participation	We the People ch.8
October 17	Quiz 2 Public Opinion, Political Participation, and Politics Review for the Midterm	
October 24	MIDTERM	
October 31	Political Parties Elections	We the People ch.9 We the People ch.10
November 7	Elections Continued Interest Groups	Sagebrush ch. 4 We the People ch.11; Sagebrush ch.5
November 14	Quiz 3 Congress The Presidency	We the People ch.12; Sagebrush ch.6 We the People ch.13; Sagebrush ch.7
November 21	American Public Policy: War on Terrorism Bureaucracy	We the People ch.14
November 28	Quiz 4 Courts State and Local Government	We the People ch.15; Sagebrush ch. 8 Sagebrush State ch. 9, 10, 11
December 5	Conclusion/Catch up Review for the Final	
Wednesday, December 14 6 p.m.	FINAL EXAM	