

Political Science 101: Introduction to American Politics

Fall 2005

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Sec. 7: TR 8:00 – 9:45 AM BEH 119
Sec. 9: TR 12:00 – 1:45 PM BEH 104
Office Hours: Mon. 5:30 – 6:30 PM
Thurs. 9:50 – 11:50 AM & by appointment

This course, which satisfies the UNLV United States and Nevada Constitution requirements, provides an overview of the political institutions, processes, and cultures in the United States and in Nevada. It also includes an examination of political, economic, and social issues and policies.

Textbooks

- Burns, Peltason, Cronin, Magleby, O'Brien, and Light, *Government by the People (Brief 6th Edition)*
- Bowers, *The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics (2nd Edition)*

Course Goals and Objectives

Introduction to American Politics is a survey course of the United States political, social, economic, diplomatic and cultural development from the inception of the United States to contemporary times. My goal is to develop your *interest* and *understanding* of political science and how it relates to you, your family, and your community, both past and present. Political science is a never-ending novel and is inclusive of everyone, every thing and every event; however, we can only survey the more significant events and people at this time.

Coursework in political science will increase your ability to think critically and independently, enhance your ability to communicate in more discussions, enhance your ability to think through competing theories, and information using logical and analytical means, knowledgeable of the discipline and major trends, debates, theories, methods and serving as a foundation for fields such as government service and practicing law.

Grading Policies

A standard "A-F" plus/minus grading scale will be used based on accumulated points as follows:

1. Group Projects	50 Points
2. Book Report	50 Points
3. Mid-Term Exam	100 Points
4. Attendance/Class Participation	100 Points
5. Final Exam	200 Points
TOTALS POINTS	500 Points

Grading will be standard:

94 – 100	A	84 – 86	B	74 – 76	C	64 – 66	D
90 – 93	A-	80 – 83	B-	70 – 73	C-	60 – 63	D-
87 – 89	B+	77 – 79	C+	67 – 69	D+	59 & below	F

Group Projects

At the start of the semester, students will be assigned to a group. The student is expected to participate in his/her group. A presentation will be made to the class by each group about 10-12 weeks after the start of the semester. The instructor will provide additional information. Each group will choose one of the following topics for their projects:

- Political Participation
- Elections in America
- Congress / Representation & Legislation
- Political Parties
- The U.S. Supreme Court
- Interest Groups
- The Presidency
- Domestic & Foreign Policies

Students will choose sub topics from the above mentioned topics. For example, under the U.S. Supreme Court category, a group may choose a particular justice to talk about.

Presentations must run 15 – 20 minutes, maximum. Within each group, students are advised to exchange emails and/or phone numbers for outside classroom meetings; if needed and applicable, students can use visual aids such as flyers, posters and handouts.

Book Reports

There is a book report required of each student consisting of 3-5 typed, double spaced pages. The topic and due date will be further discussed by the instructor.

Book reports must be typed, double-spaced, and have one inch margins. No exceptions will be made. Bibliographies must follow MLA format. Written assignments are evaluated and graded on content and form, which includes, but is not limited to, organization, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and clarity of expression. Please check with UNLV Library Resources for more information on MLA if necessary.

Mid-Term

The Mid-Term examination will be based on assigned readings, lectures and possibly expert guest speakers and class videos. The test will be multiple choice/true false. It will contain 50 questions worth 2 points each, for a total of 100 points.

Final Exam

The Final Exam will be given at the end of the semester. The test will be multiple choice/true false. The test will be 100 questions worth 2 points each, for a total of 200 points.

Attendance/Class Participation

Class participation is encouraged. This can only be accomplished through attendance. Credit is proportionate to attendance.

The classroom is where much of your learning will take place; therefore, regular class attendance is strongly advised. Whether you attend a class or not, you are responsible for all material presented and announcements made during that class session. If you miss a class, you need to check with a peer/student and may consider copying their notes.

Assignments

Verbal or written assignments are due on the date specified by the instructor. ****Only under the most extreme circumstances will work be accepted after the due date.** A penalty MAY be assessed. Poor planning by a student does not constitute an “extreme circumstance.”

Religious Holidays and Absences

If the date of any of the examinations conflicts with a religious holiday that you observe, please contact Prof. Wyman at least 2 weeks prior to the examination so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Expectations

I expect full participation from every student each class. As a college student, it is your responsibility to read the assigned material before class (which is noted as part of your participation grade), complete the assignment on time, and participate within guidelines. All assignments are due the day listed on the schedule. All assignments must be accomplished professionally, i.e. no colored, crumpled paper, additional artwork, etc. I understand that over the course of a semester, there are many factors that may influence your participation. If you believe your participation/academic work may be affected, please consult with me.

Political science courses are **naturally heavy reading courses** and require baseline knowledge provided by the reading assignments and constant attention to current events before a competent discourse can be held. I strongly encourage each of you to read the chapters as assigned and watch and/or read the news daily. This course relies heavily on discussion derived from current events and assigned and related ideas and materials. If you do not intend to read as assigned and to participate in group discussions, consider selecting another course section.

Library and Internet usage are required. Free Internet access is available to all students at UNLV. Please see me for further information if needed.

Like other disciplines, political science, which is a combination of government, politics, economics, culture and much more, often demonstrates both the good and the bad in a shared history of the U.S. Serious and open discussions in this academic setting are strongly encouraged. However, I do not want unnecessary offensive or rude behavior.

Cheating

ANY form of cheating will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with the most severe penalty the University allows. The Undergraduate Catalog (pp. 58-59) defines academic dishonesty as “any act that violates the academic processes on the university.” The simple rule for this class: **DO NOT CHEAT!** It just isn’t worth it. Cheating leads to an “F” to the course and the cheater may be subject to disciplinary review as found in the UCCSN document, “Rules and Disciplinary Procedures for Members of the University Community.”

Academic Dishonesty

All graded work must be the original work of the student claiming credit for it. Students guilty of knowingly using or attempting to use another person's work as though that work their own, will receive a grade "F" for the course. Students who are uncertain regarding what actions constitutes plagiarism should consult with the instructor. You are therefore solely responsible for violation of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you not assume any responsibility for your violation of fair use laws. The students should also be familiar with UNLV's policy on academic honesty that appears in the most recent edition of the UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG, or visit the university's copyright website at <http://www.unlv.edu/communities/copyright>.

Policy on students with Disability

Learning Enhancement Services (LES) houses Disability Services, Tutoring Services, and Learning Strategies. 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 (SSC), Room 137. The telephone number is 895-0866/TDD 895-0652. The website is: <http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les>.

Classroom Behavior

It is expected, at all times and under all circumstances, that you will act in a polite, respectful fashion toward other students in the class. If you act otherwise, I will consider this a sign that you do not understand the nature of this course, and I will consider it grounds for a potential "F" in the course regardless of your performance in other areas of the course.

In addition, you will NOT sort through materials, talk, leave the room, walk in front of students, or create disturbances.

No food shall be brought in to be eaten in class. Turn all cell phones off and all pagers on the off or "vibrate" position while in class. It is unacceptable for students to get up during class to answer phones or pagers. No tape recorders or other devices are allowed to record classes. No children or guests will be allowed to be sitting in during class, due to space and liability issues.

PLEASE come to class on time. Strolling in after class begins is disruptive, both to me as the instructor and to your fellow students. It is common courtesy to be on time. If you choose to be rude or persist in distracting behavior (to include "side bar" conversations), I will ask you to leave the class and will drop you officially from the class.

Extra Credit

There may be at least one opportunity for extra credit during the semester. It is provided for the students who wish to earn additional points and for those who would like to learn more about politics. This extra credit opportunity is not mandatory; however it may be the only chance a student has for extra credit. I therefore advice each student to take advantage of this because if he/she waits till the end of the semester to see how they are doing, and requesting from me additional extra credit opportunities it will be too late.

Addendums to Syllabus

ADDENDUMS to this document are possible although not probable. If changes are found to be necessary, students will be notified by the instructor in a timely manner.

Tentative Schedule

One “library visit” day will be offered and that day will be announced in class.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>BURNS</u>	<u>BOWERS</u>
Tues. Aug. 30	Course Introduction		
Thurs. Sept. 1	Constitutional Democracy	1	
Tues. Sept. 6	American Federalism	2	1
Thurs. Sept. 8	Political Culture and Ideology	3	2
Tues. Sept. 13	American Political Landscape	4	
Thurs. Sept. 15	Political Parties and Interest Groups	5	
Tues. Sept. 20	Political Parties and Interest Groups		
Thurs. Sept. 22	Public Opinion, Voting and Elections Nevada Political Landscape	6	4, 5
Tues. Sept. 27	Public Opinion, Voting and Elections; Nevada Political Landscape		
Thurs. Sept. 29	Media and American Politics	7	
Tues. Oct. 4	Congress	8	6
Thurs. Oct. 6	Congress (continued) *Book Reports Due*		
Tues. Oct. 11	Review		
Thurs. Oct. 13	*Mid-Term Exam*		
Tues. Oct. 18	Presidency; Congressional-Presidential Relations	9, 10	7
Thurs. Oct. 20	Federal Bureaucracy; Nevada State Government	11	9
Tues. Oct. 25	Judiciary	12	8

Thurs. Oct. 27	1 st Amendment	13	
Tues. Nov. 1	1 st Amendment (continued) *Present Group Projects*		
Thurs. Nov. 3	Equal Justice *Present Group Projects*	14	3
Tues. Nov. 8	Equal Justice (continued) *Present Group Projects*		
Thurs. Nov. 10	Making Economic Policy *Present Group Projects*	15	
Tues. Nov. 15	Nevada's History, Government & Politics *Present Group Projects*		10
Thurs. Nov. 17	Nevada's History, Government & Politics *Present Group Projects*		11
Tues. Nov. 22	Catch-Up Day		
Thurs. Nov. 24	NO SCHOOL		
Tues. Nov. 29	Making Foreign and Defense Policy	16	
Thurs. Dec. 1	Political Guests		
Tues. Dec. 6	Political Guests		
Thurs. Dec. 8	Review for Final Exam		

FINAL – Check UNLV Catalog for date and time