

Political Science 101: Introduction to American Politics

Spring 2008

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Office Hours: T Th, 1-2; T, 6:30-7 & 9:45-10:15 p.m.

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This course, which satisfies the university's U.S. and Nevada Constitution requirements, provides a careful analysis of the political institutions, processes, and cultures of the United States and Nevada. PSC 101 also includes an emphasis on contemporary political, social and economic issues and policies.

Required Readings

Keeping the Republic (Second Brief Edition, 2006), Christine Barbour and Gerald Wright.

The Sagebrush State (Third Edition, 2006), Michael Bowers.

Guide to the 2008 Elections (2008), Gregory Giroux.

Ancillary materials on the course's WebCT site.

Course Requirements

Readings: Students are expected to read the assigned material prior to class meetings. This may include material from the course's two assigned books, or the pamphlet on the 2008 elections, or material from the course's WebCT site. The instructor will assign these WebCT readings on a weekly or even daily basis. The WebCT readings will mostly include news articles on current events, albeit some supplementary background material for each topic may also be included.

Current Events: As noted above, I will be posting news articles on current political events on the course's WebCT site. Each time I do so I will make an announcement in class to this effect. Students are then expected to peruse these articles in timely fashion so that they can participate in classroom discussions and prepare for the quizzes that will flow from these posted pieces. We will have five (5) such quizzes throughout the semester, at roughly three week intervals (see more on this under "Grading," below).

Communications: Official university communications, including those from the instructor, will be sent to students' RebelMail accounts. Students should check their RebelMail accounts regularly for such communications. I will be posting student grades on the class WebCT site.

Grading

I will administer three examinations during the semester, at roughly five week intervals (see "Schedule," below). Each exam will count for 28.33% of your final grade (85% total). The final 15% of your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on five (5) current events quizzes, given throughout the semester in roughly three week intervals. Each quiz, that is, will count for 3% of your final grade. I will provide a study guide at least one (1) week before each examination. Each exam will be non-cumulative in nature in terms of material to be

covered. My grading scale is as follows: 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, and 0-59% = F.

Academic Integrity

“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.”—*Student Academic Misconduct Policy*.

For this course, any attempt to cheat on an examination or quiz will be met with strict enforcement of the university’s policies on academic misconduct.

Classroom Behavior

I expect students to attend class on a regular basis, and I expect students to make every reasonable effort to get to class on time. I would ask that students who might arrive late try to make as little disturbance as possible when entering the classroom. I may well give such students dirty looks. Students who have arrived on time are encouraged to do likewise. I would also ask that students who have to leave class early for some compelling reason please let me know ahead of time, and try to sit near an exit so that you can leave without disrupting the class. We may well talk about you after you leave. I also expect that students will switch off cell phones when entering the classroom—just pretend the classroom is a jet that takes off when class begins, and lands at the end of class.

Religious Holidays and Official Extracurricular Activities

If the date of any examinations or quizzes conflicts with a religious holiday that you observe or an official extracurricular activity, you must notify the instructor at least one week prior to the exam or quiz so that alternative arrangements may be made. For extracurricular activities, documentation will be required.

Writing Center and Other Student Assistance

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-301. Although some drop-in times are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702.895.3908. Another source of information on UNLV organizations whose purpose is to support students’ academic activities can be found at http://tlc.unlv.edu/student_success.htm

Students with Disabilities

UNLV complies with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and offers 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 as follows: VOICE (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, FAX (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: Citizenship and Democracy in American Politics
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 3.

Week Two: The Founding of the American Republic
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 2

Week Three: Nevada's Founding Period
Readings: Bowers, chptrs. 1 & 2.

QUIZ ONE

Week Four: American Federalism
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 3; Bowers, chptrs. 9 & 10

Week Five: Civil Liberties
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 4; Bowers, pgs. 43-44.

EXAMINATION ONE

Week Six: Civil Rights
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 5; Bowers, pgs. 28-42.

QUIZ TWO

Week Seven: Legislative Politics
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 6; Bowers, chptr. 6

Weeks 8 & 9: Executive Politics
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptrs. 7 & 8; Bowers, chptr. 7

QUIZ THREE

Week Ten: Judicial Politics
Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 9; Bowers, chptr. 8

EXAMINATION TWO

Week Eleven: Parties and Interest Groups

Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 11; Bowers, pgs. 45-48 & chptr. 5.

QUIZ FOUR

Wks. 12 & 13: We the People & Political Candidates/Officeholders

Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptrs. 10 & 12; Bowers, pgs. 48-58; Giroux, entire pamphlet.

QUIZ FIVE

Wks. 14 & 15: Media Politics

Readings: Barbour and Wright, chptr. 13

FINAL EXAMINATION