

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS

SPRING 2008

Instructor: Mr. Gordon Stirling Course: Political Science 101
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Office: A-217/WRI Time: MW, 5:00-6:45 PM
Office Hours: MW, 3:45-4:45 PM

Description: This course is an introduction to the political institutions and processes of the United States and Nevada. 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 Edition, Seventh Edition, Magleby, O'Brien, Light, Burns, Peltason and Cronin

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

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for Political Science 101.

Office Hours, Telephone and E-mail: Office hours and office telephone number are as noted above. You may leave a voicemail if the instructor is not in the office when you call. E-mails to the instructor should be through official UNLV e-mail and Web Campus channels only.

Attendance: Roll will not be taken. However, students will be responsible for all material, including that presented in class. Some questions on each test will be derived only from lecture material. Therefore, regular class attendance is strongly advised.

You may not attend class if you are not registered for the class. You may not attend a course section if you are not registered for that section. If you are requested by the Registrar or an Advisement office to obtain a faculty signature for any kind of add/drop or other administrative action, you will be referred to the Chairman of the Political Science Department.

April 4 is the final day you may drop or withdraw from a class without refund.

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 enrolled at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

Examples of misconduct include plagiarism (using the words or ideas of another, from the internet or any source, without proper citation of the source) 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 UNLV 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 YOU 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/>.

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, pagers, music players and other electronic communications devices 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.

If a late arrival or early departure is unavoidable, please take a seat as near to an exit from the classroom as possible to prevent disruption. If you use a laptop computer in class (**to be used for taking notes only**), please sit in a back row, so as to avoid distracting other students.

Polite intellectual discourse and inquiry, with respect for the views and opinions of each other, will be the norm in class. No tape recording or filming of class sessions is permitted, as it can inhibit class participation.

Disabilities: The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the UNLV office that reviews and maintains disability documentation for students and provides 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 Center (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are VOICE (702)895-0866; TTY (702)895-0652; FAX (702)895-0861. For additional information, please visit <http://www.studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

UNLV Writing Center: One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling (702) 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.

Assignments and Grading:

Exams

There will be three closed-book exams of multiple choice, true-false and short answer essay questions. You will need to bring a Scantron form, a pencil and an exam book (or blank sheets of paper) to each exam. The results of each exam will comprise approximately one-third 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. Please note that the amount of material covered during the semester is subject to slight change at the discretion of the instructor, taking into account time constraints and the extent of coverage of various topics. Students will be informed in advance of the specific material to be covered on exams. The exams are not cumulative.

Material from the readings not included in the lectures and material from the textbooks not included in the lectures may be the basis for exam

questions. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted to be used during exams.

This syllabus, an outline of the textbooks and class lectures, and a study guide before each exam will be provided under this course on Web Campus.

Your Scantron form and essay paper, with scores, will be returned to you following Exams I and II. Scores for Exams I, II and III also will be posted on Web Campus. After an exam, check to ensure that your exam score is posted on Web Campus. If it is not, please consult with the instructor.

Make-up Exams and Early/Late 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 shortly thereafter. You must notify the instructor by January 30 if you anticipate missing an examination because of observance of a religious holiday so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Official extracurricular activity: If the date of any of the examinations conflicts with your participation in an official extracurricular activity, you will have the opportunity to make up the examination shortly thereafter. You must provide official written notification no less than one week prior to the examination so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Extraordinary circumstances: If extraordinary circumstances require you to miss an exam you will have the opportunity to make up the exam on the last day of scheduled class only, May 7. Several days before the make-up date, the instructor will send reminders of the make-up date through Web Campus to students for whom no scores have been recorded for either or both of the first and second exams. If you receive such a reminder in error, please consult with the instructor immediately.

There will be no make-up exam for the third exam, which will be given only on May 14, during exam week.

Early exams will not be given.

Class Discussion of Current Events

Discussions of current events related to U.S. and Nevada government and political activities will enhance your understanding of material covered in the text and the lectures. You should become familiar with current political trends and events through regular reading of newspapers and/or

internet news sites, and through watching or listening to television and radio news and discussions shows. Current events material of relevance to class content may be posted on WebCt in advance of class to promote class discussion.

Extra credit

There are no extra credit opportunities in this class.

Grade Percentages

90% and above = A 80%-89% = B 70%-79% = C 60%-69% = D

Below 60% = F

Students in the B, C and D ranges whose final percentages approach the next higher grade may receive a B+, C+ or D+. No minuses will be given.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 23, 28

Introduction; Syllabus; Ungraded Pre-Assessment
Constitutional Democracy

Magleby - Chapter 1

January 30, February 4

American Federalism
Nevada History and Statehood

Magleby - Chapter 2
Bowers - Chapters 1 and 2

February 6, 11

Political Culture and Ideology

Magleby - Chapter 3

February 13, 20

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Magleby - Chapter 5

February 25, 27

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

Magleby - Chapter 6
Bowers - Chapters 4 and 5

March 3

Exam I

March 5, 10

U.S. Congress
Nevada Legislature

Magleby - Chapter 8
Bowers - Chapter 6

March 12, 24

U.S. Presidency
Nevada Executive

Magleby - Chapter 9
Bowers - Chapter 7

March 26, 31

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

Magleby - Chapter 10
Bowers - Chapters 9 and 10

April 2, 7

U.S. Judiciary
Nevada Judiciary

Magleby - Chapter 11
Bowers - Chapter 8

April 9, 14

First Amendment Freedoms

Magleby - Chapter 12

April 16

Exam II

April 21, 23

Equal Justice Under the Law
Civil Rights and Liberties in Nevada

Magleby - Chapter 13
Bowers - Chapter 3

April 28, 30

Making Economic, Regulatory and Social Policy

Magleby - Chapter 14

May 5

Making Foreign and Defense Policy

Magleby - Chapter 15

May 7

Make-up Examinations

(If you have no make-up exams to take, you do not need to come to class.)

May 14 (6:00 pm)

Ungraded Post-Assessment
Exam III