

# INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS

## SPRING 2006

Instructor: Mr. Gordon Stirling  
Phone: 895-5250  
E-mail: gordon.stirling@unlv.edu  
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. 218 CEB  
Time: MW, 5:00-6:45 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, Sixth Edition (Teaching and Learning Classroom Edition), Magleby, O'Brien, Light, Burns, Peltason and Cronin

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. Some questions on each test will be derived only from lecture material. Several pop quizzes will be given. 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 consisting of multiple choice, true-false and short answer essay questions. You will need to bring a Scantron form, pencil and blue book to each exam. The results of each exam will comprise 30 per cent of your grade. Ten per cent of your grade will be based on the results of several pop quizzes. Randomly throughout the semester, a pop quiz will be given at the beginning of a class session on the reading material assigned for that date.

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. Written study guides for the exam will be provided preceding the exam.

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. No make-ups are possible for the pop quizzes.

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 because they enhance understanding of material covered in the text and the lectures. 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.

### Extra Credit

There are no extra credit opportunities in this class.

### Grade Percentages

90%-100% = 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 18

Introduction; Syllabus  
Constitutional Democracy

Magleby – Chapter 1

January 23, 25

American Federalism  
Early Nevada History  
Nevada Territory and Statehood

Magleby – Chapter 2  
Bowers – Chapters 1 and 2

January 30, February 1

Political Culture and Ideology

Magleby – Chapter 3  
February 6, 8

American Political Landscape

Magleby – Chapter 4

February 13, 15

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Magleby – Chapter 5

February 22

First Exam

February 27, March 1

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

Magleby – Chapter 6

Bowers – Chapters 4 and 5

March 6, 8

The Media and American Politics

Magleby – Chapter 7

March 20, 22

U.S. Congress

Nevada Legislature

Magleby – Chapter 8

Bowers – Chapter 6

March 27, 29

U.S. Presidency

Nevada Executive

Magleby – Chapter 9

Bowers – Chapter 7

April 3, 5

The Federal Bureaucracy

Nevada City and County Governments

Nevada State and Local Finance

Magleby – Chapter 10

Bowers – Chapters 9 and 10

April 10

Second Exam

April 12

U.S. Judiciary

Nevada Judiciary

Magleby – Chapter 11

Bowers – Chapter 8

April 17, 19

The First Amendment

Magleby – Chapter 12

April 24, 26

Equal Justice Under the Law  
Civil Rights and Liberties in Nevada

Magleby – Chapter 13

Bowers – Chapter 3

May 2, 4

Policy-Making: Economic, Social, Foreign, Defense  
Nevada: Past, Present, and Future

Magleby – Chapters 14 and 15

Bowers – Chapter 11

May 10 (6:10 pm)

Third Exam