

PSC-101

American Politics

Summer 2009

Faculty: Dr. Tiffiany Howard, E-mail: tiffiany.howard@unlv.edu

Time: Monday thru Friday, 11:20am-1:20pm, Summer Session II-June 1-July 2

Location: Wright Hall-C237

Office Hours: WRI A210, Tuesday 1:30-2:30pm and Wednesday 1:30-3:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a basic introduction to American politics and government. Throughout this term, we will examine the institutions and processes of American government and the political factors that influence them. At the end of this course each student should understand how the U.S. political system works and the consequences of the policies our government implements.

BASIC COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) You must read the assigned readings before you come to class.
- 2) Turn everything in on time- This means that I will not grant extensions if you ask for them within 24 hours of the deadline. The university policy on the grade of incomplete will be followed in this course.
- 3) Ask questions when you don't understand something; chances are you're not alone.
- 4) Please check <https://webcampus.nevada.edu/webct/entryPage.dowebct> frequently. I will periodically post announcements regarding class on that site.
- 5) However, please **DO NOT** communicate with me via Webcampus. **For all electronic correspondence please email me at tiffiany.howard@unlv.edu.**

ADDITIONAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Please turn **OFF** all cell phones upon entering the classroom!!! They are disruptive to me, your classmates, and they prevent the student from fully participating in class. In cases of an emergency, please inform me that you are expecting a call prior to class.

Otherwise, I will deduct **five** percentage points from your final grade every time I discover you are using your phone, and yes that includes texting.

2) If you are not using your laptop to take notes then please discontinue the use of it when you enter class. If I discover you are not using your laptop to take notes, I will issue you a warning. After the second warning, I will begin deducting **five** percentage points from your final grade. The same goes for the reading of books, magazines, newspapers, and the constant chatting with your neighbor. These are distractions for me and for the other students that are in class to learn.

3) Honor code violations will not be tolerated. If you have any questions regarding the honor code please go to <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>.

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves 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, you are encouraged to visit the following website: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright/>.

3) If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to present to me an official Academic Accommodation Plan, which you can obtain from the DRC. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are: Voice (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, fax (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

4) If for some reason class is cancelled please go to <https://webcampus.nevada.edu/webct/entryPage.dowebct> I will either conduct class using the Discussion Board or post relevant assignments so that we remain on schedule.

GRADING

Exams (100%)—This class is taught over the course of five weeks. Every Friday you will be tested on the topics we covered during the week. You will take a total of FIVE exams, but I will only count four toward your final grade. The lowest exam grade will be dropped.

Note: For the exams you will be allowed to use the notes you took from the book and during my lecture. They must be *HANDWRITTEN* notes—not typed or photocopied or anything that originated on a computer or copy machine.

Required Texts:

1. George Edwards, Martin Wattenberg, and Robert Lineberry. (2009). *Government in America*-Fourteenth Edition. ISBN: 9780205662890
2. Michael Bowers. (2006). *The Sagebrush State*-Third Edition. ISBN: 9780874176827

Class Outline

Week 1-Constitutional Foundations

Mon: Welcome, Introductions and Class Overview

Tue: Introducing Government

Wed: Federalism

Thur: Civil Liberties, Civil Rights and Public Policy (Chapters 4 and 5)

Fri: Exam 1

Week 2-People and Politics

Mon: Public Opinion and the Media (Chapters 6 and 7)

Tue: Political Parties

Wed: Nominations and Campaigns

Thur: Elections, Voting Behavior and Interest Groups (Chapter 10 and 11)

Fri: Exam 2

Week 3-The Policymakers

Mon: Congress and the Presidency (Chapters 12 and 13)

Tue: The Congress, President and the Budget: Politics of Taxing and Spending

Wed: The Federal Bureaucracy

Thur: The Federal Courts

Fri: Exam 3

Week 4-Policies

Mon: Economic Policymaking

Tue: Social Welfare Policymaking

Wed: Policymaking for Health Care and the Environment

Thur: National Security Policymaking

Fri: Exam 4

Week 5-Nevada Constitution

*****This week you will need the second textbook for this class-The Sagebrush State by Michael Bowers*****

Mon: Nevada: Origins and Early History; and Nevada Territory and Statehood (Chapters One and Two)

Tue: Nevada Legislature, Executive and Judiciary (Chapters Six, Seven, Eight)

Wed: Civil Rights and Liberties in Nevada and State and Local Finance (Chapters Three and Ten)

Thur: Exam 5

Fri: No Class-Fourth of July

**Unless Otherwise Stated-Each Topic Corresponds to ONE Chapter in the Book*

***The Instructor Reserves the Right to Modify this Syllabus at Anytime During the Semester Without Notice*