

Political Science 101
Introduction to American Politics
Summer 2009

Professor John Tuman
e-mail: john.tuman@unlv.edu
Wright Hall B225, Phone: 895-5258
Office Hours: M-W 1:00-3:30PM

This course is an introduction to American government and politics. The course is intended to provide students with a basic understanding of the U.S. and Nevada constitutions, political institutions, political ideologies, participation, and civil rights and liberties. We will also discuss selected public policy issues and analyze political processes in the U.S. and in Nevada.

Requirements, Grading, and Other Policies

Lecture and Discussion: The class will meet Monday through Thursday for lectures and discussion. Students are expected to finish all of the assigned readings and to be prepared for discussion.

Exams and Grades: There will be two exams: a mid-term exam (June 11) and a final exam (July 2). The exams will consist of short-answer and essay questions. The mid-term exam counts for 45% of your final grade; the final exam counts for 50%, with the remaining 5% from participation.

Make-up exams will be given only if the student can demonstrate she/he was absent due to illness or participation in an official university function. Students must provide an excuse in writing from a licensed health care provider or from a university administrator.

University Policy for Students with Disabilities: Any student who, because of a disabling condition, may require some special arrangements to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. Students should present appropriate verification from the Disability Resource Center (Room 137, Reynolds Student Services Center; 895-0866 [TDD 895-0652]).

Observance of Religious Holidays: Students who miss class due to observance of a religious holiday shall be given the opportunity to make up the missed work. Please notify the instructor no later than third class session if you will miss class because of observance of a religious holiday.

Contact via E-mail: Students are required to use Rebelmail accounts when they contact faculty via e-mail. As the official e-mail system for students, Rebelmail is available to all students who have been admitted to the university. Non-matriculated students should contact the Office of Information Technology at UNLV students for assistance.

Course Texts

Required: Janda, Kenneth, Jeffrey M. Berry, and Jerry Goldman, The Challenge of Democracy: Government in America (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2009). 10th edition.

While not required, there are some suggested readings from: Michael Bowers The Sagebrush State (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006). 3rd edition.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Week 1: 6/1-6/4

Ideology and political values in the U.S.

Janda, Ch. 1

Theories of American politics

Janda, Ch. 2

The Constitution: key provisions; comparisons between Nevada /U.S. Constitutions

Janda, Ch. 3, and pp. A3 -A12.

Nevada Constitution: available at, <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Const/NVConst.html>

Suggested: Michael Bowers, The Sagebrush State Ch. 3, and suggested on-line reading (announced in class).

Week 2: 6/8-6/11

Constitution--conclusion

The U.S. Congress & the Legislative Process; comparisons to Nevada

Janda, Ch. 11

Suggested: Bowers, Ch. 6

Suggested: Web readings on Nevada legislative session (TBA in class)

The Executive Branch; comparisons to Nevada

Janda, Ch. 12

Midterm Exam: June 11

Week 3: 6/15-6/18.

Bureaucracy: Functions; Reforming Public Service; Comparisons with Nevada agencies

Janda, Ch. 13

The Judiciary. Structure and function. Politics of the judicial branch; Comparisons to Nevada

Janda, Ch. 14

Suggested: Bowers, Ch. 8

Week 4: 6/22-6/25

Judiciary--conclusion

Political participation: Protest, social movements, voting.

Janda, Chs. 7, 16.

Suggested: Bowers, Ch. 3

Public policy making—case studies

Janda, Ch. 18, 19.

Week 5: 6/29-7/1

Public policy making-case studies-continued

Janda, Ch. 19.

Review

July 2 Final Exam

Note: July 3 Independence Day is observed