

Introduction to American Politics

Political Science 101-004 Fall 2006 MW 2:00 -3:45

Instructor: Fumiko Sasaki

Classroom: BEH 112

Email: fumiko.sasaki@unlv.edu

Office: WRI A220

Office hours: Wednesday 11:30-12:30, Friday 2:30-4:30

Phone: 702-895-5230

1, Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide the students with the tools to analyze, understand, criticize, and challenge the events and phenomena of American politics. For this goal, we will examine the ideas and ideals on which American politics is founded, and fundamental political institutions and systems on which our lives rely. Also, we will examine the current political, economic and social issues to deepen our understanding and to train critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, and developing new interest and ideas. .

In the end, students are expected to have better idea about what we should do to better American politics.

2, Structure and sequences of class activities

The class consists of the following matters: lectures, discussions, midterm exam, final exam, topic reports, today's topic.

Lectures: will be based on the textbook, but not limited to it. The topic of each class is on the following pages. Students are expected to read the relevant chapter in advance.

Discussions: I believe that Socratic dialogues (Q & A) as the best way to develop and understand the issue in question. So I will throw some questions, problems or dilemmas which some fundamental institutions or current issues of American Politics inhere. Students are expected to participate discussions actively and not to leave any questions or problems unsolved.

Midterm: is due on 23th Oct. at class hour. It is closed -book sit-down exam on the issues raised earlier. Essay style. It should not take more than one hour.

Final exam : is due on Dec. 13, 3:10. It is also closed-book, sit-down exam on the issues covered throughout the course. Essay style. It will take one hour.

Topical Report: Students are required to pick up one article or essay from news papers, magazines, or internet on American Politics -- including political economy and social problems, and be report it briefly Your response,

comments and brief analysis are necessary. The reporter must prepare him/herself concisely regarding its background or history and so on to answer the questions from the other students. I will schedule when each student will report, so that he/she must prepare the report by the scheduled day.

Today's Topic : Students must be concerned daily with American politics. Be aware what is going on in America or Nevada, and how it will develop, what to be done, and so on. Since I will start every class with Today's Topic, students are expected to understand what the issue is. No paper reports are required.

3, Textbooks

Burns, et al, Government by the People. 5th brief edition,
Bowers, The Sagebrush State

4, Grading procedures

The grade consists of the following: Class participation 20%
Midterm 30%
Final 30%
Topic Report 20%

5, Course policies

Attendance -- required for all classes except emergency.
Cheating -- strictly prohibited.

6, Statement for students with physical disabilities

“ Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his other abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities ”

7, Schedule

Class 1, Orientation

Class 2, Social Science / Political Science -- What is politics?

Class 3, 4, American Ideology (chap. 5)

Class 5, American Political landscape (chap. 6)

Class 6, 7 American Constitution -- Democracy and its foundation (chap. 1)

Class 8, 9 Federalism and Local Authority (chap 2)

Class 10, 11 Separation of Powers

Class 12-14 Administration -- President, Bureaucracy (chap. 11, 13)

Class 15, Legislature (chap. 10)

Class 16, 17 Policy Making Process (chap 14)

Class 18 Judiciary (chap. 12)

Class 19 Political Parties and Democracy (chap. 7)

Class 20, Election System (chap.8)

Class 21,22 Other influential Actors -- Media, Business, Lobbying (chap. 7, 9)

Class 23 -26 American Foreign Policy (chap 15)

Class 27, 28 Nevada Politics Sagebrush State