

UNLV
PSC 101-011
Fall 2006
BEH 120, T Th 5-6:45pm

Instructor: Dr. Penny Pardoe
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Office Hours: Monday 10:15am – 12:15pm and
Wednesday 2:30pm-3:30pm

Introduction to American Politics

COURSE PURPOSE:

The main purpose of this course, which satisfies the UNLV United States and Nevada Constitution requirements, is to provide a general understanding of, and appreciation for, the basic systematic framework of the Government of the United States and the state of Nevada. It does so by reviewing the values of the founding periods of both and outlining the functioning of the three main branches of government (the Executive, Legislative and Judicial), as well as other major governmental institutions and processes (such as the political party system, the bureaucracy, and elections). It is designed with the intention of helping students to:

- develop the skills necessary for analyzing governmental processes and current political trends
- develop good citizenship skills
- understand and appreciate some of the basic methodologies and theories often used by American political scientists

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

The required texts for this course are:

Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, and Margaret Weir, *We the People*, Fifth Edition (ISBN 0-393-92620-6)

Bowers, *The Sagebrush State*, 2nd Edition (ISBN: 087417516X)

**Further readings will be required. These materials will be available to you through library services.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:

This class will be conducted via a series of lectures and some class discussions. A schedule of lecture and discussion topics, as well as reading assignments, is provided below. However, be aware that additional reading and discussions sessions may be added to the schedule, and that the schedule itself may change due to time constraints. Any changes will be announced at least a week in advance.

ASSIGNMENTS AND OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

You will be required to complete the following:

- 3 tests
- 2 quizzes
- and one final exam

The due dates for the above mentioned are indicated in the schedule provided below.

All tests will include a combination of multiple choice, identification, true and false, and short answer questions.

All Quizzes will consist of 10 multiple choice or true and false questions.

STUDENT EVALUATION:

Your final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 10%

First Test: 15%

2nd Test: 15%

Third Test: 15%

Quiz 1: 5%

Quiz 2: 5%

Final Exam: 25%

GRADING:

All final numerical grades will be transcribed into letter grades as follows:

100-93= A

75- 73= C

92- 89 = A-

72- 69= C-

88- 86= B+

68- 66= D+

85- 83= B

65- 63= D

82- 79= B-

62- 59= D-

78-76= C+

58- 0 = F

CLASS POLICIES:

1. Attendance: Attendance is taken and counts toward part of your final grade. Anyone coming to class more than 30 minutes late or leaving more than 30 minutes early will be counted as absent.

2. Class participation: Class participation also counts toward your final grade. Discussion periods are specifically designed to evaluate your performance. Keeping up with your reading and preparing in advance for discussion will help you achieve a high grade in this area.

3. Exam and Missed Test Policy:

If a student has an extraordinary, legitimate, and proven reason for missing a test (such as religious holidays or extracurricular activities), and the instructor is notified at least 2 weeks prior to the test date, arrangements for a make-up can be made during the semester. Otherwise, all students can make-up any missed tests on the last day of class. Note: that the format of the make-up tests will **not necessarily** be the same as that of the regularly scheduled test.

The final exam **must** be taken at the scheduled date during finals week. No make ups or early final exams will be given.

5. Late Papers. For the purposes of fairness, students who do not turn in their written assignments on time will be penalized at the rate of 5 points per day (including weekends and holidays).

7. Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism, Cheating). Such instances may (and will most likely) result in a **FAILURE** for the *entire course*. See the “*Student Academic Misconduct Policy*”

LECTURE, DISCUSSION, AND READING SCHEDULE:

Week 1

August 29th and 31st

Lecture: Introduction to American Government- Defining government and democracy and the Founding Period

Assigned Reading- Ginsburg- Chapter 1

Week 2

September 5th and 7th

Lecture: The Founding Period continued and the Constitution

Assigned Reading: Ginsberg- Chapter 2 and A10-A25, Blackmun, Harry, “Born of Struggle and Compromise.” *Humanist*, Nov/Dec91, Vol. 51 Issue 6, p5-8, and Ealy, Steven D., “The Common Sense of Political Life,” *Society*, Nov/Dec2004, Vol. 42 Issue 1, p42-48.

Discussion Question: Why did some oppose and some support the constitution? How important was a Bill of rights to the Framers? What purpose do the Federalist Papers serve?

Week 3

September 12th and 14th

Lecture: Federalism

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg- Chapter 3

Week 4

September 19th and 21st

Lecture: Nevada- Early History and Statehood

Assigned Reading: Bowers- Chapter 1

***Test on Thursday**

Week 5

September 26th and 28th

Lecture: Nevada- Early History and Statehood continued and Public Opinion

Assigned Reading: Bowers- Chapter 2, and Ginsburg- Chapter 6

Week 6

October 3rd and 5th

Lecture: the Media, and Participation

Assigned Reading:, Ginsburg Chapters 7 and 8, and Bates, Stephen, “Reinvigorating Citizenship,” *Society*, Mar/Apr99, Vol. 36 Issue 3, p80-85

Discussion Question: Should there be more media regulation? Why do some people choose not to participate in the political system?

***Quiz on Thursday**

Week 7

October 10th and 12th

Lecture: Political Parties and Campaigns

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg- Chapter 9 and Bowers TBA

Week 8

October 17th and 19th

Lecture: Interest Groups and the Congress

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg Chapters 11 and 12

***Test on Thursday**

Week 9

October 24th and 26th

Lecture: The Congress continued and Nevada Legislature

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg- Bowers Chapter 6

Week 10

October 31st and November 2nd

Lecture: The Presidency

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg Chapter 13 and TBA

Discussion Questions: TBA

***Quiz on Thursday**

Week 11

November 7th – 9th

Lecture: The Nevada Executive

Assigned Reading: Bowers- Chapter 7

Week 12

November 14th and 16th

Lecture: The Bureaucracy

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg- Chapter 14

***Test on Thursday**

Week 13

November 21st (23rd is Thanksgiving)

Lecture: Federal Justice System and Nevada Justice System

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg- Chapter 15 and Bowers- TBA

Week 14

November 28th and 30th

Lecture: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Assigned Reading: Ginsburg Chapter 4 and 5 and TBA

Discussion Questions: TBA

Week 15

December 5th and 7th

Lecture: Nevada City and County, Catch up and Review

Reading: Bowers Chapter 9

Final Exam

OTHER IMPORTANT INFO AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Copyright Law:

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/>>

Disability Resource Center (DRC) – *The Executive Vice President and Provost and Faculty Senate have endorsed the following statement to be included in all course syllabi.* NOTE: Over two-thirds of the students in the DRC reported that the syllabus statement, often read aloud by the faculty during class, directed them to the DRC office.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. The DRC strongly encourages faculty to provide accommodations only if and when they are in receipt of said plan. 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 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/>>.**

RebelMail – Student’s UNLV e-mail account (RebelMail) is one of the primary ways students will receive official university communication: information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a RebelMail account after they have been admitted to the university. For more information, see <<http://rebelmail.unlv.edu/>>.