

PSC 403Z: Topics in Public Policy: Morality Politics
Fall, 2006: Dr. Jelen

Contact Information:
Use WebCampus Mail

Required Texts:

Moral Controversies in American Politics Raymond Tatalovich and Byron Daynes (editors) (3rd edition).

Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America Morris P. Fiorina, with Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope.(2nd edition).

Objective:

This course is intended to provide critical analyses of the legal, institutional, and behavioral issues underlying public policy issues involving questions of personal or social morality: Church-state relations, abortion, capital punishment, gun control, obscenity and pornography, and gay rights. The purpose is not to support any particular perspective on any of these issues, but to understand (sympathetically and critically) diverse positions on these controversial policy areas, to identify assumptions underlying different positions, and to assess the effects of public debate on these issues on democratic governance and civility.

Technology:

View the lectures online from within the course. The links to the videos are located in the Media Library Tool. You must have Real Player on your computer to view the video lectures. You may download this free program from <http://www.real.com>

Grading:

There will be an essay midterm exam, distributed via the mail facility on the course website on Monday, October 16, at 8:00 am Pacific time, and is due via mail on Thursday, October 19, at 5:00 pm Pacific time. The final exam will be distributed via mail on Monday, December 11, at 8:00 am Pacific time, and is due on Thursday, December 14, at 5:00 pm Pacific time. Each exam counts for 30 per cent of student=s final grade.

In addition, on or before December 1 at 5:00 pm, each student will submit a critical review of Morris Fiorina=s *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*.

This review, which should be 5-10 doublespaced typed pages in length, will include a summary of the book=s main arguments, as well as the evidence on which the arguments are bases, and a critical evaluation of the plausibility of the authors= thesis. This review will count for 30 per cent of the student=s final grade.

The remaining 10 per cent of the student=s grade will be based on active and thoughtful participation in the weekly online discussions. Students are expected

to view the lectures and do the assigned reading in a timely manner, and participate in the online discussions within 48 hours of the scheduled lecture viewing. Since these are discussions, it is important that students participate at about the same time. No discussion entries posted later than 48 hours after the scheduled lecture will be counted.

Class Participation Policies:

Any attempt at academic dishonesty results in failure of the entire course. This includes, but is not limited to, receiving outside assistance on exams, or using unattributed material from other sources.

Exceptions to exam and paper deadlines will only be granted in cases of **documented** medical or bereavement considerations.

If a student has a documented disability that may require assistance, s/he will need to contact the Disability Resource Center for the coordination of their academic accommodations. Disability Resource Center is the office to assist students with documented disabilities who are otherwise qualified to attend UNLV. The assistance will vary according to the documentation of each student. The DRC is located in the Reynolds Student Services Complex, Site 137. The phone is 702-895-0866, or TDD 702-895-0653. Students may also visit their website at <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability>.

Course Schedule:

I. Culture Wars; Read Tatalovich and Daynes, Foreward, Introduction.
View Lecture 1: August 28

II. Church-State Relations: Read Tatalovich and Daynes, 6 (Jelen)
View Lecture 2: September 5
View Lecture 3: September 12
View Lecture 4: September 19

III. Abortion: Read T & D 1 (Strickland)
View Lecture 5: September 26
View Lecture 6: October 2
View Lecture 7: October 10

Midterm exam. Distributed October 16, 8:00 am; Due October 19, 5:00 pm

IV. Capital Punishment: Read T & D, 4 (Steel and Steger)
View Lecture 8: October 31

View Lecture 9: November 7

V. Gun Control: Read T & D, 7 (Spitzer)

View Lecture 10: November 14

VI. Obscenity and Pornography: Read T & D, 9 (Daynes)

View Lecture 11: November 21

VII. Gay Rights: Read T & D, 5 (Ellis)

View Lecture 12: November 28

Book Review Due: December 1, 5:00 pm

VIII. Culture Wars Revisited

View Lecture 13: December 4.